

RESEARCH NOTE

Consumer behaviour towards American foods in Bengaluru city

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Consumers desire eating out at restaurants especially American Food Restaurants (AFR) in order to spend time with their family and friends, for socializing as they are family oriented with a spacious layout, providing live entertainment, parking space and rooms for special functions / occasions, celebration, seminars, banquets and are located at convenient locations, as well as they are easily accessible and flexible. These restaurants provide an international ambience that is perceptibly chic and contemporary providing different modes of payment, having a comfortable and welcoming feeling, enjoying a high degree of popularity among children aiming to provide a memorable experience to customers at low budgets. The Indian market for chain restaurants is expected to show significant growth, mainly due to the rise of the Quick Service Restaurants (<http://www.technopak.com/>

reports.html., 2013).

National chain restaurants have also captured a fair share in the American Food Segment (<http://www.crisil.com/index.jsp>., 2013). The present study highlights the reasons as to why consumers eat out and especially at American Food Restaurants (AFR), people with whom they generally visit AFR's and their duration of consumption of foods at their preferred AFR's. For the study, primary data was collected from 90 patrons of American foods in Bengaluru city using an interview schedule during 2015 for which McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Domino's, KFC, Papa Johns, Subway and Taco Bell were chosen. Percentage analysis was employed to draw important conclusions.

Reasons for eating outside:

The eating habits of consumers has endured a metamorphic change in the recent past. Health-conscious consumers have been found to show a growing preference for organic food over the conventionally grown food and this was found to be greatly influenced by the rising incidence of lifestyle diseases, such as heart disorders and depression (Paul and Rana, 2012). Food consumption patterns in India has swiftly altered from the previous consumption of cereal-based food products to the modern high-value food products and gradually

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from fresh, unprocessed, unbranded food products to processed, packaged and branded products (Ali *et al.*, 2010). Consumer’s reasons for eating outside are indicated in Table 1. Nearly one third of the consumers (32.22%) worked too late and were tired to cook a full meal. About 28.88 per cent of the consumers preferring American foods opined that they had no time to cook followed by 23.33 per cent of the consumers who didn’t know how to cook and 17.77 per cent were not interested to cook (Table 1). This can be attributed to the fact that eating at AFR’s continues to be mainly associated with taste, pleasure and convenience.

AFR’s convenience is generally related to the service promptness, at hand location, the time saving nature of American foods and the absence of the need to carry out the culinary tasks. For young couples with absolutely no time to cook, processed products like ‘chapaties’, ‘subzies’ and portion packs of concentrated curries are fast becoming regular diets (Swamy *et al.*, 2012). Consumers do not prefer spending excessive time preparing meals, travelling distantly to pick up meals or queuing up for meals in restaurants. Cent per cent consumers belonging to Bangarpet, Mulbagal and Gudibande taluks stated that ready availability and saves time of preparation were the key factors considered for the consumption of Dosa/ Idli mix (Usha, 2007).

Also, the time spent at home has decreased due to changes in hectic lifestyle with little or no time for the preparation of home-made meals. This coupled with the availability of AFR’s at every nook and cranny of schools and campuses is a trend that further has reduced the intention to cook meals at home. The topicality of the products, quality, health issues, appearance, freshness, taste, curiosity and prestige are some of the major factors that influence people in the Prefecture of Xanthi to buy local food products (Koutroulou and Tsourgiannis, 2011). The expansion of AFR’s is a reflection of consumer demand for convenience and American food. Some of the American foods supplement the regular meals at home. Zafar *et al.* (2002); Cunha *et al.* (2010); Arulogun and Owolabi (2011); Prabhavathi *et al.* (2014) and Shoyemi (2014) also reported similar findings.

Reasons for eating out from AFR’s by consumers :

The consumers have a choice to consume food from different restaurants. However, many consumers eat out from AFR’s on a regular basis. The Indian food industry consists of some of the largest and the most successful companies in the UK (Katie, 2012). Sheeja (1998) in her study pointed out that quality aspects like aroma, taste, freshness and purity were the major factors deciding the preference for a particular brand of processed spices in

Table 1: Reasons for eating outside (n=90)

Sr. No.	Reasons	Number of consumers	Percentage
1.	Work too late and tired to cook a full meal	29	32.22
2.	No time to cook	26	28.88
3.	Don’t know how to cook	21	23.33
4.	Not interested to cook	16	17.77

Note: Multiple responses were given by the respondent / consumer

Table 2: Reasons for eating out from AFR’s by consumers

Sr. No.	Reasons	Number of consumers	Percentage
1.	For a change / to break the monotony	58	64.44
2.	For pleasure and fun	23	25.55
3.	For entertainment (celebration of birthdays, New Year eve, declaration of exam results)	16	17.77
4.	For refreshment	10	11.11
5.	Serves as a good family outing	8	8.88
6.	For diversity in diet	7	7.77
7.	To relieve stress	5	5.55
8.	Others	3	3.33
9.	Habit	1	1.11

Note: Multiple responses were given by the respondent / consumer

Coimbatore district. The reasons for eating out from AFR's by consumers are highlighted in Table 2. It can be observed that nearly two thirds of the consumers (64.44%) consumed food from AFR's in order to have a change or to break the monotony in their life.

One fourth of the consumers (25.55%) having a liking for these foods; consumed them for pleasure and fun followed by 17.77 per cent who opined that they ate out from AFR's for entertainment as these restaurants provided facilities for celebrating birthdays, New Year eve and partying after the declaration of examination results. The visit is mainly intended to break their boredom. This is completely understandable, as a change is sought universally. The visits during weekends to AFR's are intended to relieve them from the monotony that their daily routine has set in and the mill of the grind diet which has motivated them to seek some change by having American food, while family and social time and pleasure appeal for the rest.

