

Thesis

Soudalath Hongsouvanh

2024



Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Kaposvár Campus

Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics

BSc in Commerce and Marketing

THE IMPACT OF MARKETING ON FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY IN HUNGARY

Insider consultant: Dr. Katalin Szendrő
associate professor

Insider consultant's department: Department of
Agra logistic, Trade and Marketing

Created by: Ms. Soudalath Hongsovanh

Kaposvár

2024

Table of Contents

1. ***1***

2. ***2***

2.1 ***2***

2.1.1 ***4***

2.2 ***8***

2.2.1 ***8***

2.2.2 ***9***

2.2.3 ***9***

3. ***11***

3.1 ***11***

3.2 ***11***

4. ***13***

5. ***26***

6. ***28***

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. INTRODUCTION

The fast-food industry has evolved into one of the most dynamic and competitive sectors in the global economy, largely driven by innovative and aggressive marketing strategies. Marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences, brand perceptions, and purchasing behaviors within this industry (Keller & Lehmann, 2008) . As the fast-food market becomes increasingly saturated, companies leverage a variety of marketing techniques to differentiate themselves and attract a diverse customer base. This influence is evident through strategic advertising, promotional campaigns, digital engagement, and brand positioning (Kumar, Singh, & Gupta, 2023).

In today's competitive environment, traditional marketing strategies are no longer sufficient. Simply appealing to consumers' sight and smell senses may not be enough to attract and retain customers (Spence & Youssef, 2015). The fast-food restaurant industry's competitiveness means that retaining customers and fostering loyalty depends significantly on the integrated consumer experience at the time of consumption (Baron, Warnaby, & Hunter-Jones, 2014).

The impact of marketing on the fast-food industry is multifaceted. On one hand, it drives consumer demand through targeted advertising and promotional tactics that emphasize convenience, affordability, and taste (Sheth, Sinha, & Shah, 2016). On the other hand, it influences eating patterns and social trends, often reflecting shifts in societal values (Sweeney & Soutar, 2020). The use of celebrity endorsements, digital platforms, and personalized promotions demonstrates how marketing strategies are tailored to resonate with modern audiences, significantly influencing consumer behavior and industry dynamics (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024).

Competition within the fast-food sector is intense. To satisfy customers, restaurants are employing various strategies to secure a larger market share. The problem definition of this research focuses on investigating how marketing strategies impact consumer behavior and purchasing decisions in Hungary's fast-food industry.

Objectives of the study

- Understanding consumer preferences: Investigate the factors that influence customers to consume fast-food (Price, Convenient, social media influence).
- To evaluate the relationship between marketing and consumers buying behavior in the fast-food industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social media and the fast-food industry

The fast-food business in Hungary has seen a considerable transformation due to social media, which reflects broader global trends. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are becoming essential to how fast-food companies interact with their customers. Social media's ability to create visual appeal is among its most powerful features, businesses like McDonald's, KFC and Burger King frequently employ eye-catching posts to advertise new items and seasonal sales, enticing users to share their experiences online. People are more inclined to try food they see regularly on their feeds, so this user-generated material not only raises brand awareness but also affects consumer behavior (Hanaysha, 2022).

As in many other nations, fast-food chains in Hungary have adjusted their marketing tactics by placing more of an emphasis on social media platforms with the goal to adapt to the digital world. Influencers are essential in promoting culinary trends, since marketing frequently employs them to build relationships with younger consumers. A sense of urgency and excitement is encouraged by Instagram stories and TikTok challenges that advertise special deals or new menu items. According to research, these platforms are very successful at increasing brand engagement and purchase intent because users are drawn to engaging and interactive content (Katherine, B., 2022).

The increasing significance of health consciousness in Hungary is another significant factor which is driving fast food companies to expand their product lines. These organizations can meet the increasing demand for better food options while maintaining flavor through the utilization of social media to promote healthier menu items. Social media is being utilized by brands to draw

attention to these developments, frequently using visually appealing photos and influencer collaborations to connect with health-conscious customers (Abdallah, 2023).

Furthermore, the effect of social media goes beyond mainly commercial promotion; it additionally forms a community where users may exchange preferences and experiences. By developing campaigns that encourage people to publish their meals online, participate in contests, and interact with brand-related substances, fast food brands enhance customer engagement. In addition to increasing brand loyalty, this enables businesses to collect insightful customer preference data that can inform future marketing and product development plans. Social media platforms have changed the dynamic between brands and consumers, making traditional marketing strategies more dynamic and captivating (Daniel, 2024).

Social media integration into marketing strategies is turning out to be crucial for success as Hungary's fast-food industry keeps evolving. Today's consumers are more likely to connect with brands that successfully use visual appeal, influencers interactions, and health-focused messages. For fast-food chains seeking to succeed in an increasingly competitive sector, the capacity to adjust to shifting consumer tastes while preserving a strong online presence is essential. Social media's impact on industry trends and consumer behavior is only expected to increase with its growing popularity, underscoring the necessity for fast food firms to remain innovative and responsive (Daniel, 2024).

In 2023, social media usage in Hungary was dominated by Facebook and YouTube, with 83% of respondents using Facebook daily and another 9% using it less frequently, resulting in a combined reach of 92% (Figure 1). YouTube followed closely with 51% daily users and 39% occasional users, amounting to a total usage of 90%. These two platforms clearly stand out as the most widely used, showing their strong presence in Hungarian digital culture. The daily use of other platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, was moderate, at 29% and 25%, respectively. TikTok reached 41%, while Instagram saw an additional 21% use it less frequently, increasing its overall reach to 50%. Although they are used, platforms including Pinterest (36% total), Twitter (18% total), LinkedIn (17% total), Reddit (13% total), and Tinder (9% total) had far

lower interaction rates, indicating that they serve to more specialized audiences than Facebook and YouTube (Statista, 2024).

