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CUSTOMER PREFERENCE ON BRANDED FAST FOOD RETAIL OUTLETS IN KERALA**Dr. T. SUBASH****PRINCIPAL****GOVERNMENT ARTS & SCIENCE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
MALAPPURAM****PARVATHY R. NAIR****RESEARCH SCHOLAR (JRF)****GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM****ABSTRACT**

The study finds out that the ever-changing busy world is in a fashion of shifting to fast food from homemade recipes. This indicates the growing relevance of fast food retail outlets recently. But the trend reveals that only the well-established and managed Multinational Companies are flourishing while small units are struggling in this area. Retail fast food outlets should make it sure that the food supplied are healthy enough. So that customer's health is also valued. In a nutshell, the study revealed significant opportunity to marketers as far as consumer's behavior regarding preference, usage pattern and understanding of food market is concerned. The findings can be used as basis to pattern marketing strategy towards satisfaction of the fast food market.

KEYWORDS

Kerala, customer preferences, branded fast food retail outlets.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fast food is a mass-produced food that is prepared and served very quickly. The food is typically less nutritionally valuable compared to other foods and dishes. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurant or store with frozen, preheated or precooked ingredients, and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away. Fast food restaurants are traditionally distinguished by their ability to serve food via a drive-through. Outlets may be stands or kiosks, which may provide no shelter or seating, or fast food restaurants. It has been a noticeable trend that food consumption pattern of urban Indian families has changed dramatically with the times owing to the growing influence of Western culture. Indians have started dining out and moved on to accept different varieties of delicious food from the world. Further, studies indicate a radical change in the consumption patterns of Indian consumers, who have traditionally been known for their price consciousness. Instant food is scoring over traditional food due to influence of Western countries and rise in income and subsequent standard of living, convenience, etc. As a result, fast food menus are gaining wider acceptance from the Indian consumers who do not want to spend much time in cooking in the middle of their hectic lifestyles. About 86 per cent of households prefer to consume instant food over traditional food.

Currently the Indian fast food industry stands at a massive size of \$47 billion, driven by a growing number of working professionals and increasing westernization. This industry at the moment thrives on international appeal endorsed by niche chains. The development of nutritious and healthier replacements for the traditional servings at fast food restaurants has transformed into mass promotion of portable food. It has not only provided convenience to people who shuttle between home and work for a bigger part of the day but also eliminated the requirement of conventional cutlery. As demand for all types of fast food items are consistently on the rise, pizza, burger, and French fries have become the all-time favorite among young Indians, more so with some of the well-known burger and pizza restaurants like McDonald's, Domino's, KFC, Pizza Hut, Chicking etc., operating in India. Various initiatives by the Government of India in the recent past have resulted in the entry of many international Fast Food Retailers in the country. With the economic liberalization in 1991, nearly all tariff and non-tariff barriers have been removed or minimized in India that has helped many retailers to enter the growing Indian fast food industry.

Important definitions on fast food - 1: Fast food generally refers to "a limited menu of foods which lend themselves to production-line techniques; suppliers are likely to specialize in products such as hamburgers, pizzas, chicken or sandwiches" (Bender and Bender, 1995). Definition 2: The market of fast food is described as "the sale of food and beverages for instant usage either on the premises or in selected eating areas shared with other foodservice operators or, for usage elsewhere" (Data Monitor, 2005). Definition 3: Fast food is "inexpensive food, such as hamburgers and fried chicken, prepared and served quickly". Definition 4: Fast food is "prepared for ready availability, use or consumption and with little consideration given to quality or significance" Definition 5: Fast food is "prepared in advance such as at McDonald and KFC or it may be cooked to order such as Pizza Hut" (Emerson, 1990).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the brand preference amongst the consumers of fast food restaurants and to identify the factors influencing the selection of a fast food outlet.
2. To identify the problems faced by customers of branded fast food retail outlets.
3. To identify the satisfaction of customers of branded fast food retail outlets.

3. METHODOLOGY**3.1 SOURCE OF DATA****(a) Primary Data**

The data were collected through survey method, with the help of interview schedule.

