

Omar Ashurbayev¹ – author, senior lecturer in Millat Umidi University

Muhammdamin Kuldashev² – co-author, student of Millat Umidi University

Farrux Pardayev³- co-author, student of Millat Umidi University

Abror Rahimjonov⁴ - co-author, student of Millat Umidi University

Abstract : *This article examines that various factors that influence to the growth of fast-food consumption among teenagers in Uzbekistan. For explore further information about this topic article provides some purposes, methods and results from this research, also it illustrates a bit discussion of this results. However, the main purposes of writing this article is that determining different factors that leads young people to eat fast food research as a method. Primary research gives the topic related survey and on the other hand, secondary research provides some information from different websites and articles. In addition, article has a unique result with excellent analysis and discussions throughout this research that is based on reliable sources. Overall article ended with recommendations and conclusion.*

Key words – *fast food, consumption, young generation, junk food, nutritional value, brand reputation*

Introduction

As everything is being streamlined to achieve more and more convenience in our daily life, it definitely impacts on our consumption habits. As people are trying to accomplish more than ever before in their studies, career and their personal life, they are getting used to obtaining more advantages by spending less in terms of time, money and effort. Significantly rising demand for fast-food is one of the definite results occurring these days as the sales of global fast-food market reached \$731.65 billion in 2022 (World Population Review) [1]. According to Fortune Business Insights [2] global fast-food market size increased from \$862.05 billion in 2020 to \$972.74 billion in 2021.

Nowadays, the consumption of fast-food is significantly increasing among young people as well, basically from the age of 15 till 25. Even though, these age group are partially aware of the risks coming from high and frequent consumption of fast-food, it has already been young adults' food consumption habit worldwide. There is no doubt that there are certain factors triggering youth to eat fast-food in daily basis, such as, convenience including time, price, rush hours, dramatically changing lifestyle and preferences, location and less awareness of nutritional value of daily food consumption as mentioned by Rajini, Kannan and Selvi [3].

This article aims to thoroughly explore the main factors triggering young people to eat more and more fast-food in daily basis in Uzbekistan.

Literature review

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the sources written about the factors that cause the growth of fast-food consumption and identify the gaps that exist in them. Due to the lack of this type of data in Uzbekistan, we use global trends.

Convenience

Fast food is popular among young people due to its quick preparation and convenience. Youngsters often skip breakfast due to their studies, academic pressures and lack of time. Therefore, fast food becomes the best choice for quick and easy consumption. Therefore, fast food establishments occupy places near schools and universities. Due to lack of time, many young people do not cook at home and just eat fast food. This factor is one of the main reasons for the growing demand for fast food among young people (Rajini, Kannan and Selvi) [4].

Social gathering

According to Rajini, Kannan and Selvi [5] social gatherings also play big role in the growth of fast-food consumption among young generation. Adults often consume fast food when they meet their friends and it's a big part of social life for them. Fast-food businesses adapted for this situation and they provide some sort of menu that people can offer as a group and they make it more appealing to young generation too. Although eating fast food can be seen as a status and modernity among young people.

Family Influence

Family influence is also main factor in fast food consumption. Families where parents also have time constraints due to work are more likely to consume fast food. Because of limited time due to work they can not cook traditional meals and they push their family to fast food. Fast food is a great solution for many parents because they don't have enough time to prepare food for their child. Many young people said that their parents also like fast food and that eating fast food is not considered a bad habit in their family. Some families have pointed out that it is useful for the family budget. But this can lead to breaking the emotional ties and values in the family that are formed by eating traditional meals in the family circle (Askari Majabadi et al., 2016) [\[6\]](#).

Methodology:

Primaryresearch

For doing primary research, survey was chosen to get beginning information by respondents. Survey was directed to gain various information about factors that affect growth of fast-food consumption among people with demographic and fast-food consumption related questions. In addition, survey includes overall 15 questions and it was shared out mostly students and young people.

Results

67,3% of our survey participants are students and 30,8% of participants work and study at the same time and most of the survey participants do not work. 78.8% participants consume fast food 1-2 times in a week. However, there are people that consume fast foo 3-4 times in week and its percentage is 26.9%. Although delivery and restaurant is approximately equal but offering in restaurant is little bit higher than delivery. The time can be reason for this because in restaurant 55.3% people wait less than delivery. In delivery they mentioned that 40.4% people wait around 30-40 minutes and 34.6% people wait around 20-30 minutes but there are some people that wait their delivery less than 20 minutes (13.5%) and more than 40 minutes (11.5%). The number of people for whom calories are important and not important is equal, that is, 21.2%, but for 57.7% of

young people, the importance is not very high. Let's see other main factors with the figures.