Social media usage frequency in Hungary in 2023, by platform

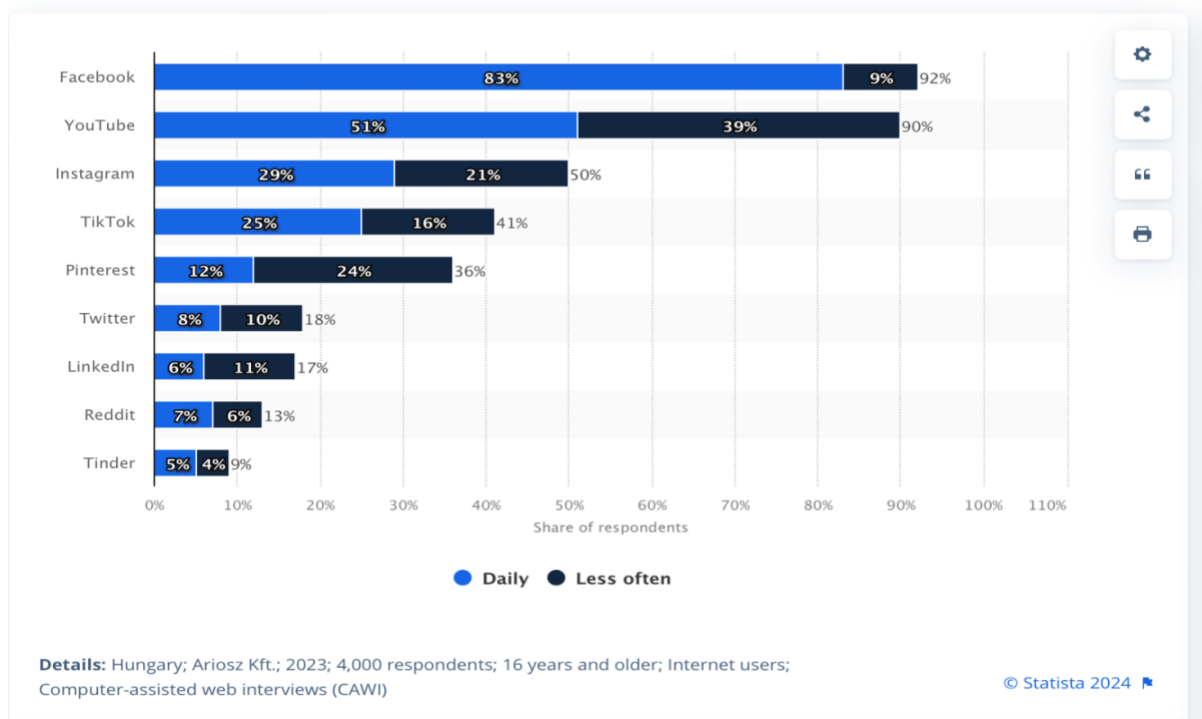


Figure 1: Social Media Usage Frequency in Hungary in 2023
Source: Statista, 2024

2.1.1 Digital Marketing and Social Media Influence

The fast-food sector in Hungary has adopted digital marketing techniques, especially using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to improve consumer interaction. These platforms are used by fast-food restaurants to display visually appealing content, such as pictures and videos of their menu items. This strategy greatly increases brand exposure in addition to inspiring customers to engage and post about their eating experiences online. These postings' interactive and visually appealing elements are extremely successful at influencing consumers' decisions regarding purchases, especially younger audiences who are more likely to interact with dynamic material (Saini, 2022). By transitioning from traditional advertising to more collaborative marketing strategies, social media enables fast-food businesses in Hungary to

build stronger connections with their customers. Through challenges, contests, and loyalty programs, many campaigns now encourage consumer participation, increasing brand visibility and encouraging customer loyalty. Businesses may gain insightful feedback through this active engagement, which helps them improve their products and adapt to customer preferences (Kumar, Singh, & Gupta, 2023).

TikTok and Instagram are effective at promoting exclusive deals and limited time offers as they make their followers motivated to respond quickly. Brands using these platforms claim higher consumer engagement and purchase intent, especially when influencer marketing is used (Alanazi, 2023). Fast-food companies' expanding online visibility through social media.

To enhance customer satisfaction, the Hungarian fast-food industry's digital landscape also uses AI-driven data analysis along with personalized advertising. To create customized advertising that appeals to certain consumers, brands are increasingly employing personalized campaigns that target users according to their online preferences and activity. Furthermore, the industry has embraced advances in technology such as mobile applications and self-order, which streamline the ordering process and improve the consumer experience by offering more convenience and customization. The increasing significance of digital technologies in providing value to contemporary consumers is shown by this move toward technology-driven service models (Sivathanu, Bhat, & Mohan, 2023).

Influencer Marketing

A study by (Ghaleb & Alawad), revealed that social media influencers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, had a significant influence on customer purchase decisions. To drive campaigns or promote new menu items, fast-food restaurants work with influencers to build an emotional bond with their audience.

Social influence and reference group

Emotions play a crucial role in influencing consumer decision making on social media, acting as powerful drivers that shape perceptions and behaviors. According to (Umriliyeva, Ayazbay, Yesbergenova, & Skidanova, 2022), emotional appeals in social media marketing with positive

emotions like happiness or excitement, or even negative ones like fear can significantly persuade purchasing decisions. These emotions create deeper connections between consumers and brands, leading to more impulsive and emotionally driven choices. Social media raise this effect by allowing emotional content to spread quickly through likes, shares, and comments, thus strengthening the consumer's emotional response and strengthening (Umraliyeva, Ayazbay, Yesbergenova, & Skidanova, 2022).

(Brindal, 2020) investigates how social dynamics and environmental factors shape fast food consumption patterns among various demographic groups. Brindal highlights that peer influence, family habits, and cultural norms significantly impact individual choices, particularly among younger consumers who often prioritize social acceptance and convenience when opting for fast food. The research underscores the importance of understanding the social context in which food choices are made, suggesting that marketing strategies should consider these social influences to effectively target and engage consumers (Brindal, 2020). By addressing both individual and social factors, the fast-food industry can better align its offerings with the preferences and motivations of its diverse clientele.

User-Generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors within the fast-food industry, serving as a powerful tool for marketing and brand engagement. According to (Folch, Spielman, & Manduca, 2018), UGC, particularly in the form of reviews, images, and social media posts, significantly influences the decision-making process of potential customers. The study emphasizes the importance of social media sites like Instagram in sharing user experiences, as these platforms can draw attention to and increase foot traffic to fast-food restaurants through visually appealing content. As customers increasingly rely on the real voices of their peers over traditional advertising approaches, positive user-generated content (UGC) can boost company trust and encourage community participation.

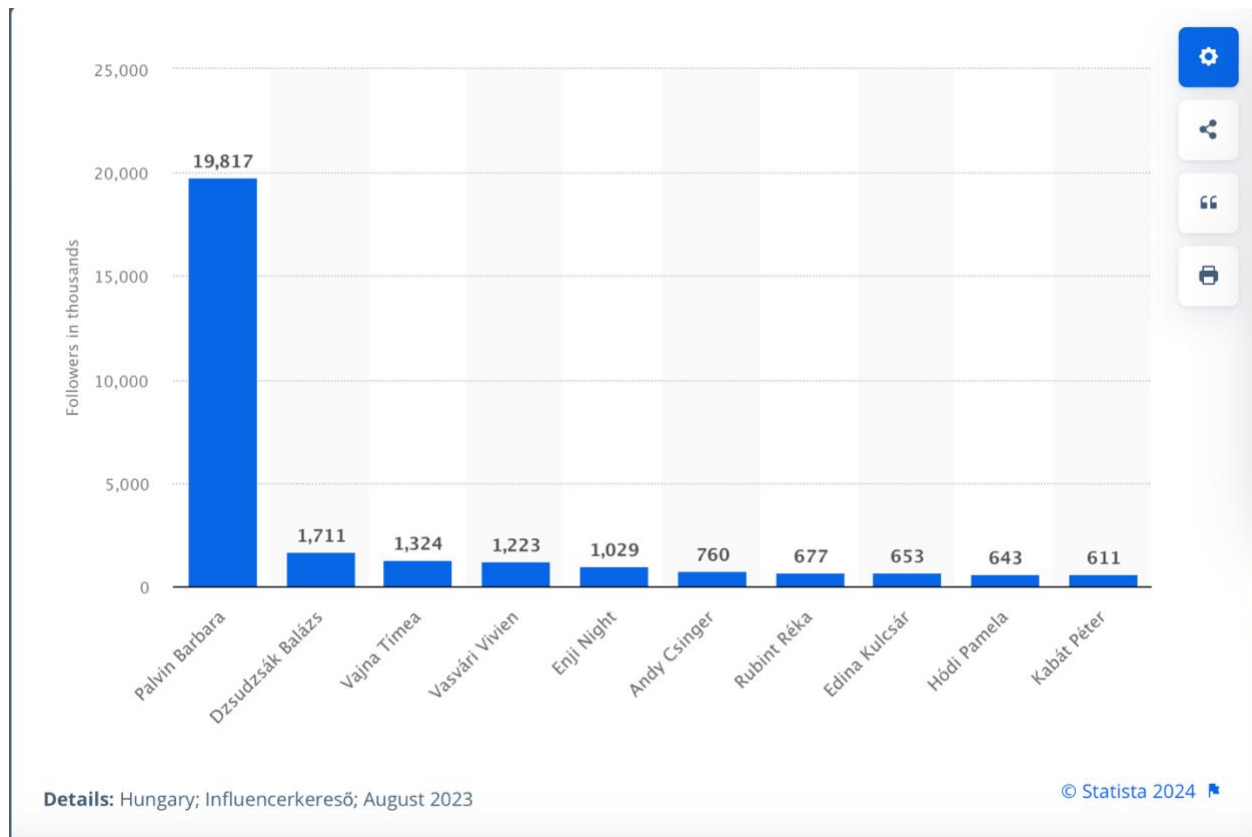


Figure 2: Most popular Hungarians on Instagram as of August 2023, by number of followers
Source: Statista, 2024

According to the number of followers, the graph above shows the most popular Hungarians on Instagram as of August 2023. Palvin Barbara is a powerful character for fast-food advertising due to her enormous social media presence and approximately 20 million Instagram followers. Her 2019 partnership with Burger King serves as an instance of how fast-food restaurants can profit from her extensive reach. Any fast-food promotion she takes part in could possibly instantly reach millions of customers because she has such an extensive and passionate fan base.

