

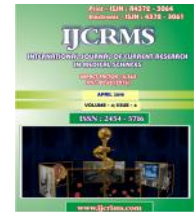


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Consumption of fast foods and their effects on family lifestyle in Aba north L.G.A of Abia state

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Introduction

Fast food is food that is served very quickly in special restaurants and often taken away to be eaten in the street (Hornby 2006). Fast food refers to food that can be prepared and served quickly (Jakle, 1999). Achinihu & Ukozor (2011) citing Jakle, (1999) fast food is any meal with low preparation time. The author further stated that fast food is also foods sold in restaurants or stores with preheated or precooked ingredients and served to the customer in a packed form for take-out or take away. The concept of ready-cooked food for sale is closely connected with urban development.

Linda (2008) stated that fast food centers are universally not new phenomenon. The author observed that fast foods are available around the world especially from small operators. Depending on the locality, multiple street vendors may specialize in specific types of food characteristic of a given culture or tradition. Fast foods cultures are in vogue in Nigeria. The most popular items on the menu of a typical Nigerian fast food outlets are fried rice, jollof rice, chicken, meat pies,

doughnuts, ice cream, fish, chin-chin, puff-puff, plantain chips, okpa, moin-moin, Africa salad, beans ball (Akara), egusi soup, bitter leaf soup, ogbono soup, vegetable soup served with either garri, akpu etc. Fast food centers catered for those who did not have means to cook their own food, particularly single households and travelers as well (Asomugha *et al.*, 2017).

Adebayo (2009) stated that from the functionalist perspective, the fast food industry appeared in the society to fill the gap created by the busy lifestyle of people in the twenty first century. The hectic and tight schedule in lifestyle made it absolutely inconvenient for most families, parents and workers to cook meal at home. Bachelors, spinsters and even parents stop at fast food centers to get breakfast or lunch for their children in school. Not only that at the end of a very busy day, instead of making a trip to the market to get ingredients and cooking a meal, fast food provides a better alternative. The hectic and very busy life style today has led to and encouraged fast food meals.

Edwards (2010) stated that family meals have visibly diminished, a factor that is making a number of families spend less and less time together. Family meal time is a medium that allows or gives the family members an opportunity to come together and share their experiences. Gathering at the table allows family to bond with their loved one's after the busy day. Parents and other home makers during meal times serve as role models in table manners. Meal times help younger family members to learn good table manners and healthy eating habits.

However, the fast food is often made with cheaper ingredients such as high fat meal, sugar and fats, instead of healthful ingredients such as lean meats, whole grains fresh fruits and vegetables. Fast food centers usually have a walk-up counter where one orders and picks up one's food without having to wait for too long. Fast food centers display their products by advertizing them in different forms just to increase sales and attract more customers to their centers for more consumption . This has led some children frequently requesting for foods and snacks from the fast food centers. Examples of fast food centers include Mr Bigg's, Crunchies, Chicken Republic, Mr Fans, Class Style, Country Style, Tantalizers, Tasty Fried Chicken, Mac Dons, Master Bugger, Sweet Sensation etc. These fast food centers advertise when opening a new branch. Fast food center operators aim at preparing meal to make profit and are not concerned about the nutritional values of the meals.

Fast food centers ensure immediate prepared foods sale to customers for consumption either on or off the centers. Generally not all aspects of fast food operation are standardized. The increasing rate of fast food centers especially in urban areas have greatly affected many family lifestyle because the establishment of fast food centers have reduced the chances of family coming together during meal time, and children preferring fast food to homemade meals. The younger ones can no longer prepare tasty meals for the family members because of the effect of fast food centers. Fast food is food that is served very quickly in special restaurants and often taken

away to be eaten in the street (Hornby 2006). Fast food refers to food that can be prepared and served quickly (Jakle, 1999). Achinihu & Ukozor (2011) citing Jakle, (1999) fast food is any meal with low preparation time. The author further stated that fast food is also foods sold in restaurants or stores with preheated or precooked ingredients and served to the customer in a packed form for take-out or take away. The concept of ready-cooked food for sale is closely connected with urban development.

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together. Family meal time is a medium that allows or gives the family members an opportunity to come together and share their experiences. Gathering at the table allows family to bond with their loved ones after the busy day. Parents and other home makers during meal times serve as role models in table manners. Meal times help younger family members to learn good table manners and healthy eating habits.

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Fast food centers ensure immediate prepared foods sale to customers for consumption either on or off the centers. Generally not all aspects of fast food operation are standardized. The increasing rate of fast food centers especially in urban areas have greatly affected many family lifestyle because the establishment of fast food centers have reduced the chances of family coming together during meal time, and children preferring fast food to homemade meals. The younger ones can no longer prepare tasty meals for the family members because of the effect of fast food centers

Aim

The main objective of this study is to investigate the consumption of fast food and its effects on

family lifestyle in Aba-North Local Government Area.