Fig.1. How much do you spend for fast food?

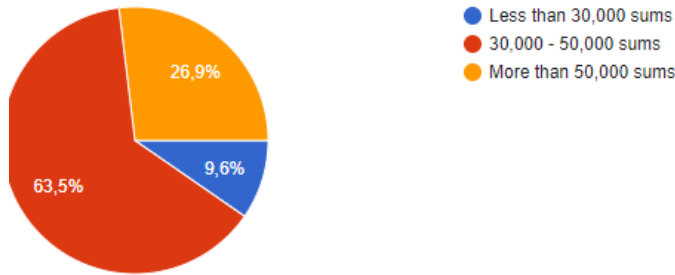


Fig.1. 63.5% of survey participant are likely to pay 30.000-50.000 sums and it is normal in the market.

Fig.2. Does the taste affect your choice of fast food?

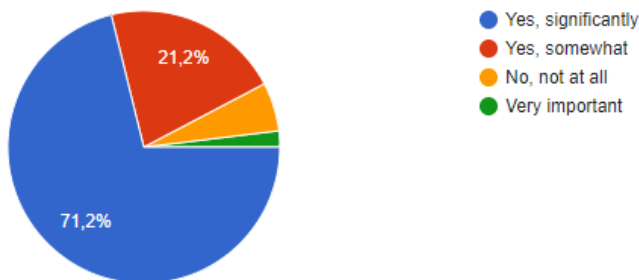


Fig.2. For most of the survey participants' taste play significantly big role when choosing a fast food.

Fig.3. Do brand names affect your fast-food choices?

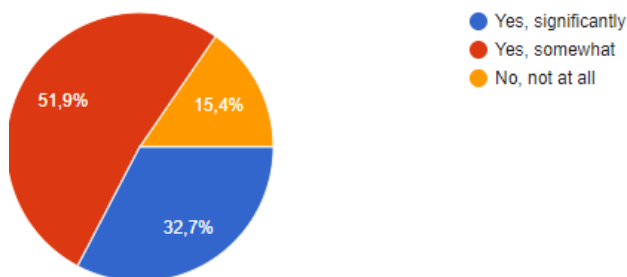


Fig.3. When it comes to brand it does not play big role as taste but somewhat it can affect to choose of fast food. Because we can see that 51.9% people chose somewhat.

Fig.4. How location of fast food restaurants is important for you?

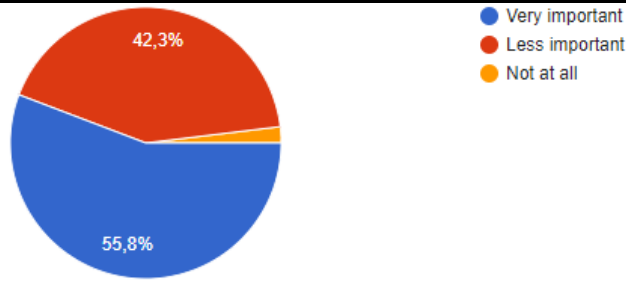


Fig.4. From the figure 4 we can see location also very important when choosing fast food. 55.8% people choose fast food based on location. For other 42.3% location is less important but they didn't choose not at all, it means for them location also somehow important.

Fig.5. Overall which factors are the most important for you?

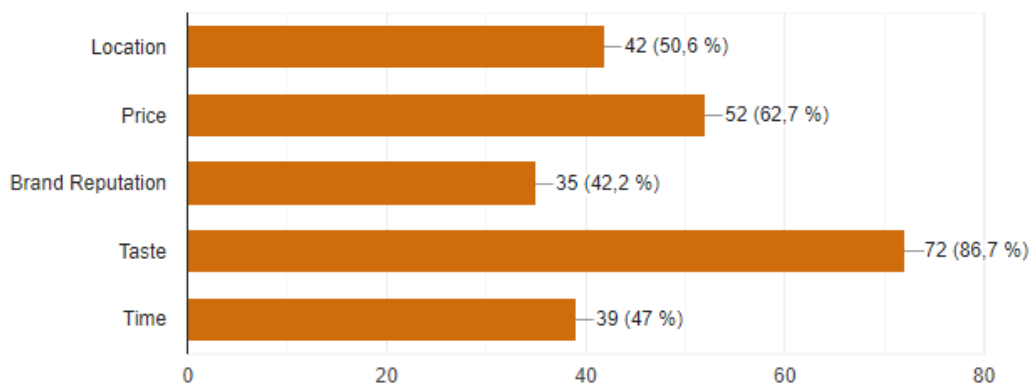


Fig.5. Overall, from this figure we can see that for our survey participants taste is most important factor than other factors.