Fast-food companies can reach Palvin Barbara's audience by utilizing her influence, especially with younger audiences who are extremely active on social media. Her encouragement can generate a lot of interaction, which makes her an ideal partner for advertising new products, menu items, or brand campaigns. This will ultimately raise market awareness of the brand.

2.2 Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Through influencing perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions, marketing methods in the fast-food industry have a substantial impact on consumer behavior. In this process, advertising is crucial since it uses a variety of media platforms to promote menu items and build brand awareness. Using emotional appeals to establish a personal connection with their customers, fast-food companies frequently use demographically specific targeted advertising . (Hanaysha, 2021) One way to encourage consumers to choose a company over its competitors is to create a sense of familiarity and trust through advertisements that promote family-friendly products or realistic scenarios.

In addition to traditional advertising, digital marketing strategies have become increasingly important in the fast-food sector. Brands utilize social media platforms to engage with consumers directly, showcasing new products and promotions while also encouraging user-generated content that enhances brand visibility. Interactive campaigns encouraging customers to share their experiences can foster a sense of community around the brand, strengthening its position in the minds of consumers (Balázs, Kiss, & Nagy, 2021). This direct interaction enables fast-food brands to collect valuable insights from consumers, allowing them to adapt their offerings to align with changing preferences.

Fast-food consumption is also significantly influenced by convenience, as people look for quick and easily available meal options that fit into their hectic schedules. Fast food caters to the needs of the modern consumer by offering quick and convenient meals that can be eaten on the go. Drive-thru services, delivery partnerships, and mobile ordering applications are examples of strategies that increase convenience and make it more likely for customers to select fast food over alternative restaurant options (Balázs, Kiss, & Nagy, 2021).

2.2.1 Customer service

In the fast-food industry, customer service is an essential component that has a big impact on customer satisfaction. Fast-food franchises in Hungary that emphasize on friendly and effective service had greater customer retention rates, according to research by (Garai-Fodor, Popovics, &

Csiszárík-Kocsir, 2022). They discovered that when customers receive timely service and pleasant interactions with employees, they are more likely to visit again, which enhances the whole eating experience.

Furthermore, a study by (Sun & Moon, 2023) emphasizes how consumer perceptions are impacted by service quality. According to their research, consumers who receive outstanding service are more likely to feel positively of the company and recommend others to it. In the fast-food industry, where consumer experiences may rapidly impact the brand's image, this word-of-mouth advertising is extremely profitable. Therefore, companies can improve their entire market position by concentrating on enhancing their customer service activities.

2.2.2 Convenience

Consumer behavior in the fast-food industry is primarily driven by convenience. The emergence of online ordering and delivery services has changed the way Hungarian customers engage with fast-food firms, according to research by (Papp & Horgos, 2022). Their research shows that although these features significantly raise the convenience factor, customers prefer companies that provide simple online ordering and speedy delivery alternatives.

In addition, (Acheampong & Ogbebor, 2021) point out that the COVID-19 pandemic hastened the adoption of drive-thru and contactless delivery services, which are now necessary to satisfy customer demands for convenience and safety. In an increasingly competitive market, fast-food companies that successfully incorporate these options have a higher chance of drawing in and keeping consumers.

2.2.3 Promotions and Pricing Strategies

In the fast-food industry, promotions and price strategy have a big impact on consumer behaviors because customers are frequently attracted by deals, discounts, and value meals. Effective price promotions can raise consumers' perceptions of value, promoting impulsive purchases and return business claims (Hanaysha, 2021). Fast-food companies commonly use promotional strategies like package pricing or "buy one, get one free" offers, which draw in budget-conscious

customers and boost overall sales volume. This strategy is in line with theories of consumer behavior that contend that promotions instill a sense of urgency in consumers, encouraging them to act fast to take advantage of the deals.

Additionally, social media plays a crucial role in amplifying the impact of promotions by facilitating word-of-mouth marketing. Consumers often share their experiences and discoveries of deals on social platforms, further influencing others' purchasing decisions (Hanaysha, 2021). Fast-food brands that utilize social media to advertise their pricing strategies can improve their visibility and effectiveness, leading to increased customer traffic at their locations. This connection between pricing promotions and social media highlights the significance of strategic marketing in influencing consumer behavior in the fast-food industry.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Secondary research

This research employs a secondary research approach to examine how marketing affects the fast-food industry in Hungary. The methodology consists of an extensive review of existing literature, which encompasses peer-reviewed academic journals, market analysis reports, government publications, google scholar and media articles. Through thematic and comparative analysis methods, the study reveals significant patterns and trends regarding consumer behavior, the effectiveness of marketing strategies, and the overall dynamics within the fast-food sector. The data collection process involves conducting literature searches with keywords associated with fast-food marketing and consumer behavior, alongside an analysis of social media trends that impact purchasing decisions.

The secondary research acknowledges the limitations of the available data, such as potential biases in the sources and challenges in extending findings to different customer groups. Making sure that all sources are properly credited, and that data privacy is maintained when examining user-generated information underlines ethical considerations. In the end, this methodology offers insightful information to direct future marketing initiatives in the fast-food business by establishing a strong foundation for understanding how marketing strategies affect customer preferences and behaviors inside Hungary.

3.2 Primary research

As part of a quantitative research method, I conducted a survey to investigate how marketing affects the fast-food industry in Hungary. The primary objective of this research was to understand more about fast-food consumer behavior and preferences, especially in connection with the marketing tactics.

This primary research aims to illuminate the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behavior in the fast-food industry in Hungary. By understanding how marketing impacts consumer preferences and behaviors, the findings can guide future marketing initiatives with the sector.

To gather data for this study, a survey consisting of 14 questions was designed, divided into four sections. The questionnaire included a mix of response formats, such as short answers, open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and multiple-choice grids, providing respondents with diverse options. The survey aimed to collect data on fast-food consumption patterns, the influence of social media on consumer buying decision, and the use of various social media platforms in advertising.

I utilized the snowball sampling method to reach a varied sample of individuals. Using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, I distributed my questionnaire so that respondents may forward it to their friends or family. With this approach, I was able to obtain responses from a diverse range of people, including those from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and geographical areas in Hungary. Overall, 87 respondents filled in the questionnaire.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics to organize and analyze the collected data. Visual representations, such as graphs and pie charts, were employed to clarify the findings. Additionally, Chi-square tests and cross-tabulation were utilized to explore relationships between different variables, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the data.

4. RESEARCH RESULT AND EVALUATION

Figure 3 shows a significant majority of respondents (91.95%) answered "Yes," indicating that 80 out of the 87 total respondents consume fast food. Only 8.05% (7 respondents) answered "No," suggesting a relatively small portion of the population avoids fast food.