Materials and Methods

Design of the Study

It was a survey research. According to Nwana (2003), survey research is the method which includes the use of questionnaire in the collection of data.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in Aba – North Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all adult males (53, 016) fifty three thousand, one hundred and six, and adult females (53,828) fifty three thousand eight hundred and twenty eight. Total population (106, 844) one hundred and six thousand, eight hundred and forty four (National Population Census, 2006)

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for this study was purposive sampling. (100) adult males and 100 adult females will be selected totaling 200 respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument to gather relevant data from the respondents was structured questionnaire (from the respondents). The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section A collected information on personal data of the respondents. Section B drew information on why families patronize fast food centers, food preferences, feeding pattern of families etc.

A likert scale with 4 point ratings scale was used. The ratings are as follows:

Strongly Agree	(SA)	4 points
Agree	(A)	3 points
Disagree	(D)	2 points
Strongly Disagree	(SA)	1 point

Validation of the Instrument

The questionnaire was face validated by three lecturers in the Department of Home Economics Alvan Ikoku Federal College of education. Based

on their comments corrections were made in-line with the research questions.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to people in the offices, churches and market places, in Aba North Local Government Area Abia State. Illiterates among the respondents were helped by translating the content of the questionnaire in their local language. The literate ones filled in the questionnaire by themselves.

Results

Table 1: Reasons why family members consume fast foods

S/ No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Homemakers are too busy to cook	96 384	90 270	3 6	11 11	200 671	3.4	Accepted
B	Desire to relax and enjoy relative peace outside the home and office environment	71 284	62 186	24 48	43 43	200 561	2.8	Accepted
C	More economical than cooking at home for some people	14 56	20 60	79 158	87 87	200 361	1.8	Rejected
D	Inability of home makers to prepare delicious meals	74 296	70 210	29 58	27 27	200 591	2.9	Accepted
E	Lack of kitchen utensils.	23 92	10 30	95 190	72 72	200 384	1.9	Rejected
	Total	278	255	230	240	1,000		

The data in table 1 show the various reasons family members consume fast foods frequently. The respondents accepted as shown in the table above with the mean scores of 3.4, 2.8 and 2.9

respectively as reasons why family consumed fast food frequently. Items C and E were rejected with a mean score below 2.5.

Table 2: Family members who frequently consume fast foods?

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Fathers only	41 164	56 168	42 84	61 61	200 477	2.3	Rejected
B	Mothers only	36 144	29 87	79 158	56 56	200 445	2.2	Rejected
C	Bachelors only	103 412	56 168	22 44	19 19	200 643	3.2	Accepted
D	Spinsters only	96 384	59 177	31 62	14 14	200 637	3.1	Accepted
E	Adolescents and children only	87 348	61 183	27 54	25 25	200 610	3.1	Accepted
F	All of the above	196 784	4 12	- -	- -	200 796	4.0	Accepted
	Total	659	265	201	175	1,000		

The data in table 2 show that items C, D, E and F were accepted with the mean scores of 3.2, 3.1, 3.1 and 4.0 respectively while items A and B were

rejected with mean score of 2.3 and 2.2 respectively which were below the bench mark.

Table 3: Food preferences of the family members consuming fast foods

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Chin-chin/plantain chips	59 236	63 195	39 78	39 39	200 549	2.7	Accepted
B	Fried rice and fried chicken	62 248	74 222	26 52	38 38	200 560	2.8	Accepted
C	Moin-moin/beans	50 200	48 144	69 138	53 53	200 535	2.7	Accepted
D	Fruit cream and meat pie	74 296	56 168	31 62	39 39	200 565	2.8	Accepted
E	African salad	94 376	76 228	18 36	12 12	200 652	3.3	Accepted
	Total	339	317	183	161	1,000		

The data in table 3 illustrate that all the items A, B, C, D and E were accepted with mean scores of 2.7, 2.8, 2.7, 2.8 and 3.3 respectively as food

preferences of the family while consuming fast food.

Table 4: The feeding patterns of the family members that consume fast foods frequently

S/N o	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Family members eat breakfast together most of the time	13 292	65 195	18 36	44 44	200 567	2.8	Accepted
B	Family members eat lunch outside the home most of the time	103 412	72 216	24 48	1 1	200 677	3.8	Accepted
C	Family members eat dinner together most of the time	70 280	65 195	39 78	26 26	200 579	2.9	Accepted
D	Family members frequently consume snacks and beverages outside the home most of the time	106 424	64 192	16 32	14 14	200 692	3.5	Accepted
E	All of the above	200 800	- -	- -	- -	200 800	4.0	Accepted
	Total	552	266	97	85	1,000		

The data table 4 shows that items A, B, C, D and E were accepted with the mean scores of 2.8, 3.8, 2.9, 3.5 and 4.0 respectively as the feeding

patterns of the family members that consume fast foods frequently.

Table 5: The extent to which consumption of fast foods affect family lifestyle

S/ No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Children are becoming lazier and unable to cook	101 404	77 231	8 16	14 14	200 665	3.3	Accepted
B	Parents do not have enough time to teach their children good table manners	101 404	77 231	8 16	14 14	200 665	3.3	Accepted
C	Children prefer fast foods meals to homemade meals	98 392	96 288	6 12	- -	200 692	3.5	Accepted
D	Some families members dislike traditional meal cooked at home	87 348	90 270	11 22	12 12	200 652	3.3	Accepted
E	Mothers do not have time to teach their children how to cook	56 224	70 210	34 68	40 40	200 542	2.7	Accepted
	Total	443	410	67	80	1,000		

The data in table 5 show that items A, B, C, D and E were accepted with the mean scores of 3.3, 3.3, 3.5, 3.3 and 2.7 respectively as the extent to

which consumption of fast foods affected family lifestyle.