Also, AFR's offer the perfect environment and is the preferred place of entertainment – fun, friendly and familiar given that the target audience is hygiene and taste conscious, brand conscious, is drawn by the western culture, seeks international standards, are value seekers and are experimental. Other minor reasons such as consumption for refreshment (11.11%), AFR's serving as a good family outing (8.88%), for bringing in diversity in diet (7.77%), for relieving stress (5.55%), others (3.33%) and habitual behaviour (1.11%) were also cited by the consumers for eating out from AFR's (Table 2).

The habit of social get-togethers is catching up fast particularly among the younger generation and this may also be one of the major reasons for frequenting AFR's. Consumers prefer drinking soft drinks mainly for entertainment or at a social occasion, as a refreshment and to relax themselves (Kumudha and Thilaga, 2013). Consumers are also found to consume food at AFR's as AFR's prepare and provide meals for refreshment during celebrations, meetings and conferences. This has increased the amount of stints people nourished these foods. Consumers viewed visiting AFR's as a source of relaxation, recreation and outing. Zafar *et al.* (2002); Cunha *et al.* (2010); Arulogun and Owolabi (2011) and Prabhavathi *et al.* (2014) have also reported similar findings in their studies.

People with whom consumers generally visit AFR's:

The people with whom consumers generally visit AFR's is presented in Fig. 1. A fast food restaurant is considered as an economical and convenient place to eat out (Ibrahim and Vignali, 2005). It can be observed from the Fig. 1 that nearly two thirds (61.11%) of the consumers visit AFR's with their families, followed by friends (58.88%) and relatives (31.11%). This indicates that consumers want their dining to be a memorable experience and hence, were accompanied by their friends/ family. Most consumers consider it to be a suitable occasion for a family outing and also for socializing.

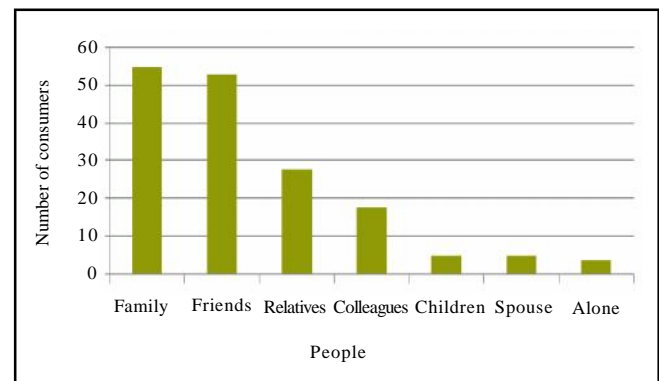
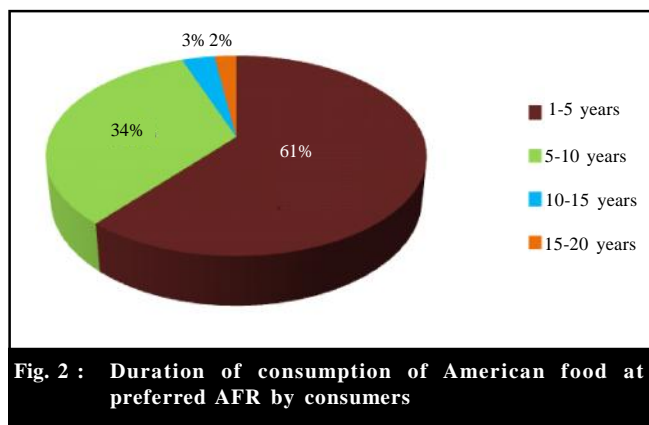


Fig. 1 : People with whom consumers generally visit AFR's

Hirekenchanagoudar (2008) in her study conducted in the twin city of Hubli and Dharwad indicated that the major factors considered by the respondents for purchasing biscuits were convenience as snacks, liking of the family members and ready availability. Further, 20 per cent of the consumers consumed food from these AFR's with their colleagues while consumption with children and spouse accounted for 5.55 per cent each. It is interesting to note that only 4.44 per cent of the consumers ate alone at these restaurants which could be attributed to the fact that these consumers prefer solitude or privacy which AFR's provide. Influence of children is seen on the type of food items that are eaten by consumers (Gupta and Nagar, 2009).

Duration of consumption of American food at preferred AFR by consumers:

The details about the duration of consumption of American food at preferred AFR's by the consumers is presented in Fig. 2. On an average, 98.2 per cent of the



survey participants were found to consume different types of chilled and canned ready meal products several times a month (Motus, 2012).

It can be observed that nearly two thirds (61.11%) of the consumers patronizing AFR's have been consuming American foods for the last one to five years followed by one third of the consumers (33.34%) who are consuming for the last five to ten years. Only 5.55 per cent of the consumers were consuming for the last ten and above years. This indicates that the consumers are very familiar with AFR's and have been consuming American foods for a long period. It also indicates that consuming American foods from AFR's is not a new concept to consumers anymore and it has become some sort of a ritual or habit for most of the consumers. In spite of the recent entry of this style of restaurants in India, the consumers have a long standing association. Consumers are willing to pay more for products that are perceived to be higher quality (Hartman Group, 2008).

In a nutshell, nearly two thirds of the consumers patronizing AFR's have been consuming for the last one to five years. Nearly one third of the consumers worked too late and were tired to cook a full meal. Nearly two thirds of the consumers consumed food from AFR's in order to have a change or to break the monotony in their life and also they visited AFR's with their families, followed by friends and relatives thereby accounting for a major chunk of the consumers patronizing these restaurants. Therefore, it is necessary for AFR's to reserve exclusive spaces for these groups of consumers patronizing AFR's.

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