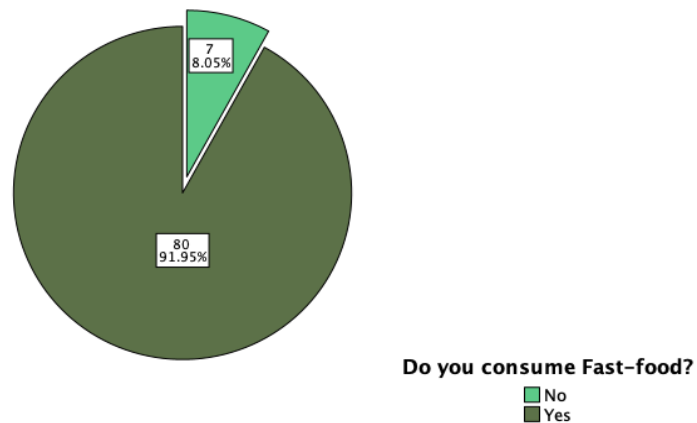


Figure 3: Fast-food consumption among the respondents, % (N=87)

Figure 4 illustrates the primary reasons respondents rarely or never visit fast-food restaurants. The overwhelming majority 91.95%, 80 respondents indicated that they do not face any major issues with fast food, while a small portion of respondents cited specific concerns. Of those who avoid fast food, 5.75%, indicated health concerns as their primary reason, and 2.30% (2 respondents) mentioned that the food is "not fresh."

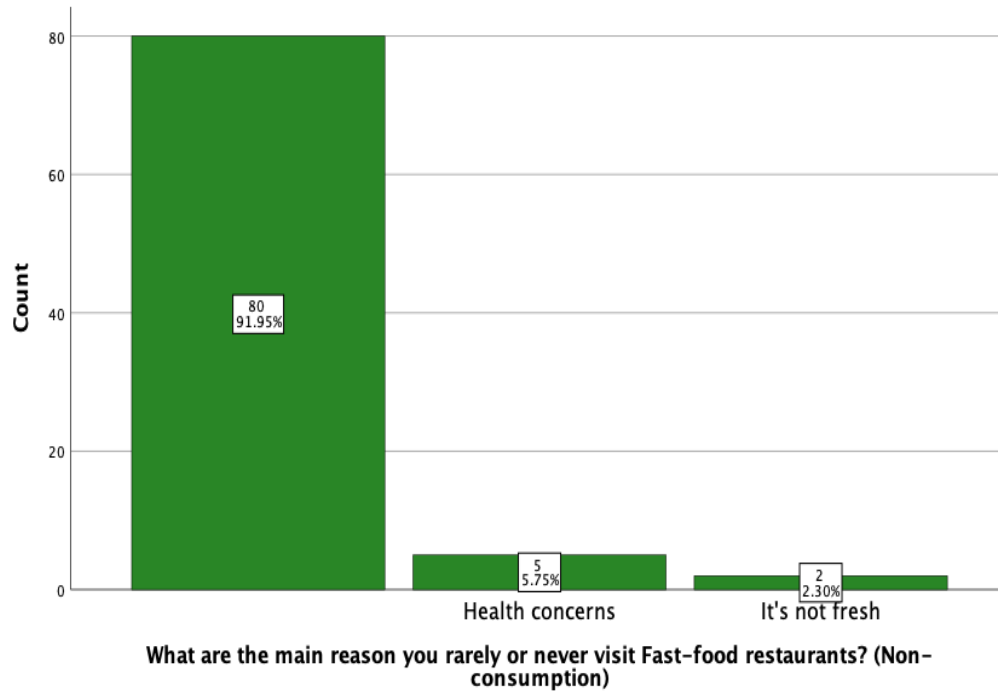


Figure 4: Reasons for rarely or never visiting fast-food restaurants, % (N= 87)

Figure 5 illustrates the frequency of fast-food consumption among respondents. The data shows that most respondents consume fast food either weekly or monthly. Specifically, 41.38% of participants eat fast food weekly, while 40.23% consume it monthly. This indicates that most people have a regular pattern of fast-food consumption, with over 80% consuming it at least once a month. On the lower end of the frequency spectrum, 8.05% of respondents are fast-food non-consumption, while an equal 8.05% do so rarely. A very small proportion, 2.30%, consumes fast food more than once daily. The chart highlights that although a significant portion of consumers eat fast food regularly, very few do so daily.

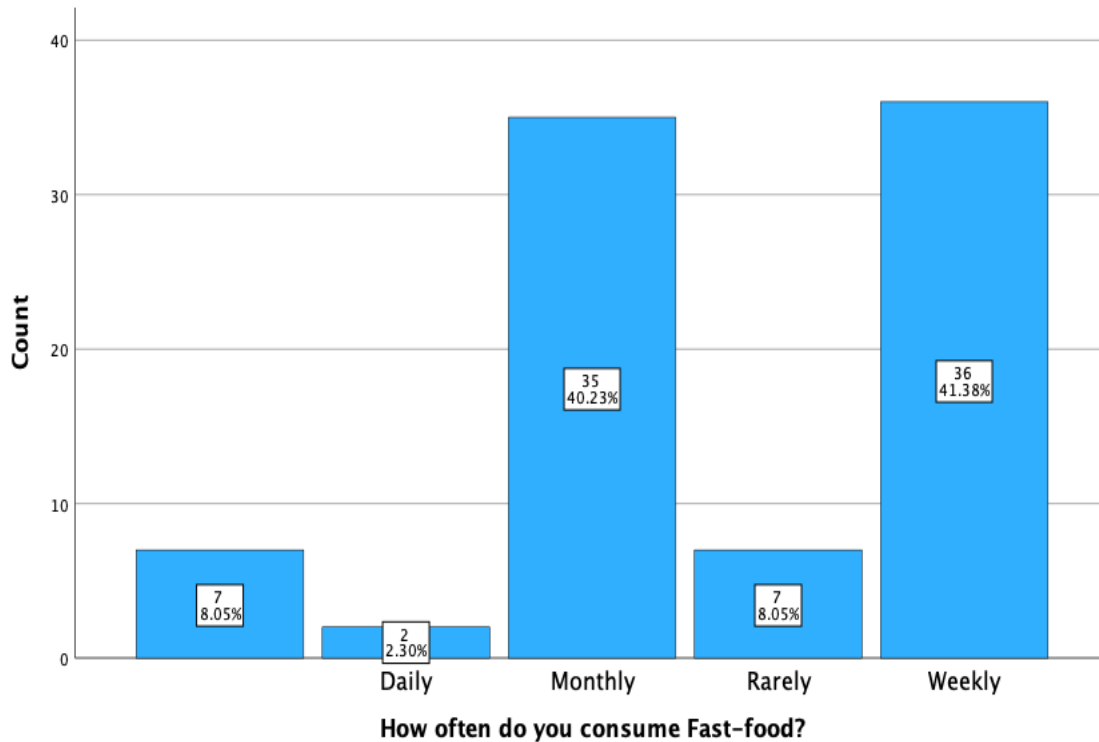


Figure 5: The Frequency of fast-food consumption (N=87)

Table 1 indicates that McDonald's is the most frequently visited fast-food restaurant, with 34.5% of respondents choosing it as their top option, followed by KFC at 28.7%, and Burger King at 12.6%. Together, these three global chains dominate consumer preferences, accounting for over than 75% of frequent visits. This suggests that the brand strength, global reach, and broad menu offerings of McDonald's and KFC play a significant role in attracting customers. In contrast, smaller chains and regional fast-food options like Pizza Hut, Subway, and local varieties (e.g. Turkish or Iranian fast-food) attract far fewer consumers, with each capturing less than 5% of visits. The overwhelming preference for major international brands highlights the critical importance of brand reputation and accessibility in the fast-food industry.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7	8.0	8.0	8.0
Burger King	11	12.6	12.6	20.7
Domino	1	1.1	1.1	21.8
Indian fast-food	1	1.1	1.1	23.0
Iranian fast-food	1	1.1	1.1	24.1
KFC	25	28.7	28.7	52.9
McDonald's	30	34.5	34.5	87.4
Not branches	1	1.1	1.1	88.5
Pizza Hut	4	4.6	4.6	93.1
Subway	2	2.3	2.3	95.4
Supermarket	1	1.1	1.1	96.6
Tacos	2	2.3	2.3	98.9
Turkish fast-food	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	87	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: The Most Visited Fast-Food Restaurants (N=87)

According to Table 2, the descriptive statistics reveal distinct consumer priorities. The data show that brand reputation holds the most significant affect over decision-making, with a mean score of 3.57. Consumers seem to head toward well-known and trusted brands when selecting fast-food options, indicating that brand familiarity and trust are key drivers of choice.

