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RESEARCH PAPER

An assessment of impact of income levels, family type, family size and food habit on the regularity of American food consumption in Bengaluru city

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ABSTRACT

There is an increase in the number of consumers dining from posh restaurants catering various cuisines and dishes to people across the world. The study targets to check if there is any impact of income level, family type, family size and food habiton the frequency of consumption of American foods in American Food Restaurants (AFR). Being an exploratory study, 90 consumers of American style foods in Bengaluru city were interviewed for which seven AFR's were carefully chosen and the data was analysed using Chi-square technique. From the findings, it is evident that there is impact of income level, family type and family size and no impact of food habit on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's. The study concludes that profiling customers by their choice of preferences provides more meaningful ways to identify and understand various customer segments and marketing strategies.

KEY WORDS : American foods, Frequency, Impact, Lifestyle, Psychological factors

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There is an increase in the number of consumers dining out from posh restaurants catering various cuisines and dishes to people across the world. About 50 per cent of the Indian population iseating out at least eight times every month in bustling metrosas compared to US (14 times), Brazil (11 times), Thailand (10 times) and China (9 times) (*http://www.assocham.org*, 2013).

According to Park (2004), eating out enables consumers to satisfy their hunger, need for convenience, pleasure, entertainment, social interaction and the mood of transformation. Studies have indicated that psychosocial factors can be linked to increasing consumption of American foods; this includeslifestyles that value and consider American foods as modern, trendy and also the lively and entertaining social events conducted in American Food Restaurants (AFR) – like

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birthdays or anniversaries, family celebrations or meeting friends. The average middle class person can afford to spend more on convenience and the luxury to save time and energy which in turn has contributed to the growth in the American Food Restaurant segment.

Castelo and Salay (2001) examined the attitude of consumers in relation to eating out in the commercial center of Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and highlighted that taste, flavor and other sensory attributes of the food, nutritional value were some of the major factors that helped customers in their decision to eat out.

UK is a hub for Indian foods and subsequently, this has ensured that restaurants expand and ready-made Indian foods fly off the shelves in UK supermarkets (Katie, 2012).

For consumers, the benefits that might be received are the satisfactory value of dining out, variety of foods that meet the expectations and also going through a dandy experience from each visit. The consumer's tastes, habits, needs and preferences are highly dynamic and priorities of the different segments of consumers differ dramatically leading to a radical alteration in lifestyles and spending patterns which in turn gives rise to new business opportunities. This implies that every brand of AFR should necessarily understand and constantly seek ways to offer freshness and get in huge crowds of consumers in order to remain relevant in the market place. The restaurant industry is no longer divided into clear-cut segments since the services offered by different restaurants overlap at times. As several firms have been engaged in the production and marketing of American foods, most of these restaurants offer similar products or services.

Profiling customers by their choice of preferences provide more meaningful ways to identify and understand various customer segments and marketing strategies. The consumer rational behaviour and background was deemed to be relevant to understand the consumption pattern and preferences of different consumers of American foods. The study targets to check if there is any impact of income level, family type, family size and food habiton the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's. This study will be supportive for the upcoming and latest entrants in the food service sector chiefly for the local brands and the future potential international brands who are aiming to launch themselves in the AFR market.

METHODOLOGY

Samples for the study consisted of the youth segment (teens), adults and the old aged people of various income groups and from both the sexes who were selected by convenient and purposeful sampling from a large number of customers at the AFR's. Being an exploratory study, 90 consumers of American style foods in Bengaluru Metropolitan city limits were interviewed for which seven AFR's *viz.*,McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Domino's, KFC, Papa Johns, Subway and Taco Bell were selected. Consumers belonging to different localities of Bengaluru city namely Jayanagar, Hebbal, Yelahanka, Indiranagar, Vijayanagar, Electronic city, Basavanagudi, Yeshwantpur and J.P. Nagar were chosen to get a diversity in the sample mainly based on region, per capita income and social class. The data was analysed by using Chi-square technique.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the given study are presented below under the following headings:

Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by monthly income (Rs.) :