Analysis

Price

According Hikersbay [7] that average fast-food price in Uzbekistan is approximately 45.200 sum, which is around \$4. This price is very affordable for young generation based on family income. Although individual items like cheeseburger cost about \$2 and it's very affordable for budget-conscious students. This low prices highly encourage young generation to fast food consumption.

From the survey, also we can see price is second very important factor in growing fast food consumption among young generation. About 63.5% people are paying 30.000-50.000 sums for fast food and it is affordable and normal for them. However, 9.6% people pay less than 30.000 sums for fast food. The reason for this may be a lack of confidence in cheap things. The younger generation believes that the lower the price of the product, the lower the quality. 26.9%

people mentioned that they pay more than 50.000 sum for fast food. Because of the overall young generation, most of them are students, but some of them have a good financial situation of their family or themselves, so the price does not play a big role for them.

Preference including taste

Taste preference plays crucial role in fast food consumption, with this in mind, several results were obtained from the survey. In addition, in this survey 85 people responded to our topic-based questions. According to the results of the survey, 69.4% of students and young people who eat fast food eat fast food because its taste plays a big role. At the same time, 24.7% of the participants in this survey sometimes pay attention to the taste of fast food and sometimes do not pay attention, that is, when they want fast food, its taste does not play a big role. Our survey shows a very low result with 5.9% of respondents saying that its taste does not play a role in choosing fast food. These results show once again the extent to which fast food is growing among young people.

Location

Considering that many places are becoming urbanized in today's developing world, location plays a very important role in the fast-food industry. As I mentioned above, by conducting a survey with 85 people, it was determined how important the location is in the fast-food business. According to this survey, 49 out of 85 people (57.6%) indicated that the location of fast-food restaurants is very important. On the other hand, 34 out of 85 respondents with a result of 40% indicate that the role of location is not very important. In the survey, with a very small percentage and number of respondents, only 2 out of 85 respondents answered that the location of fast-food restaurants is not important at all, with a result of 2.4%. These results show that the location of fast food is very important nowadays, because many people prefer fast food restaurants to be located in the city center, especially close to workplaces, universities, metro stations and similar hotspots.

Time – convenience

As Askari Majabadi [8] mentioned in his article published by National Library of Medicine, conveniences offered by fast-food restaurants, such as, quick service and less time required to take their ready food, lead youth to consume more fast-food on daily basis.

If we look at global trends, according to Gallant [9], 42% of adults in the USA expect to receive their order within 5 minutes, that is why the average time spent to prepare fast-food by majority fast-food chains in the USA, including McDonalds is 5 minutes.

In terms of drive thru, one of the facilities to help restaurants to serve quicker, from which customer can take their orders without getting out their cars within less amount of time. 54% of adults in the USA prefer drive thru to receive their junk-foods within 5 minutes. Fast-food restaurants are trying to satisfy demands in the market and reach maximum 5 minutes in drive thru in the USA [10].

As for the survey results conducted to identify the main factors triggering youth to eat fast-food on a daily basis among the age groups of 16-20 and 21-25. 63% respondents are 16-20-year-old teenagers and remaining 37% are young people.

59.2% respondents stated that they prefer using the restaurant itself to take their ready fast-food as the average time spent to receive their orders in restaurants is about 10 to 15 minutes but the remaining 47.1% participants would rather be using delivery service due to their studies and part-time jobs because it provides a lot convenience for them to have their junk foods delivered. 37.6% of those respondents said that the average delivery time is about 30-40 minutes. The duration of the delivery and quick service in fast food restaurants are the results provided by fast food restaurants to satisfy the youth's demands because 63.5% of survey participants stated that they only study while 23% of respondents of the survey work as a part-time employee and they need a lot quicker service in the restaurant and quicker delivery.

Brand reputation

According to Bagnato's [11] research that they did across six countries with youth aged 10-17 about the impact of brand recognition on fast food consumption that young generation are highly sensitive to brand recognition. Young people reacted 2.32 times more to advertisements of brands like McDonalds, KFC than other brands. This means that their demand is also high among young people. Brands such as KFC and McDonalds also do not stop advertising to retain loyal customers.