(b) Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from the website of several educational sites which contained journals, reports etc.

3.2 SAMPLING DESIGN

- (a) **Population:** The population of the study covers all the fast food retail outlet in Kerala.
- (b) **Method of sampling adopted:** The method of sampling adopted is convenience sampling
- (c) **Sample size:** The total number of 75 samples has been selected from customers visiting the fast food retail outlet.

TABLE 1: SELECTION OF SAMPLE CUSTOMERS

Name of Unit Selected	District	No. of Customers Selected	Total
KFC	Thiruvananthapuram	5	15
	Ernakulam	5	
	Kozhikkode	5	
PIZZA HUT	Thiruvananthapuram	5	15
	Ernakulam	5	
	Kozhikkode	5	
DOMINOS	Thiruvananthapuram	5	15
	Ernakulam	5	
	Kozhikkode	5	
SUBWAY	Thiruvananthapuram	5	15
	Ernakulam	5	
	Kozhikkode	5	
SFC	Thiruvananthapuram	5	15
	Ernakulam	5	
	Kozhikkode	5	
Total			75

3.3 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The main tool for data collection is the questionnaire.

(a) Tools for analysis of data

The main tool for analysis of data is percentage analysis and weighted average method.

(b) Tools for presentation of findings

Tables are used to express the relationship between variables.

3.4 PERIOD OF STUDY

The primary data for the study were collected during the month of January - March 2019.

4. PROFILE OF SELECTED BRANDED FAST FOOD RETAIL OUTLETS

4.1 KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN (KFC)



TABLE 2: PROFILE OF KFC

Type	Subsidiary
Industry	Restaurants
Genre	Fast food restaurant
Founder	Harland Sanders
Headquarters	1441 Gardiner Lane Louisville, Kentucky, U.S
Key people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greg Creed (Brands Chairman and CEO) Roger Eaton (Yum! COO and KFC President)
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried chicken Chicken sandwiches Wraps French fries Soft drinks Salads Desserts Breakfast
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yum! Brands worldwide outside of China Yum China within China
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.kfc.com

4.2 PIZZAHUT



TABLE 3: PROFILE OF PIZZAHUT

Type	Wholly owned subsidiary
Industry	Restaurants
Founded	June 15, 1958; 59 years ago Wichita, Kansas, U.S.
Founders	Dan Carney Frank Carney
Headquarters	7100 Corporate Dr, Plano, Texas[1]
Products	Italian-American cuisine pizza · pasta
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yum! Brands worldwide outside of China • Yum China within China
Website	www.pizzahut.com

4.3 DOMINOS



TABLE 4: PROFILE OF DOMINOS

Type	Public
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food delivery • Franchising • Restaurants
Founded	(December 9, 1960; 57 years ago) in Ypsilanti, Michigan, US
Founders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Monaghan • Tom Monaghan
Headquarters	Domino's Farms Office Park, Ann Arbor, Michigan, US
Key people	David A. Brandon (Chairman) J. Patrick Doyle (President and CEO)
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken wings • Dessert • Pasta • Pizza • Submarine sandwiches

4.4 SUBWAY



TABLE 5: PROFILE OF SUBWAY

Working Hours	11am to 11pm
Average Customers per day	60
Average Sale per day	20 Thousand.
Seating Pattern	Common Fully Air Conditioned
Maximum Capacity of Customers at a time at the shop	40
Facilities Available	Wi-Fi, Digital Wallet
Facilities Not Available	Home Delivery, Car Parking, Disabled Friendly, Security, Parcel and Drive thru
Display or Indication Boards Available	Cash Counter Sign, Rate and Menu List Panel and Offers and Discount Panel.
Display or Indication Boards Not Available	Washroom Sign, Price Raise Notice Panel, Cam Surveillance Sign, Order Ready Sign And Suggestion Sticker Board.

4.5 SFC PLUS



SFC Plus was launched for those who defy tradition and for the inherent trailblazers waiting to break free in all of us. The journey from a single outlet in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 1993 to the 37 restaurants that span UAE and India today, is a story in itself - of breaking barriers and setting trends. Through our unique approach to delicious yet wholesome fast food that satisfies all your cravings in one place – from pizzas, burgers and fried chicken to salads, juices and Mocktails!– we’ve moved away from being just a traditional “quick service restaurant” to a groundbreaking “WOW service restaurant” with a dedicated table service in selected stores.

