

Effect of age, gender, domicile status and profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods

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ABSTRACT

India is among the top 10 markets for once in a week American food consumption. From its inception American fast foods have been designed to be eaten 'on the go'. These do not require traditional cutlery and are eaten as finger foods. This study deals with the effect of age, gender, domicile status and profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods for which data from 90 consumers consuming American dishes from McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Domino's, KFC, Papa Johns, Subway and Taco Bell in Bengaluru city were collected using a schedule in 2015 and analysed using chi-square technique. Results revealed that there was impact of domicile status, occupation/profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods in American Food Restaurants (AFRs). However there was no impact of age and gender on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs.

Keywords: American Food Restaurants; fast foods; effect; consumption

INTRODUCTION

India is among the top 10 markets for once in a week American food consumption. The percentage of the adult population eating at takeaway restaurants at least once every week is 61, 59, 54, 50, 44, 41, 37 and 11 in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, China, India and Europe respectively.

American foods are highly processed and prepared in a standardized industrial manner with standard ingredients, cooking and production methods in order to produce a common and consistent product. From its inception American fast foods have been designed to be eaten 'on the go'. These do not require traditional cutlery and are eaten as finger foods. Generally these foods are characterized as energy-dense that are low in micronutrients and fiber, high in fat, salt and sugar (Goyal and Singh 2007). American Food Restaurants (AFRs) are becoming a part of life and the expansion of these chains exhibits the change in lifestyle and attitude among the youth in dining.

There is an increase in branded retail chains and growth of entertainment as a concept with the emergence of malls and multi-screen multiplexes with food courts. All this in turn has increased the exposure levels of the youngsters and has started to influence the way they eat encouraging them to venture out and try new cuisines. AFRs have succeeded in adapting to young people's needs and expectations. Dining out has become a style statement with consumers eating out for varying reasons such as for refreshment, relieving stress and breaking the monotony for change. With changing lifestyles and increased dining out people become more prone to wider exposures towards experiences in dining. As a consequence customers have different feelings about the restaurants and develop higher expectations for their dining experience.

With increasing standards of living, changing demographics, increasing disposable incomes and changes in the lifestyle of the people the demand for food away from home has increased due to which more and more consumers are flocking to various restaurants.

Indians are famous for trending when it comes to tasting various types of gastronomical delights. This has led to the growth of restaurants which serve international/foreign delicacies. Dining out is considered a leisure activity with many customers visiting restaurants to entertain friends and relatives, celebrate birthdays or special occasions. It was therefore pertinent to study the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs and if the socio-economic parameters had any effect on the consumption pattern of consumers.

Present study was conducted to see the effect of age, gender, domicile status and profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Bengaluru city for which 90 respondents consuming American dishes from McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Domino's, KFC, Papa Johns, Subway and Taco Bell were surveyed using an interview schedule in the year 2015 and data were analysed using chi-square technique to determine the socio-economic parameters affecting the frequency of consumption of American foods from AFRs.

The chi-square formula used for analysing the data obtained was as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum[(O-E)-0.5]^2}{E} \approx (r-1)(c-1)df$$

where O= Observed frequency in each category, E= Expected frequency in the corresponding category, df= Degrees of freedom

A correction factor of 0.5 was used in the formula with a view to analyse the objective as some of the observed frequencies were either zero or less than five.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The effect of different factors on the frequency of consumption of American foods from AFRs is presented in Tables 1-4.

Influence of age

Most of the respondents consumed American foods weekly. In the age group of below 25 years the maximum number of respondents (36.85%) consumed

American foods weekly followed by 26.31 per cent consuming monthly (Table 1). In the age group of 26-35 years also maximum (42.86%) were weekly consumers followed by monthly (20.00%). However in the age group of 36-45 years monthly consumers were more (44.44%) followed by occasional (33.33%). In the age group of above 45 years maximum respondents were weekly consumers (37.50%) followed by twice or thrice a week and monthly consumers (25.00% each). Calculated chi-square value was 24.8260 lesser than the table value of 24.995 at 5 per cent level of significance. This shows that there was no impact of age on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs. The social and lifestyle influences have led consumers to consume American foods from AFRs. Visiting an AFR is a great way of reconnecting with friends and family while some indulge in these foods during special occasions. The American food diet also suits the chaotic work routines, job stress and time limitations. The cheap and inexpensive alternatives that the AFRs offer to the customers have hit the right chord as most consumers consume foods from these restaurants for the convenience of fast service. Similar findings have been reported by Srividhya (2014).

Influence of gender

Effect of gender on frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs is presented in Table 2. Female respondents accounted for the single largest group of consumers frequenting AFRs. Nearly one third of the male consumers were found to frequent AFRs weekly (34.29%) followed by occasionally (25.71%) and monthly (22.86%). Female consumers too showed a similar pattern with two-fifth of the consumers frequenting AFRs weekly (40.00%) followed by monthly (27.28%). In this case the calculated chi-square value was 4.9265 less than the tabulated value of 11.0705 at 5 per cent level of significance depicting that there was no impact of gender on frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs.