Influence of Fresh Ingredients

According to customers, "Fresh ingredients" have a mean of 3.31, which indicates a modest level of importance. This suggests that while freshness and health are important, brand reputation influences decisions more than these factors. This may point to a growing trend towards healthier choices, but it also suggests that for most people, this may not yet be a substantial factor.

Word of mouth, with a mean of 3.18, also plays a role but appears to be a more moderate influence. While personal recommendations and social influence are important, they are not as impactful as brand reputation or the perception of freshness. This finding suggests that consumers may rely on their own experiences or brand familiarity more than the opinions of others when it comes to fast-food decisions. Though less important, word-of-mouth impact still

shapes consumer choices, so it's still important to maintain positive customer feedback and capitalize on reviews.

Interestingly, calories count has the lowest mean score of 2.70, indicating that nutritional considerations, specifically calorie awareness, are not top priorities for these consumers when selecting fast food. The relatively high standard deviation 1.326 for this factor shows that there is variability in how important this is to different respondents. While some consumers may consider calories when making choices, for many, other factors such as convenience, taste, or brand loyalty are more critical. This could reflect a common perception that fast food is a fulfilment or convenience-focused choice, where nutritional factors are temporarily set aside.

the data reveals that consumers place the greatest emphasis on brand reputation, followed by a moderate focus on fresh ingredients and word of mouth. Calorie considerations rank much lower, showing that health consciousness is not a leading factor for most respondents in this context. For fast-food companies, these insights emphasize the need to invest in building a strong, trustworthy brand and possibly incorporating elements of freshness into their messaging, while understanding that calorie information may not be as influential for most of their customers.

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Please rank the following factors based on how much they influence your choice of Fast-Food options. Use the scale of (1-5)(Calories count)	80	1	5	2.70	1.326

Please rank the following factors based on how much they influence your choice of Fast-Food options. Use the scale of (1-5)(Word of mouth)	80	1	5	3.18	1.016
Please rank the following factors based on how much they influence your choice of Fast-Food options. Use the scale of (1-5)(Fresh ingredients)	80	1	5	3.31	1.259
Please rank the following factors based on how much they influence your choice of Fast-Food options. Use the scale of (1-5)(Brand reputation)	80	1	5	3.57	1.088
Valid N (listwise)	80				

Table 2: Factors Influencing Fast-Food Choice (N=80)

According to Table 3, the proportion of those who Strongly Agree that they visit fast food restaurants due to its quickness is the highest with 37.9%. The largest group Strongly Agree with the statement, indicating that a significant majority respondents believe that they consume fast-food because it is quick in term of service. This suggests that, for a substantial portion of the surveyed individuals, the quick service aspect is a significant factor in choosing fast-food.

Somewhat Agree with 33.3%, with consuming fast-food because it is quick in-service means that a suitable number of respondents think there is a connection between fast-food and quick service. It is not a strong agreement, but a massive portion recognizes that the speedy service of fast-food plays a role in why they choose to consume it.

Why do you consume Fast-food? (They're quick service)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		7	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Neutral	11	12.6	12.6	20.7
	Somewhat Agree	29	33.3	33.3	54.0
	Somewhat Disagree	3	3.4	3.4	57.5
	Strongly Agree	33	37.9	37.9	95.4
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	87	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. The role of quick service in decision-making (N=87)

A smaller portion, 12.6%, are “Neutral”, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. On the negative side, 3.4% "Somewhat Disagree" and 4.6% "Strongly Disagree," suggesting that a small minority do not view speed of service as a significant factor in their decision to consume fast food.

In summary, most of the respondents in this survey strongly agree that they consume fast-food because it is quick in terms of service. This implies that, according to this sample, the quick service attribute is a significant motivator for choosing fast-food among the surveyed individuals.

The bar chart in Figure 6 illustrates respondents' attitudes toward the influence of advertising on their fast-food consumption. (28.74%), selected Neutral, indicating that they neither agree nor disagree that advertising influences their decision to eat fast food. This suggests that a significant portion of the population is indifferent or unsure about the impact of advertisements. The next

groups are those who Somewhat Agree (20.69%) and Somewhat Disagree (19.54%), showing that opinions are quite mixed, with similar numbers of people on both sides of the issue.

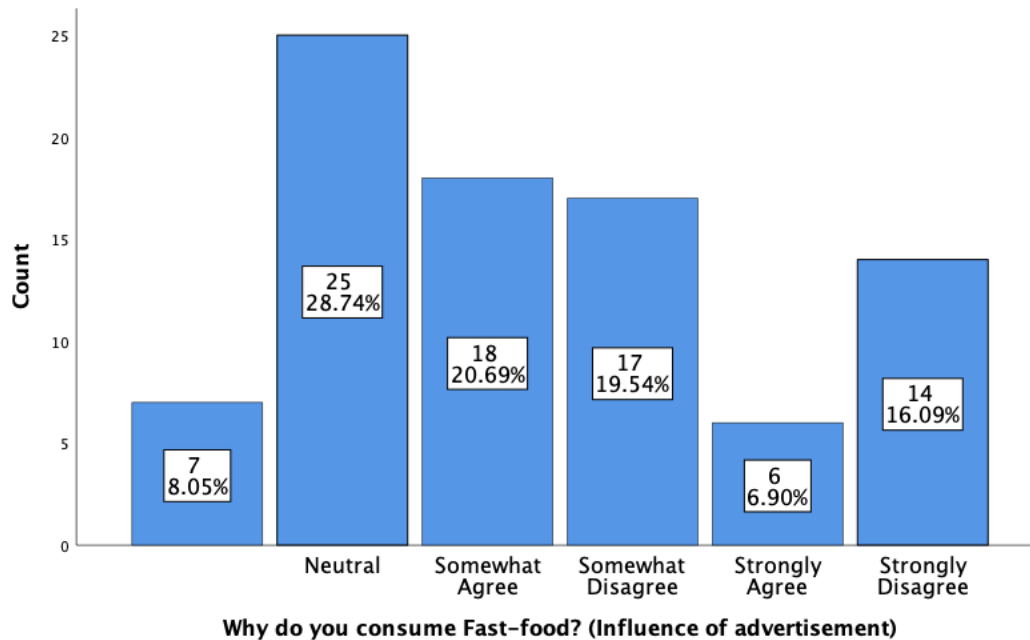


Figure 6: The Influence of Advertisement in decision-making (N=87)

At the opposite ends of the scale, (16.09%) strongly disagreed, while only (6.90%) strongly agreed with the statement. This shows that more respondents are unsure about how advertising affects their fast-food choices than those who believe it does. Overall, Figure 6 reveals a range of opinions, with a slight tendency to disagree when combining the "Somewhat" and "Strongly Disagree" responses. However, most people seem to feel neutral or indifferent.