TABLE 6: PROFILE OF SFC PLUS

Working Hours	11am to 11pm
Average Customers per day	60
Average Sale per day	20 Thousand.
Seating Pattern	Common Fully Air Conditioned
Maximum Capacity of Customers at a time at the shop	40
Facilities Available	Wi-Fi, Digital Wallet
Facilities Not Available	Home Delivery, Car Parking, Disabled Friendly, Security, Parcel and Drive thru
Display or Indication Boards Available	Cash Counter Sign, Rate and Menu List Panel and Offers and Discount Panel.
Display or Indication Boards Not Available	Washroom Sign, Price Raise Notice Panel, Cam Surveillance Sign, Order Ready Sign And Suggestion Sticker Board.

4.6 CHICKING



Born in Dubai, UAE, Chicking is proud to be one of the first and fully Halal compliant, international quick service restaurants (QSR) that serves customers globally with great tasting food, infused with the largest selection of top quality herbs and spices from around the world that creates some of the most exciting flavors in a modern setting. Since opening the doors of the first outlet in Dubai during the year 2000, Chicking has grown into a highly popular and in-demand quick service restaurant.

TABLE 7: PROFILE OF CHICKING

Average Customers per day	120
Average Sale per day	60 Thousand.
Seating Pattern	Common Fully Air Conditioned
Maximum Capacity of Customers at a time at the shop	70
Facilities Available	Home Delivery and Parcel.
Facilities Not Available	Car Parking, Wi-Fi, Digital Wallet Disabled Friendly, Security and Drive thru
Display or Indication Boards Available	Cash Counter Sign, Washroom Sign, Price Raise Notice Panel, Rate and Menu List Panel, Surveillance Cam, and Offers and Discount Panel.
Display or Indication Boards Not Available	Cash Counter Sign, Washroom Sign, Price Raise Notice Panel, Order Ready Sign and Suggestion Sticker Board.
Average no. of Staffs	11

5. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

For the purpose of analyzing the perception of customers towards branded fast food outlets in Kerala, the data were collected from 75 customers using structured interview Schedule. The details of analysis are given below:

5.1 PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The personal profile of respondents is given in the following table.

TABLE 8: PERSONAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Below 25 Years	36	45
	Between 25 and 45 Years	35	47
	Above 45 Years	6	8
	Total	75	100.0
Gender	Male	38	51
	Female	37	49
	Total	75	100.0
Status	Government Servant	23	39
	Private sector employee	19	34
	Business	4	14
	Unemployed	4	13
	Total	75	100.0
Family Type	Single	37	30
	Husband and wife only	16	12
	Husband and wife with children	16	28
	Husband, wife, children and grandparents	6	24
	Total	75	100.0
Frequency of visit	First time	13	17
	At least once in a week	11	14
	At least once in a month	35	46
	Occasionally	16	21
	Total	75	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Awareness about Branded Fast Food Outlets

Table 9 gives the awareness of the branded fast food retail outlets among the customers.

TABLE 9: AWARENESS ABOUT BRANDED FAST FOOD OUTLETS

Outlets		Aware	Not aware	Total
KFC	No	72	3	75
	%	96.0	4.0	100
PIZZA HUT	No	53	22	75
	%	70.7	29.3	100.0
DOMINOS	No	64	11	75
	%	85.3	14.7	100.0
SUBWAY	No	39	36	75
	%	52.0	48.0	100.0
SFC	No	24	51	75
	%	32.0	68.0	100.0
CHICKING	No	61	14	75
	%	81.3	18.7	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Reason for choosing the preferred Branded Fast Food Outlet

Customers were asked to state the reason why you select a particular retail outlet. The responses are given in table 10.