Influence of domicile status

Influence of domicile status on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs is presented in Table 3. South Indians formed the single largest group of consumers consuming American foods at AFRs. Nearly one third of the North Indian consumers were found to visit AFRs monthly (34.21%) followed by occasionally (28.94%) and weekly (26.31%). South Indian consumers were found to

Table 1. Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs as influenced by age (n= 90)

Frequency	Age group (years)				
	Below 25	26-35	36-45	Above 45	Total
Daily	1 (2.63)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1
Twice or thrice a week	4 (10.52)	1 (2.86)	0 (0.00)	2 (25.00)	7
Weekly	14 (36.85)	15 (42.86)	2 (22.23)	3 (37.50)	34
Fortnightly	3 (7.90)	6 (17.14)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	9
Monthly	10 (26.31)	7 (20.00)	4 (44.44)	2 (25.00)	23
Occasionally	6 (15.79)	6 (17.14)	3 (33.33)	1 (12.50)	16
Total	38 (100.00)	35 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	8 (100.00)	90

$\chi^2 = 24.8260$, Figures in parentheses are percentages to the column total

Table 2. Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs as influenced by gender (n= 90)

Frequency	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Daily	0 (0.00)	1 (1.81)	1
Twice or thrice a week	3 (8.57)	4 (7.28)	7
Weekly	12 (34.29)	22 (40.00)	34
Fortnightly	3 (8.57)	6 (10.91)	9
Monthly	8 (22.86)	15 (27.28)	23
Occasionally	9 (25.71)	7 (12.72)	16
Total	35 (100.00)	55 (100.00)	90

$\chi^2 = 4.9265$, Figures in parentheses represent percentages to the column total

Table 3. Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs as influenced by domicile status (n=90)

Frequency	Domicile status				
	North Indian	South Indian	Northeastern Indian	Foreign nationals	Total
Daily	1 (2.64)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1
Twice or thrice a week	0 (0.00)	7 (14.90)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	7
Weekly	10 (26.31)	21 (44.68)	3 (75.00)	0 (0.00)	34
Fortnightly	3 (7.90)	6 (12.76)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	9
Monthly	13 (34.21)	9 (19.14)	1 (25.00)	0 (0.00)	23
Occasionally	11 (28.94)	4 (8.52)	0 (0.00)	1 (100.00)	16
Total	38 (100.00)	47 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	1 (100.00)	90

$\chi^2 = 67.6868^*$, Figures in parentheses represent percentages to the column total, *Significant at 5 per cent level

frequent AFRs weekly (44.68%) followed by monthly (19.14%). Three-fourth of the northeastern Indians consumed American foods from AFRs weekly (75.00%) followed by monthly (25.00%). It is noteworthy that cent per cent of the foreign nationals consumed American foods occasionally. In this case calculated chi-square value was 67.6868 which was higher than the tabulated value of 24.9958 at 5 per

cent level of significance showing thereby that there existed impact of domicile status on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs.

According to 2011 census the major communities of Bengaluru who share a long history in the city other than the Kannadigas were the Telugus and the Tamilians. Other communities were Tuluvas

Table 4. Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs as influenced by occupation/profession (n= 90)

Frequency	Occupation/profession						
	Student	Software professional	Bank employee	Government employee	Private sector employee	Business	Total
Daily	1 (3.22)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1
Twice or thrice a week	3 (9.68)	0 (0.00)	1 (16.66)	1 (16.66)	1 (5.89)	1 (33.33)	7
Weekly	15 (48.39)	7 (25.92)	2 (33.34)	3 (50.00)	7 (41.18)	0 (0.00)	34
Fortnightly	3 (9.68)	5 (18.51)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (33.34)	9
Monthly	6 (19.35)	9 (33.34)	3 (50.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (29.41)	0 (0.00)	23
Occasionally	3 (9.68)	6 (22.23)	0 (0.00)	2 (33.34)	4 (23.52)	1 (33.33)	16
Total	31 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	90

$\chi^2 = 50.7178^*$, Figures in parentheses represent percentages to the column total, *Significant at 5 per cent level

and Konkanis of coastal Karnataka, the Kodavas of the Kodagu district as well as Malayalees, Punjabis, Rajasthanis, Gujaratis, Sindhis and Bengalis.

Study revealed that south Indian consumers preferred American foods as they had good exposure to the international environment and culture which made them opt for these restaurants for eating out.

Influence of occupation/profession

Effect of occupation/profession on frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs is presented in Table 4. The data show that students formed the single largest segment of consumers consuming American foods from AFRs. Nearly half of the student consumers were found to frequent AFRs weekly (48.39%) followed by monthly (19.35%). Software professionals who accounted for the second largest group of consumers frequented AFRs monthly (33.34%) followed by weekly (25.92%) and occasionally (22.23%). Half of the bank employees consumed foods from AFRs monthly (50.00%) followed by weekly (33.34% each). Fifty per cent government employees ate at AFRs weekly followed by occasionally (33.34%). On the other hand about two-fifth private sector employees consumed American foods weekly (41.18%) followed by monthly (29.41%). Businessmen showed a uniform pattern of visiting AFRs twice or thrice a week, occasionally and fortnightly (33.33% each). Calculated chi-square value (50.7178) here was higher than the tabulated value of 37.6525 at 5 per cent level of significance which shows that there

was impact of occupation/profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs. The study revealed that student community was much more aware about MNC American food outlets frequently visiting and spending more time and money than the consumers belonging to other professions primarily because MNC American foods are relatively new to India and the younger generation is more open to adapting new ideas and cultural trends. Software professionals mostly patronize MNC AFRs in Bengaluru due to their higher income levels, long working hours and diverse cultural background of their peers.

The study showed that there was impact of domicile status and occupation/profession on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFRs but no impact of age and gender. American food consumption decision is driven by impulsive consumer behavior. Hence AFRs should make glittery presentation of the products in the restaurants which will further influence more impulse purchase.

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