The bar chart in Figure 7 reveals that convenience is a major factor influencing fast-food consumption for most respondents. 30 respondents (34.48%), selected Somewhat Agree, indicating that while they view convenience as a key reason for eating fast food, they may not see it as the sole driving factor. Similarly, a substantial portion, (28.74%), Strongly Agree that convenience plays a major role in their decision to consume fast food. Together, these two

groups account for over 63% of the respondents, showing that for the majority, fast food's accessibility and ease are compelling reasons for choosing it.

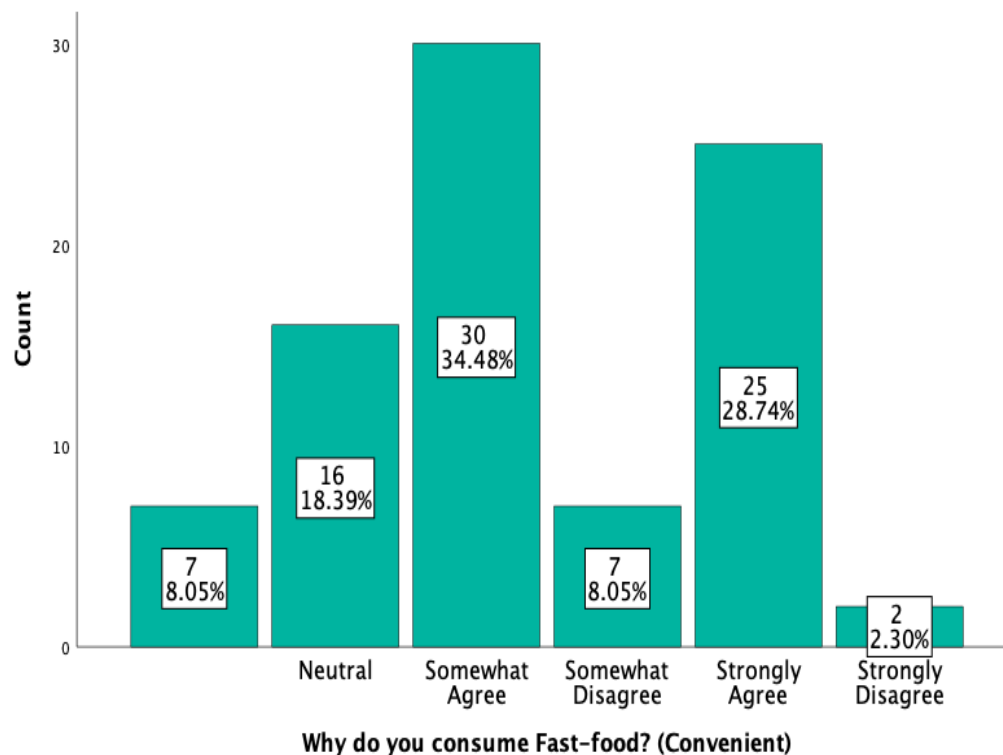


Figure 7: Impact of Convenience on Fast-Food Choice (N=87)

On the other hand, fewer respondents expressed neutrality or disagreement. (18.39%) selected Neutral, suggesting that a smaller portion is unsure or indifferent about whether convenience is a factor in their fast-food habits. Even fewer people disagree with the statement, with only (8.05%) Somewhat Disagreeing and (2.30%) Strongly Disagreeing. This indicates that only a small minority of respondents do not view convenience as an important motivator for eating fast food. Overall, Figure 7 highlights that convenience is a widely accepted reason for fast-food consumption, with relatively few people dismissing its influence.

Based on Figure8, the graph shows the distribution of responses to a survey question asking participants to rank the importance of “Price” when selecting a fast-food restaurant, using a scale from 1-(not important at all) to 5- (very important). The results indicate that most respondents

rated the importance of price around 3 or 4, suggesting that price is considered moderately important in their decision-making process.

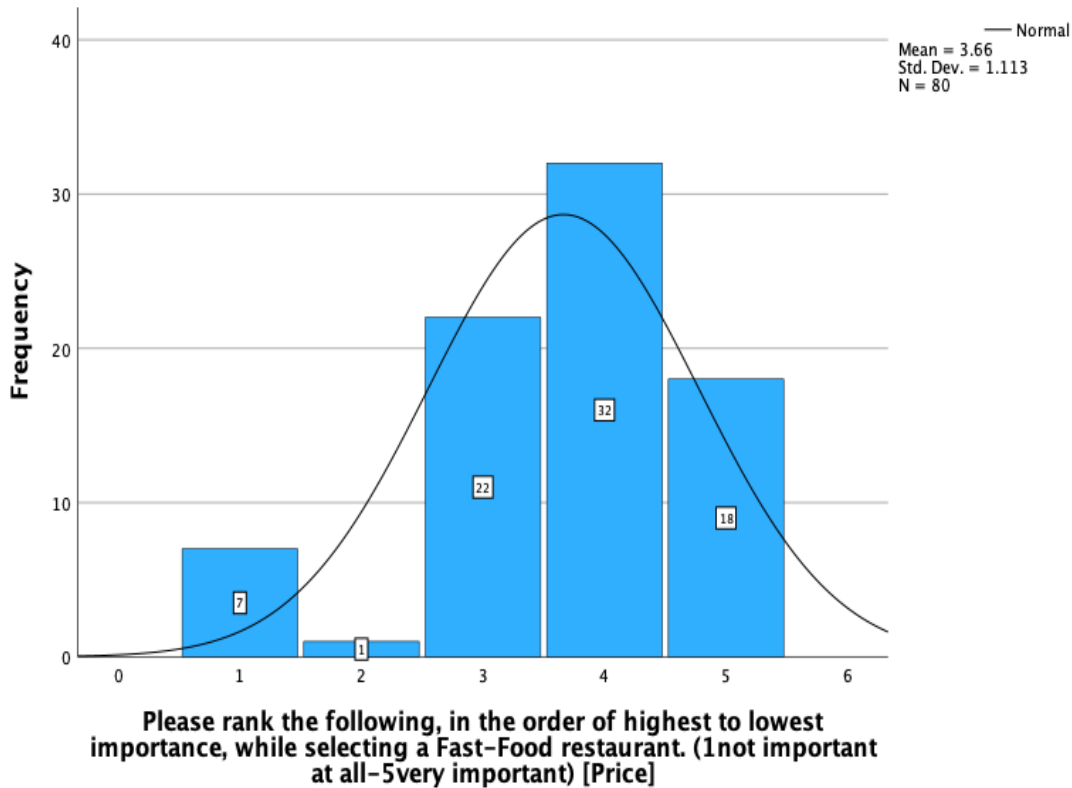


Figure 8: The Influence of Price on Decision Making (N=80)

The mean rating 3.66, indicating that, on average, respondents see price as “Somewhat important”. The standard deviation of 1.113 shows moderate variability in the responses, meaning that while many participants rated price in the middle range, there is some spread, with a few people rating it as either highly important or not important. The total number of respondents N=80, providing a reasonable sample size for the analysis.

Table 4 presents responses to the statement "I consume fast food because it's inexpensive," underline a range of perspectives among the 87 respondents. A significant 29.9% indicated they "Somewhat Agree," while an additional 12.6% "Strongly Agree," suggesting that approximately 42.5% perceive fast food as a cost-effective option that influences their purchasing decisions. The largest group, comprising 26.4%, selected a neutral response, which indicates hesitation

toward the concept that price is a primary motivator for their fast-food consumption. This neutrality suggests that other factors, such as convenience or taste, may also significantly impact their choices.