TABLE 10: REASON FOR CHOOSING THE PREFERRED BRANDED FAST FOOD OUTLET

Reason		No	Yes	Total
Quick Serving	No	59	16	75
	%	78.7	21.3	100.0
Low Price	No	63	12	75
	%	84.0	16.0	100.0
Tasty Food	No	23	52	75
	%	30.7	69.3	100.0
Ease to Reach	No	33	42	75
	%	44.0	56.0	100.0
Better Ambience	No	45	30	75
	%	60.0	40.0	100.0
Fun and Entertaining	No	61	14	75
	%	81.3	18.7	100.0
Likeness by others	No	19	56	75
	%	25.3	74.7	100.0

Source: Primary Data

6.2 The facilities Available and Availed at the Branded Fast Food Outlet

The following table gives the facilities available, and facilities availed by the customer from the branded fast food retail outlet.

TABLE 11: THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE AND AVAILED AT THE BRANDED FAST FOOD OUTLET

Facility	Available	Facility	Availed	NA	Total
Take away	No 37	Take away	No 36	2	75
	% 49.3		% 48.0	2.7	100.0
Home Delivery	No 43	Home Delivery	No 28	4	75
	% 57.3		% 37.3	5.3	100.0
Car Parking	No 22	Car Parking	No 20	33	75
	% 29.3		% 26.7	44.0	100.0
Security	No 13	Security	No 2	60	75
	% 17.3		% 2.7	80.0	100.0
Wi-Fi	No 2	Wi-Fi	No 0	73	75
	% 2.7		% 0	97.3	100.0
Others	No 2	Others	No 0	73	75
	% 2.7		% 0	97.3	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Type of Products Purchased from the Branded Fast Food Outlet

The different items purchased by customer from the branded fast food retail outlet is given below.

TABLE 12: CUSTOMER MOST OFTEN BUYS FROM THE BRANDED FAST FOOD OUTLET

Items	Yes	No	Total
Sandwiches	No 20	55	75
	% 26.7	73.3	100.0
Salads	No 3	72	75
	% 4.0	96.0	100.0
Chicken Items	No 67	8	75
	% 89.3	10.7	100.0
Veggie Items	No 32	43	75
	% 42.7	57.3	100.0
Rice Items	No 10	65	75
	% 13.3	86.7	100.0
Beverages	No 59	16	75
	% 78.7	21.3	100.0
Others	No 8	67	75
	% 10.7	89.3	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Problems Faced by Customer

The different types of problems faced by customer from the branded fast food retail outlet are given in the following table.

TABLE 13: PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMER AT THE BRANDED FAST FOOD OUTLET

Problems	No	Yes	Total
Non-availability of seats	No 47	28	75
	% 62.7	37.3	100.0
Negative approach of staff	No 72	3	75
	% 96.0	4.0	100.0
Overcrowding at the outlet	No 51	24	75
	% 68.0	32.0	100.0
Billing taking too long to get and pay	No 60	15	75
	% 80.0	20.0	100.0
No parking space	No 48	27	75
	% 64.0	36.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Satisfaction Based on Price

The satisfaction level of the customers on the basis of price of product is given in table.

TABLE 14: SATISFACTION LEVEL ON THE BASIS OF PRICE

Status	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Total
Government Servant	No. 2	16	5	23
	% 18.2	34.0	31.3	30.7
Private sector employee	No. 4	11	4	19
	% 36.4	23.4	25.0	25.3
Business	No. 1	2	1	4
	% 9.1	4.3	6.3	5.3
Unemployed	No. 0	3	1	4
	% .0	6.4	6.3	5.3
Student	No. 4	15	6	25
	% 36.4	31.9	31.3	33.3
Total	No. 11	47	17	75
	% 100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Satisfaction Based on Quality

The satisfaction level on the customers is based on the quality is given in table.

TABLE 15: SATISFACTION LEVEL ON THE BASIS OF QUALITY

Status		Highly Dis-Satisfied	Dis-Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Total
Government Servant	No.	0	0	5	17	1	23
	%	0	0	25.0	36.2	16.7	30.7
Pvt. sector employee	No.	1	0	8	7	3	19
	%	100.0	0	40.0	14.9	50.0	25.3
Business	No.	0	0	1	3	0	4
	%	0	0	5.0	6.4	0	5.3
Unemployed	No.	0	0	0	4	0	4
	%	0	0	0	8.5	0	5.3
Student	No.	0	1	6	16	2	25
	%	0	100.0	30.0	34.0	33.3	33.3
Total	No.	1	1	20	47	6	75
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Satisfaction Based on Variety of Food

The satisfaction level on the basis of variety of food is given in table.