Table 6: The strategies to reduce frequent consumption of fast foods

S/ No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{X}	Decision
A	Home makers should make out time to prepare tasty meals at home	200 800	- -	- -	- -	200 800	4.0	Accepted
B	Home makers should be interested in preparing and serving nutritious meals	200 800	- -	- -	- -	200 800	4.0	Accepted
C	Other family members should help in meal preparation at home	198 792	2 6	- -	- -	200 798	4.0	Accepted
D	Home makers should provide foodstuffs and appropriate utensils for cooking meals at home	200 800	- -	- -	- -	200 800	4.0	Accepted
E	Home makers should inculcate the right methods of cooking different meals in their children	200 800	- -	- -	- -	200 800	4.0	Accepted
	Total	1,993	8	-	-	1,000		

The data 6 show that items A, B, C, D and E were accepted with the mean scores of 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, 4.0, and 4.0 respectively as the strategies to reduce frequent consumption of fast foods.

Discussion

The respondents disagreed that fast foods were more economical than cooking at home with mean score of 1.8 and also disagreed that lack of kitchen utensils with mean score of 1.9 were the reasons why family members consumed fast foods. However the respondents agreed that desire to relax and enjoy relative peace outside the home and office environment with mean score of 2.8, homemakers' inability to prepared delicious meals with mean score of 2.9, homemakers' were too busy to cook with mean score of 3.4, were the reasons why family members consumed fast foods.

This is in line with Adebayo (2009) who found out that fast foods appeared in the society to fill the gap created by the busy lifestyle of people in the twenty first century. The hectic tight schedule in lifestyle made some families, parents, and workers not to eat all meals at home most of the

time. Particularly single households, and travelers as well.

The respondents disagreed that it was not only fathers and mothers that consumed fast foods frequently with mean score of 2.3, and 2.2 respectively. However majority of the respondents agreed that bachelors only consumed fast food frequently with mean score of 3.2, adolescents and children with mean score of 3.1, and all of the above with mean score of 4.0 were the groups of family members that consumed fast foods frequently. This is in line with Achinihu & Ukozor (2011) who stated that bachelors and spinsters (unmarried workers) without house helps or cooks were more prone to consumed fast food meals. Edwards (2010) found out that family meals have visibly diminished, that family member now frequently consumed fast food meals more than homemade meals.

All the respondents agreed that chin-chin/plantain chips with mean score of 2.7, fried rice and fried chicken with mean score of 2.8, moin-mion/beans with mean score of 2.6, ice cream and meat pie with mean score of 2.8 and African salad with mean score of 3.3 were the food preferences of the families while consuming fast foods.

This is in agreement with the opinion of Linda (2008) who found out that most popular items on the menu of a typical Nigerian fast food outlets were fried rice, jollof rice, chicken, meat pie ice cream, chin-chin, okpa, African salad, bitter leaf soup with akpu, beans ball (akara) egusi soup, served with garri among others.

All the respondents agreed that all family members ate breakfast together most of the time with mean score of 2.8, family members ate lunch outside their homes most of the time with mean score of 3.8, family members ate dinner together most of the time with mean score of 2.8, family members frequently consume snacks and beverages outside their home most of the time with mean score of 3.5, and all of the above with mean score of 4.0 respectively.

This is in agreement with the view of Adebayo (2009) who found out that family members stopped at fast foods centers to get breakfast or lunch for their children in school.

The respondents agreed that children were becoming lazier and unable to cook with mean score of 3.3, parents did not have enough time to teach their children good table manner with mean score of 3.3, children prefer fast food meals to homemade meals with mean score of 3.5, some family members dislike traditional meals cooked at home with mean score of 3.3, and mothers did not have time to teach their children how to cook with mean score of 2.7.

This is also in agreement with the view of Edwards (2010) who found out that family meals have visibly diminished, a factor that is making a number of families spend less and less time together, and have affected family lifestyle that parents did not have enough time to teach their children good table manners and healthy eating habits.

All the respondents agreed that home makers should make out time to prepare tasty meals at home with mean score of 4.0, home makers should be interested in preparing and serving nutritious meal with mean score of 4.0, other family members should help in meal preparation at home with mean score of 4.0, home makers should provide food stuffs and appropriate utensils for cooking meals at home with mean score of 4.0 and home makers should inculcate the right method of cooking different meals in their children with mean score of 4.0.

This is in agreement with the view of Adebayo (2009) who stated that the hectic and tight schedule lifestyle made it sometime inconvenient for most families, parents and workers to cook meals at home.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is hoped that when home makers, parents, workers etc. fully implemented all the strategies mentioned above, frequent consumption of fast food will be drastically reduced especially in Aba-North Local Government Area Abia – State.

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