Why do you consume Fast-food? (They're inexpensive)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7	8.0	8.0	8.0
Neutral	23	26.4	26.4	34.5
Somewhat Agree	26	29.9	29.9	64.4
Somewhat Disagree	14	16.1	16.1	80.5
Strongly Agree	11	12.6	12.6	93.1
Strongly Disagree	6	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total	87	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Reasons for Consuming Fast-food Perceived Inexpensiveness(N=87)

On the other end of the spectrum, 6.9% of respondents "Strongly Disagree," and 16.1% "Somewhat Disagree" with the idea that they consume fast food due to its affordability. This indicates that for some individuals, considerations like health, quality, or personal preferences may outweigh the appeal of low prices. Overall, the data reveals diverse attitudes toward the relationship between fast-food consumption and perceived affordability, emphasizing that while cost is a substantial motivator for many, it is not the only influence on consumer behavior.

The chi-square test results indicate that there is no statistically significant association between Gender and Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption (Table 5). The p-value of 0.181 is greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05 (Table 6). As the p-value exceeds 0.05, we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis, meaning we cannot conclude that gender and fast-food consumption are related in this sample. Similarly, the likelihood ratio test also shows no significant association, with a p-value of 0.231.

How often do you consume Fast-food? * What is your gender? Cross Tabulation

		What is your gender?			Total
		Female	Male	Prefer not to say	
How often do you consume Fast-food?					
	Daily	2	5	0	7
		1	1	0	2

	Monthly	21	13	1	35
	Rarely	5	1	1	7
	Weekly	16	20	0	36
Total		45	40	2	87

Table 5: Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption by Gender (Cross Tabulation) (N=87)

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.376 ^a	8	.181
Likelihood Ratio	10.512	8	.231
N of Valid Cases	87		

a. 11 cells (73.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results for Fast-Food Consumption by Gender (N=80)

P<0.05 Alternative Hypothesis: There is association between the two variables.

p>0.05 Null Hypothesis: There is no association between the two variables.

However, 73.3% of the cells in the crosstabulation have expected counts less than 5, which could affect the reliability of the test. This suggests that the sample size for certain categories, such as daily fast-food consumption, is too small. While the test results show no significant relationship, the large number of cells with low counts may limit the strength of this conclusion. Therefore, a larger sample or regrouping the categories may be necessary for more strong results.

The Chi-square test results indicate a significant association between the two variables (Age and Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption) Table 7. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 53.757 with 16 degrees of freedom and a p-value less than 0.001. Since the p-value is much smaller than the conventional significance level of 0.05 (Table8), we reject the Null Hypothesis, suggesting that the frequency of fast-food consumption is significantly associated with the respondents' age groups. This implies that age plays a role in how frequently individuals consume fast food.

How often do you consume Fast-food? * What is your age? Crosstabulation

Count

		What is your age?					
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	Under 18	Total
How often do you consume Fast-food?		4	3	0	0	0	7
	Daily	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Monthly	18	15	0	1	1	35
	Rarely	5	1	0	1	0	7
	Weekly	26	10	0	0	0	36
Total		54	29	1	2	1	87

Table 7: Frequency of Fast-Food Consumption by Age (Cross Tabulation) (N=87)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	53.757 ^a	16	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	18.580	16	.291
N of Valid Cases	87		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Table 8: Chi-Square Test Results for Fast-Food Consumption by Age (N=87)

P<0.05 Alternative Hypothesis: There is association between the two variables.

p>0.05 Null Hypothesis: There is no association between the two variables.

The results suggest distinct patterns of fast-food consumption across different age categories. However, the (Table 8) shows that 84% of the cells have an expected count of less than 5, which may indicate that some age groups, such as those aged 35-44 or 45-54, have lower representation in certain consumption categories. Despite this, the significant association highlights meaningful

differences in fast-food consumption habits by age, with younger respondents tending to consume fast food more frequently than older respondents.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research delves into the impact of marketing on consumer behavior in the fast-food industry, providing valuable insights into the motivations and preferences of consumers. Several significant findings have been established from the analysis. Firstly, an overwhelming 91.95% of respondents answered they consume fast food, with the majority doing so at least once a month, indicating a high prevalence of fast-food consumption. This emphasizes the fact that fast food is in many people's lives and how important it is to the industry. Further, freshness and health concerns were the top reasons given by the minority who consume fast food infrequently or never. A little percentage of consumers are driven by a desire for healthier options, even though the majority choose fast food, indicating a market opportunity for businesses to address these issues.

Moreover, the data shows that 41.38% of respondents eat fast food weekly, and 40.23% do so monthly, indicating that fast food is important for many, though few consume it daily. This consistent consumption pattern presents a robust customer base for fast-food establishments. The dominance of major chains is also evident, as McDonald's, KFC, and Burger King were identified as the most frequently visited fast-food restaurants, collectively accounting for over 75% of visits. This reflects the significant influence of brand reputation and marketing on consumer preferences. In terms of factors influencing choice, brand reputation was identified as the most critical factor in consumers' decisions, with a mean score of 3.57, followed by fresh ingredients and word of mouth. The lower importance of calorie considerations indicates that health is not a primary motivator for most consumers when selecting fast food.

The analysis further highlights the importance of quick service and price considerations in fast-food consumption. The quick service aspect is a significant factor for consumers, with a strong majority indicating its importance. Additionally, price was rated as moderately important,

suggesting that while it influences decisions, other factors may carry more weight. Lastly, the gender distribution of respondents showed a slight majority of females, but statistical analysis indicated no significant association between gender and fast-food consumption frequency. This suggests that marketing strategies may not need to be heavily gender targeted.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed for fast-food chains to enhance their marketing strategies and improve consumer engagement. First, fast-food restaurants should continue to invest in building and promoting their brand reputation through marketing campaigns that emphasize quality, trust, and customer satisfaction. Additionally, to appeal to health-conscious consumers, fast-food chains should prioritize the promotion of fresh ingredients and healthier menu options. Transparency in sourcing and preparation methods can enhance consumer trust and attract those concerned about food quality.

Moreover, given the importance of quick service, fast-food chains should continually streamline their operations to enhance order accuracy and speed. Leveraging technology for mobile ordering and contactless payment can also improve the customer experience. While price is considered a moderate factor, offering value promotions, discounts, and combo deals can attract budget-conscious consumers. Implementing loyalty programs can further incentivize repeat visits and enhance customer retention.

Engaging with customers is another critical aspect, actively seeking customer feedback and reviews can provide valuable insights into consumer preferences and areas for improvement. Fast-food chains should use this feedback to adapt their offerings and enhance overall satisfaction. Additionally, while there was no significant association between gender and fast-food consumption, understanding demographic preferences can inform targeted marketing strategies. Customized promotions based on age or lifestyle may resonate better with specific consumer segments.

Finally, given the noted concerns regarding health and freshness, fast-food chains should consider expanding their menus to include healthier choices. Marketing these options can attract health-conscious consumers who may otherwise avoid fast food. By implementing these

strategies, fast-food chains can better align their offerings with consumer preferences and expectations, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and driving growth within the competitive fast-food landscape.

6. SUMMARY

This thesis explores the impact of marketing on consumer behavior in Hungary's fast-food industry, emphasizing the role of social media, digital marketing, and pricing strategies. As the fast-food sector becomes increasingly competitive, companies rely on innovative marketing techniques, such as influencer partnerships and social media engagement, to attract and retain customers. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok play a key role in promoting new products and creating brand reputation, particularly among younger consumers.