Effect of income levelson the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR'sis presented in Table1. It is revealed from the Table 1 that a little more than one third of the consumers (39.13%) earning a monthly income in the range of Rs.5,000 to 10,000 frequented AFR's weekly followed by monthly (17.40%), occasionally (13.05%), fortnightly (13.04%) and twice or thrice a week (13.04%). There were a few consumers belonging to this group who consumed American foods daily (4.34%). Similarly, nearly half of the consumers in the income group of Rs. 10,001-20,000 frequented AFR's weekly (44.44%), followed by monthly (27.77%), occasionally (16.67%), fortnightly (5.56%) and twice or thrice a week (5.56%) and there were no consumers who consumed foods from AFR's daily. A little more than half of the consumers in the income group of Rs. 20,001-30,000 frequented AFR's weekly (54.54%) followed by occasionally (18.18%) and fortnightly (18.18%). Only a few consumers consumed American foods monthly (9.10%). There was an equal per cent of consumers in the income bracket of Rs. 30,001-50,000

who frequented AFR's weekly and monthly (50%).

A little more than one third of the consumers in the income range of Rs. 50,001 to 1,00,000 consumed foods from AFR's monthly (39.14%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (26.08%) who frequented AFR's weekly and occasionally with 17.40 per cent constituting each, twice or thrice a week and fortnightly constituting 8.69 per cent each. A little more than one third of the consumers in the income range of more than Rs.1,00,000 consumed foods from AFR's occasionally (36.37%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (27.27%) who consumed foods from AFR's by frequenting weekly, monthly (18.18%), twice or thrice a week and fortnightly (9.09%) each.

Monge-Rojas (2013) revealed that the daily consumption of fast food was 1.8 times more frequently mentioned by rural adolescents as compared to the urban youth of Costa Rica. Income status is one of the major determinants of the consumption pattern of milk (Kubendran and Vannirajan, 2005). Consumers in lower status groups are found to spend the biggest portion of their income on food products. As the wages increase, the level of spending on food product decreases proportionally and the ability to make savings increases (Koc and Ceylan, 2012).

Calculated Chi-square value for this table is 38.4266 which is higher than the table value *i.e.* 37.6525 at 5 per cent significance level which shows that the test is significant. Calculated value shows that there is impact of income level on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's. It can be inferred that as the disposable incomes of the consumers increases, the frequency of visits to AFR's by the consumers also increases. As disposable income increases, time for cooking becomes scarce and restaurant dining becomes more affordable and sobecause of inexpensive costs and convenience, AFR's have been a "home away from home" for breakfast, lunch and dinner meal times and so an increase in their regularity of visits is seen. In the study on the socio-cultural factors influencing food consumption patterns in the Black African population in an urban township in South Africa, it was found that

Table 1 : Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR'sas influenced by monthly income (Rs.) (n=90)

Sr. No.	Frequency of consumption	Monthly income (Rs.)						
		Rs.5,000 to 10,000	Rs. 10,001 to 20,000	Rs. 20,001 to 30,000	Rs. 30,001 to 50,000	Rs. 50,001 to 1,00,000	More than Rs.1,00,000	Total
1.	Daily	1 (4.34)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1
2.	Twice or thrice a week	3 (13.04)	1 (5.56)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (8.69)	1 (9.09)	7
3.	Weekly	9 (39.13)	8 (44.44)	6 (54.54)	2 (50.00)	6 (26.08)	3 (27.27)	34
4.	Once in a fortnight	3 (13.04)	1 (5.56)	2 (18.18)	0 (0.00)	2 (8.69)	1 (9.09)	9
5.	Monthly	4 (17.40)	5 (27.77)	1 (9.10)	2 (50.00)	9 (39.14)	2 (18.18)	23
6.	Occasionally	3 (13.05)	3 (16.67)	2 (18.18)	0 (0.00)	4 (17.40)	4 (36.37)	16
	Total	23 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	23 (100.00)	11 (100.00)	90 (100.00)

X_2=38.4266*

Note: Figures in parentheses represents percentage to the column total, * indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Table 2: Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by family type (n=90)

Sr. No.	Frequency of consumption	Family type		
		Nuclear family	Joint family	Total
1.	Daily	1 (1.13)	0 (0.00)	1
2.	Twice or thrice a week	7 (7.96)	0 (0.00)	7
3.	Weekly	33 (37.50)	1 (50.00)	34
4.	Once in a fortnight	9 (10.22)	0 (0.00)	9
5.	Monthly	22 (25.00)	1 (50.00)	23
6.	Occasionally	16 (18.19)	0 (0.00)	16
	Total	88 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	90 (100.00)

x^2 = 19.9527*

Note**:** Figures in parentheses represents percentage to the column total * indicate significance of values at P=0.05

when people move to thecity, they abandoned traditional foods and usually adopted foods that were associated with status. They perceived the consumption of certain foods such as samp(corn), beans, greens and root plants as associated with poverty (Puoane *et al.,* 2006).

Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by family type:

Effect of family type onthe frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's is presented in Table 2. Grier *et al.* (2007) stated that most children consumed fast food at least sometimes and nearly one-third of the children consumed fast food once or more times perweek. It can be inferred from the Table 2 that consumers belonging to nuclear families accounted for majority of the consumers frequenting AFR's. A little more than one third of the consumers belonging to nuclear families consumed foods from AFR's weekly (37.50%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (25%) who frequented AFR's monthly, occasionally (18.9%), fortnightly (10.22%) and twice or thrice a week (7.96%). Consumers showed lowest frequency pattern of consuming foods from AFR's daily (1.13%). Consumers belonging to joint families showed an equal frequency pattern of consuming American foods weekly and monthly (50%) each.

Ibrahim and Vignali (2005) predicted the consumer patronage behaviour in the Egyptian fast food business and found that the frequency of visit to international fast food restaurants in a typical month was 3.4 per cent less than once, 24.3 per cent once, 34.3 per cent two to three times, 19.4 per cent four to five times and 18.7 per cent six times and more. Majority of the university students in the Malaysian medical school (73.5%) consumed fruits less than three times per week, 51.5 per cent had fried food twice or more a week and 59.8 per cent drank water less than 2 litres daily (Ganasegeran *et al.,* 2012).

Calculated Chi-square value for this table is 19.9527 which is higher than the table value *i.e.* 11.0705 at 5 per cent significance level which shows test is significant. Calculated value shows that there is impact of family type onthe frequency of consumption of American foods

Table 3: Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by family size (n=90)

Sr. No.	Frequency of consumption	Family size			
		Small family (upto 4 members)	Medium family (5 members)	Large family (more than 6 members)	Total
1.	Daily	1 (1.42)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1
2.	Twice or thrice a week	6 (8.58)	1 (5.56)	0 (0.00)	7
3.	Weekly	25 (35.71)	8 (44.44)	1 (50.00)	34
4.	Once in a fortnight	8 (11.42)	1 (5.55)	0 (0.00)	9
5.	Monthly	17 (24.29)	5(27.78)	1 (50.00)	23
6.	Occasionally	13 (18.58)	3 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	16
	Total	70 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	90 (100.00)

$X^2 = 24.2116^*$

Note: Figures in parentheses represents percentage to the column total, * indicate significance of value at P=0.05

Table 4: Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by food habit (n=90)

Sr. No.	Frequency of consumption	Food habit		
		Vegetarian	Non-vegetarian	Total
1.	Daily	1 (2.64)	0 (0.00)	1
2.	Twice or thrice a week	4 (10.52)	3 (5.77)	7
3.	Weekly	12 (31.58)	22 (42.31)	34
4.	Once in a fortnight	3 (7.90)	6 (11.53)	9
5.	Monthly	11 (28.94)	12 (23.08)	23
6.	Occasionally	7 (18.42)	9 (17.31)	16
Total		38 (100.00)	52 (100.00)	90 (100.00)

$X^2 = 4.2947$

Note: Figures in parentheses represents percentage to the column total

in AFR's. The urbanization of consumer lifestyles and openness of the future generations to try out a variety of dishes are the factors that are compelling consumers belonging to nuclear families to opt out for these restaurants. Nuclear families and working couples are an important indicator of emerging cultural trends in urban India and they consume more American food than joint families and single spouse working families because of higher disposable incomes and a busy life style. Also, nuclear families are more aware and frequent American food outlets as they do not regularly prepare food at home and hence they rely more on food away from home.

Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by family size :

Effect of family size on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR'sis presented in Table 3. It can be seen from the table that consumers belonging to small families (upto 4 members) accounted for the single largest group patronizing American foods from AFR's. A little more than one third of the consumers belonging to small families consumed foods from AFR's weekly (35.71%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (24.29%) who visited AFR's monthly, occasionally (18.58%), fortnightly (11.42%) and twice or thrice a week (8.58%). Consumers showed lowest frequency pattern of consuming foods from AFR's daily (1.42%).

Similarly, nearly half of the consumers (44.44%) belonging to medium families (5 members) frequented AFR's weekly, followed by one fourth of the consumers (27.78%) who visited AFR's monthly, occasionally (16.67%), fortnightly (5.55%) and twice or thrice a week (5.56%). There were no consumers who consumed American foods from this group daily. Exactly half of the consumers belonging to large families (more than 6 members) frequented AFR's monthly and weekly (50%) each. Regular family meals at home were frequent inthe adolescents belonging to rural areas and 99 per cent of themate lunch daily at home (Bargiota *et al.*,2013).

Norimah *et al.* (2008) stated that more urban dwellers consumed chicken and eggs more frequently than their rural counterparts. Around 49.5 per cent of the Estonian consumers stated that they purchase chilled and canned ready meal products 3-6 times a month (Motus, 2012).The existence of family maybe considered a factor, that influences the consumers in theprefecture of Xanthi who are interested in purchasing local products (Koutroulou and Tsourgiannis, 2011).

Calculated Chi-square value for this table is 24.2116 which is higher than the table value *i.e.* 18.3070 at 5 per cent significance level which shows that the test is significant. Calculated value shows that there is impact of family size onthe frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's. Family size determines family type. The hectic lifestyle of consumers belonging to small families has resulted in the increased demand for American food. People do not want to spend a lot of time preparing meals, traveling to pick up meals or waiting for meals in restaurants. The average middle class person can afford to spend more on convenience and the luxury to save time and energy which has in turn contributed to the growth of AFR's. The expansion of AFR's is a reflection of the consumer demand for American food.

Frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's as influenced by food habit :

Influence of food habits on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR'sis presented in Table 4. Fruits and vegetables are purchased daily or twice a week given their perishable nature, whereas grocery items were found to be less frequently purchased (Ali *et al.,* 2010). Consumers have been found tomeet face-to-face with the producers of local products and they prefer frequently shopping at grocery stores to buy local fare (Hartman Group, 2008). Seafood consumption was found to be low with an average consumption being 1.5 times per month, and with very few of the respondents eating seafood more than three times per week (Birch *et al.*, 2012). Lack of consumption experience of wines from different origin is noticed among the more frequent consumers belonging to the region of Southern United States (Alonso and O'Neill, 2012).

It can be seen from the Table that non-vegetarian consumers accounted for the single largest group patronizing American foods from AFR's. Nearly half of the non-vegetarian consumers consumed foods from AFR's weekly (42.31%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (23.08%) who visited AFR's monthly, occasionally (17.31%), fortnightly (11.53%). Consumers showed lowest frequency pattern of consuming foods from AFR's twice or thrice a week (5.77%). Consumers belonging to this group did not consume American foods daily. Nearly one third of the vegetarian consumers

consumed foods from AFR's weekly (31.58%), followed by one fourth of the consumers (28.94%) who frequented AFR's monthly, occasionally (18.42%) and twice or thrice a week (10.52%).Consumers showed lowest frequency pattern of consuming foods from AFR's fortnightly (7.90%) and daily (2.64%).Fast food consumption among the university students in Daejeon revealed that 30.1 per cent of the respondents were frequent consumers (> or = 2 times/week) (Kim *et al.*, 2004).

Calculated Chi-square value for this table is 4.2947 which is lesser than the table value *i.e.* 11.0705 at 5 per cent significance level which shows test is insignificant. Calculated value shows that there is no impact of food habit on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's.Consumers resort to American food due to their exposure to global urban culture and western cuisine which accelerates their desire for cheap and delicious food. Moreover, American food costs less than the traditional meals commencing with appetizer and concluding with dessert. Changing consumer behaviour and favourable demographics have resulted in an increasing number of consumers preferring these foods irrespective of their food habit.

Conclusion:

There is impact of income level, family type and family size on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's. However, there is no impact of food habit seen on the frequency of consumption of American foods in AFR's.

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