From our survey, we can see that for 55.8% people the brand recognition is important. They are loyal customers for the fast-food businesses. Although 42.3% people mentioned that for them the brand reputation is less important and it means that they are more likely to choose the brand that they like when there are some options. Because they did not choose, answer "not at all". The people who choose "not at all" are the neutral people. For them brand reputation is not very important. Other factors can be important for them like location, taste etc. Overall brand reputation moderate role in growth of fast-food consumption among young generation.

Less awareness of nutrients and ingredients

In terms of the survey results, as we have 85 respondents participated, it has been clear that 50.6%, about 43 respondents, are not aware enough about the ingredients and nutrients in what they consume on a daily basis and 27.1%, about 23 participants, do not know at all about the nutritional value of what they eat. Even though 100% of those respondents are almost aware of the risks of high and frequent consumption of fast-food, in our survey, we identified that almost 80% of respondents eat fast-food twice a week, 20% consume 3-4 times a week. We can conclude from those statistics that one of the main factors affecting the growth of consumption among youth is less awareness and knowledge about the ingredients and nutrients contained in what they consume even though they are somewhat aware of the risks of high consumption of fast food.

Discussion

62.4% of survey participants pay around 30,000-50,000 sums for fast food. This is equal to the average price of fast food in Uzbekistan, which is 42,000 sums.

According to the statistics of Kunu.uz, the average monthly salary in Uzbekistan is 5 million sums [12]. Compared to students' daily expenses, fast food is the most affordable for them, but fast-food addiction has a great impact on students' health. As a result of the survey, we saw that 20% of people eat fast food 3-4 times a week, and 1.2% of people eat it 5-6 times. This means that they spend an average of 210,000 sums a week on fast food. Although it is good for price affordability, it is a great harm to health. According to statistics, the average weekly consumption of fast food among young people in the world is 3-4 times, but according to dietary standards, normal consumption is 1-2 times (Pietrangelo, 2018) [13].

According to the results of the survey, it was found that brand reputation does not play an important role in choosing fast food. We can see above that in a separate survey for brand reputation, 32.7% of survey participants stated that it is very important, while the remaining 51.9% of participants said that it is not very important and 15.4% of participants said that it is not important. When asked which factor is important in general According to the results of the survey, the brand was the least important factor. However, as a real case example, Look and Les Ailes are old and leading brands in the domestic market, but KFC quickly became the first after entering the market of Uzbekistan.

As we mentioned the results gathered through the survey we made, 55.3% respondents take their orders in the restaurant itself within 10-15 minutes. It means that taking their orders in the restaurant in more than 15 minutes means the service they are providing is not good enough. In terms of the delivery, 37.6% of respondents stated that the average time their delivery takes to be delivered is about 30-40 minutes. These results also indicate that average time restaurants like EVOS, LOOOK, MaxWay take to prepare orders and the delivery are about 10-15 minutes and 30-40 minutes respectively. Otherwise, if they take more time than the results, it causes their customers to choose other substitute fast-food restaurants that serve quicker.

According to the survey, 2,540 adults participated, conducted by Gallant, 42% respondents stated that the maximum wait time should not exceed 5 minutes

[14]. The fast-food restaurants in the USA that are aware enough these statistics achieved to reduce the time required to prepare the order till maximum 5 minutes so that they can increase their sales. As the sales of fast-food consumption is increasing, the consumption of fast-food is rising as well. The correlation between less wait time and the rising consumption of fast food is that young people prefer less wait time in restaurant and for their delivery, they choose those fast-food restaurants that serve quicker.

As we have stated earlier that the next crucial factor affecting the growth of fast-food consumption among youth in Uzbekistan is less awareness of nutrients, ingredients included in what young people consume. The results in our survey show that 50.6%, about 43 respondents, are somewhat aware of nutritional value (ingredients, nutrients) of what they eat on daily basis while 27.1%, about 23 participants are not aware at all. These results indicate that there is a less awareness among adults about what kind of ingredients, nutrients are consisted in what they consume. Even though they somewhat know that more consumption of fast-food cause some health problems in general but they do not know the ingredients and its long-term impacts on their health in depth.

In terms of another survey conducted among 302 college students in India by Ahmed and Dwivedi, even though 94.7% of those students stated that fast-food is unhealthy, 59.60% of all participants consume different types of fast-food [15]. These results also indicate that considering fast-food unhealthy does not mean that they are fully aware of the ingredients in junk-food.