The study combines secondary research from academic literature with primary research through a survey of 87 respondents to understand how marketing influences consumer preferences. Key findings highlight that convenience, customer service, and promotions significantly drive fast-food consumption, with digital platforms enhancing consumer interaction and decision-making. The research underscores the importance of marketing strategies in shaping consumer behavior and guiding future marketing efforts in Hungary's fast-food industry.

The study reveals that 91.95% of respondents consume fast food, with most eating it at least once a month. Weekly consumption is common (41.38%), and major brands like McDonald's, KFC, and Burger King dominate preferences, making brand reputation a critical factor in fast-food choice. Health and freshness concerns are key reasons for the minority who avoid fast food.

In conclusion, fast food plays an integral role in consumer diets, with brand reputation being the top influence. To attract health-conscious customers, fast-food chains should promote fresh ingredients and healthier menu options. Enhancing quick service, offering value deals, and engaging with customer feedback will further boost consumer satisfaction and retention.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography

- Ghaleb, M., & Alawad, W. (n.d.). Social Media and Purchase Intentions of Gen Z: Role of Social Media Influencers. *nternational Journal of Innovative Cases (ijicases)*, 8(1), 96-120.
- Umrallyeva, D., Ayazbay, O., Yesbergenova, B., & Skidanova, A. (2022). How emotions can influence customers' Decision Making Process via Social Media? *International Journal of Marketing*.
- Brindal, E. (2020). Exploring fast food consumption behaviors and social influence. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 19(4), 358-366.
- Folch, D., Spielman, S., & Manduca, R. (2018). Fast food data: Where user-generated content works and where it does not. *Geographical Analysis*, 50(2), 125-140.
- Hanaysha, J. (2021). Impact of price promotion, corporate social responsibility, and social media marketing on word of mouth. *Business Perspectives and Research*, 9(3), 446-461.
- Balázs, I., Kiss, G., & Nagy, L. (2021). Social media marketing in the fast-food industry: A case study of Hungary. *Journal of Digital Marketing Research*, 14(2), 146-160.
- Gauli, K. (2021). *Digital Economy: Analyzing the influence of social media marketing and platform-based economy on the food industries in Finland*. Chicago.
- Katherine, B. (2022, June 27). *How Fast Food Has Evolved In The Age Of Social Media*. Retrieved from Tasting Table: <https://www.tastingtable.com/908464/how-fast-food-has-evolved-in-the-age-of-social-media/>
- Hanaysha, J. (2022). An examination of social media advertising features, brand engagement, and purchase intention in the fast food industry. *British Food Journal*, 4143-4160.
- Abdallah, A. (2023, May). The Impact of Health Consciousness on Consumer Behavior in Fast Food Restaurants. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 18(5), 55-64.
- Daniel, C. (2024). *Nutritious Fast-Food Trends*. Retrieved from FrozeNet.
- Vitsentzatou, E., Mihiotis, A., & Tsoulfas, G. (2022, November 16). The digital transformation of the marketing mix in the food and beverage service supply chain: A Grey DEMATEL approach. *Sustainability*, 14(22).
- Daradkeh, F., Hassan, T., Palei, T., Helal, M., Mabrouk, S., Saleh, M., & Elshawarbi, N. (2023, March 24). Enhancing digital presence for maximizing customer value in fast-food restaurants. *Sustainability*, 15(7), 5690.
- Saini, R. (2022). Social media marketing: A tool for building brand awareness and customer engagement. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*.
- Kumar, A., Singh, R., & Gupta, P. (2023). The impact of social media on consumer engagement in the fast-food sector. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 13(1), 25-40.
- Sivathanu, M., Bhat, S., & Mohan, R. (2023). AI-driven marketing in the fast-food industry: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Business Research*, 294-310.
- Alanazi, A. (2023). The Impact of Health Consciousness on Consumer Behavior in Fast Food Restaurants. *Scholars Middle East Publishers*, 10(4), 456-470.
- Garai-Fodor, M., Popovics, A., & Csiszárík-Kocsir, Á. (2022, August 24). The perception of Hungarian food by consumer segments according to food purchasing preferences based on primary research results. *PLOS ONE*, 17(8).
- Sun, K.-A., & Moon, J. (2023, December 9). Assessing antecedents of restaurant's brand trust and brand loyalty, and moderating role of food healthiness. *Nutrients*, 15(24), 5057.

- Papp, J., & Horgos, J. (2022). The role of online ordering in shaping consumer behavior in the Hungarian fast-food market. *Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39(1), 58-71.
- Acheampong, Y. T., & Ogbebor, O. P. (2021, June 30). COVID-19 and the food industry in Hungary. *International Journal of Contemporary Business and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 1-13.
- Keller, K., & Lehmann, D. R. (2008). Brands and branding: Research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 740-759.
- Spence, C., & Youssef, J. (2015, November 14). *Olfactory dining: Designing for the dominant sense*. Retrieved from Flavor.
- Baron, S., Warnaby, G., & Hunter-Jones, P. (2014). Service(s) marketing research: Developments and directions. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 16(2), 150-171.
- Sheth, J. N., Sinha, M., & Shah, R. (2016). *Breakout strategies for emerging markets: Business and marketing tactics for achieving growth*.
- Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2020). Consumer perceptions of fast food quality: A comparative analysis. *British Food Journal*, 43-56.
- Anjorin, K., Raji, M., & Olodo, H. (2024). The influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior in the retail industry: A comprehensive review. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*, 5(6), 1547-1580.

APPENDIX

Dear all respondents, my name is Soudalath Hongsouvanh. This questionnaire was created with the aim of The Impact of Marketing on the Fast-food industry which is part of my Bachelor degree of Commerce and Marketing, at Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE).

All your information will be kept confidential and used for educational purposes only.
Please, help my survey with filling in this questionnaire! It takes about 10 minutes altogether.
Thank you very much for your help!
Contact us at (blackpinktoon@gmail.com)

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the word “Fast-food”?
2. Do you consume Fast-food?
 1. Yes
 2. No
3. What are the main reasons you rarely or never visit Fast-food restaurants?
 1. Health concerns
 2. Budget
 3. Lack of appealing options
 4. It's not fresh
4. How often do you consume Fast-food?
 1. Daily
 2. Weekly
 3. Monthly
 4. Rarely
5. Has Fast-food become a basic need for you?
 1. Yes
 2. No
6. Please select the Fast-food restaurant you visit the most frequently
 1. KFC
 2. McDonald's
 3. Burger King

4. Pizza Hut

5. Subway

7. Please rank the following factors based on how much they influence your choice of Fast-food options. Use the scale of (1-not influence at all “to” 5-totally influence)

	1-not influence at all	2	3	4	5-totally influence
Calories count					
Word of mouth					
Fresh ingredients					
Brand reputation					

8. Do you use discount coupons to purchase Fast-food?

1. Always

2. Never

3. Sometimes

9. Why do you consume Fast-food?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
They're quick					
They're inexpensive					
Convenient					
Offers a variety					

Influence of advertisemen t					
Enjoy the taste					
I find it healthy					

10. Please rank the following, in the order of highest to lowest importance, while selecting a Fast-food restaurant. (1-5)

	1. Not important at all	Not important	Neutral	Important	5- Very important
Price					
Calories					
Customer service					
Menu					
Drive in					

11. What is your age?

1. Under 18
2. 18-24
3. 25-34
4. 35-44
5. 45-54
6. 55 and above

12. What is your gender?

7. Male
8. Female
9. Prefer not to say

13. What is your educational background?

1. Elementary school

2. Secondary school
3. University

14. How do you consider your household income?

1. Regularly have difficulty in meeting daily costs
2. Sometimes have difficulty in meeting daily costs
3. Just enough, but cannot send any money aside
4. Live well but can only set a little money aside
5. Live very well and with a high enough income to set money aside
6. DK/NA (Do not know/ No answer)