TABLE 16: SATISFACTION LEVEL ON THE BASIS OF VARIETY OF FOOD

Status		Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Total
Government Servant	No.	6	11	6	23
	%	33.3	28.9	31.6	30.7
Private sector employee	No.	5	10	4	19
	%	27.8	26.3	21.1	25.3
Business	No.	1	2	1	4
	%	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.3
Unemployed	No.	0	3	1	4
	%	0	7.9	5.3	5.3
Student	No.	6	12	7	25
	%	33.3	31.6	36.8	33.3
Total	No.	18	38	19	75
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Satisfaction Based on Taste

The satisfaction level on the basis of taste of the food is cross analyzed with the status profile of the customers.

TABLE 17: SATISFACTION BASED ON TASTE

Status		Satisfaction level on the basis of Taste				Total
		Highly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	
Government Servant	No.	1	4	12	6	23
	%	100.0	20.0	36.4	28.6	30.7
Pvt. sector employee	No.	0	8	7	4	19
	%	0	40.0	21.2	19.0	25.3
Business	No.	0	1	1	2	4
	%	0	5.0	3.0	9.5	5.3
Unemployed	No.	0	0	2	2	4
	%	0	0	6.1	9.5	5.3
Student	No.	0	7	11	7	25
	%	0	35.0	33.3	33.3	33.3
Total	No.	1	20	33	21	75
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. From the survey, it is clear that 86% of people prefer branded fast food retail outlets in their daily life. Moreover, the fast food provided by the outlets is of less nutritious compared to our own homely foods.
2. The study reveals that KFC is the most preferred retail outlet by majority of the customers. 96% of consumer is aware of it and only few people are aware about SFC outlet.
3. Most of the people have no preference for choosing branded fast food outlet.
4. Majority of customers (84%) were interested in the low price of the branded fast food outlet.
5. Majority (89.3 %) of customers were interested in chicken items from the Branded Fast Food Outlets.
6. Major problem of Branded Fast Food Outlets is the negative approach of staff towards customers (96%).
7. Non-availability of parking space is the major problem faced by the customer at the branded fast food outlet (42.7 %).

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made based on the findings of the study:

1. More nutrition food (salads of different variety) need to be offered and served by the branded fast food outlets as they are healthy and can also open a new arena of marketing.
2. More parking space need to be provided by the branded fast food outlets. In the congested areas, underground parking, circular parking lots, wallet parking, multi-level parking etc. need to be arranged so that the problem of inadequate parking space can be resolved.
3. More seats need to be arranged at least during the peak hours of the business. In addition, separate seating arrangements are made for family, groups, couples etc. both AC and Non-AC. Non-availability of seats force the customers to visit other restaurants.

4. Suggestion/complaint book should be maintained and proper indication board for the same should be set up. More over customers are encouraged to submit/write their valuable suggestions for improving the services by offering incentives/awards etc. for better suggestions.
5. The problem of misbehavior of the staff need to be taken care of. They need to be trained on various aspects of how to behave and serve a valuable customer.
6. In order to attract more and more customers towards fast food retail outlets, some special offers like discount offers, attractive packages, gift coupons, combo pack, different menu etc. should be arranged.

CONCLUSION

The ever-changing busy world is in a fashion of shifting to fast food from homemade recipes. This indicates the growing relevance of fast food retail outlets recently. But the trend reveals that only the well-established and managed Multinational Companies are flourishing while small units are struggling in this area. Retail fast food outlets should make it sure that the food supplied are healthy enough. So that customer's health is also valued. In a nutshell, the study revealed significant opportunity to marketers as far as consumer's behavior regarding preference, usage pattern and understanding of food market is concerned. The findings can be used as basis to pattern marketing strategy towards satisfaction of the fast food market.

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