As for another important factor influencing the increase of consumption among young people, taste, we found throughout our survey, that taste is the most important triggering factor, compared to other factors mentioned earlier, youth to consume fast-food, with 86.7% with 72 respondents and based on another survey conducted among 302 college students in the age of 15-30, medium age is 22, 73% participants' main reason why they prefer eating fast-food is because of its taste [16]. The reason why the taste of fast-food is so attractive and addictive is because of the ingredients combined within a single portion of junk-food such as

high level of sugar, caffeine having mouth feel, mild stimulant features but the consumption of high level of those ingredients cause significant health issues.

Although they consider fast-food unhealthy, 20% of respondents eat 3-4 times in a week. The survey conducted among college students also shows that 38.74% have problems with digestive problems, while 29.14% are overweight [17].

Conclusion

In conclusion, our research shows that fast food consumption is growing year by year among young people. Moreover, our survey results also can be good prove. In this article, researched informations are given with various approaches like methodolgy, literature review, results of our survey, analysis of them and discussions. However, we analyzed survey results with exact numbers, after that, we discussed about these results, pros and cons sides. In addition, this article can be helpful for people who are gathering reliable information about fast food consumption in Uzbekistan.

References

- Askari Majabadi, H., Solhi, M., Montazeri, A., Shojaeizadeh, D., Nejat, S., Khalajabadi Farahani, F. and Djazayeri, A. (2016). Factors Influencing Fast-Food Consumption among Adolescents in Tehran: a Qualitative Study. *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal*, [online] 18(3). doi:<https://doi.org/10.5812/ircmj.23890>.
- Ahmed, S.S. and Dwivedi, S. (2024). Fast Food Consumption Pattern and its Awareness among Youth. *Acta Scientifci Nutritional Health*, [online] 8(3), pp.51–60. doi: <https://doi.org/10.31080/asnh.2024.08.1357>.
- Bagnato, M., Roy-Gagnon, M.-H., Vanderlee, L., White, C., Hammond, D. and Potvin Kent, M. (2023). The impact of fast-food marketing on brand preferences and fast-food intake of youth aged 10-17 across six countries. *BMC public health*, [online] 23(1), p.1436. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16158-w>.
- Fortune Business Insights (2022). *Fast Food Market Size, Share, Trends & Growth [2021-2028]*. [online] www.fortunebusinessinsights.com. Available at: <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/fast-food-market-106482>.

Gallant, A. (2023). *Three-Quarters of Fast-Food Diners Expect Their Orders in 5 Minutes or Less*. [online] CivicScience. Available at: <https://civicscience.com/three-quarters-of-fast-food-diners-expect-their-orders-in-5-minutes-or-less/>.

Hikersbay (2019). *Prices in Uzbekistan 2024 prices in restaurants, prices of food and drinks, transportation, fuel, apartments, hotels, supermarkets, clothing, currency*. [online] Hikersbay.com. Available at: https://hikersbay.com/prices/uzbekistan?lang=en#google_vignette [Accessed 25 Oct. 2024].

kunu.uz (2024). *Average monthly salary in Uzbekistan reaches 5 million UZS*. [online] Kun.uz. Available at: <https://kun.uz/en/news/2024/07/26/average-monthly-salary-in-uzbekistan-reaches-5-million-uzs> [Accessed 26 Oct. 2024].

Li, L., Sun, N., Zhang, L., Xu, G., Liu, J., Hu, J., Zhang, Z., Lou, J., Deng, H., Shen, Z. and Han, L. (2020). Fast food consumption among young adolescents aged 12–15 years in 54 low- and middle-income countries. *Global Health Action*, [online] 13(1), p.1795438. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2020.1795438>.

Pietrangelo, A. (2018). *The Effects of Fast Food on the Body*. [online] Healthline. Available at: <https://www.healthline.com/health/fast-food-effects-on-body#central-nervous-system>.

Rajini, S., Kannan, K. and Selvi, T. (2021). *View of Factors Influencing the Consumption of Fast Food among Young Adults*. [online] Journaljpri.com. Available at: <https://journaljpri.com/index.php/JPRI/article/view/3443/6895> [Accessed 23 Oct. 2024].

Rodgers, E. (2023). *75+ Fast Food Consumption Statistics*. [online] www.driveresearch.com. Available at: <https://www.driveresearch.com/market-research-company-blog/fast-food-consumption-statistics/#FFConsumptionStart>.

World Population Review (2023). *Fast Food Consumption by Country 2023*. [online] worldpopulationreview.com. Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/fast-food-consumption-by-country>.