# FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG VISITORS OF SHOPPING COMPLEXES AT KOTA KINABALU

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# **DECLARATION**

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#### ABSTRAK

# PENGAMBILAN MAKANAN SEGERA DI KALANGAN PENGUNJUNG PUSAT MEMBELI-BELAH DI KOTA KINABALU

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji pengambilan makanan segera di kalangan pengunjung pusat membeli-belah, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pengambilannya, serta hubungan di antara kekerapan pengambilan makanan segera dengan Index Jisim Tubuh (BMI) dan lilitan pinggan (WC). Kajian ini dijalankan di 4 buah pusat membelibelah di Kota Kinabalu dan merangkumi 500 orang responden yang merupakan pengunjung pusat beli-belah. Survei ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan borang soal selidik. Data yang dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) versi 11.0. Responden dikategorikan kepada tiga kumpulan umur, iaitu umur 10-19, 20-39 dan 40-59. Terdapat lebih banyak responden perempuan (52.8%) daripada responden lelaki (47.2%). Kekerapan pengambilan makanan segera dibahagikan kepada lima kategori. Keputusan analisis menunjukkan kebanyakan responden (30.4%) mengatakan bahawa mereka jarang makan di premis makanan segera, hanya 4.0% daripada jumlah responden yang melaporkan bahawa mereka mengambil makanan segera 2-3 kali seminggu. Secara umumnya, kebanyakan responden (52.4%) suka makanan segera, dan tahap penerimaan makanan segera berkurang secara signifikan apabila umur meningkat (p = 0.000). Remaja (umur 10-19) dan dewasa (umur 20-39) menunjukkan kesukaan makanan segera yang lebih tinggi dan pada masa yang sama, mengambil makanan segera lebih kerap berbanding dengan responden yang berumur 40-59. Sebab yang paling utama pengambilan makanan segera yang diberikan ialah memudahkan (79.6%). Premis makanan segera yang paling popular ialah Kentucky Fried Chicken (63.4%). Ini mungkin kerana KFC menawarkan menu yang sesuai dengan citarasa kebanyakan pengguna. Ayam goreng pula merupakan item makanan segera yang paling digemari (61.6%). Walau bagaimanapun, kebanyakan responden (77.2%) tidak berpuas hati dengan harga makanan segera yang ditawarkan sekarang. Rasa makanan segera merupakan kriterion yang paling dipentingkan manakala saiz hidangan adalah kriterion yang tidak begitu dititik-beratkan. Iklan (p = 0.037), promosi (p = 0.016) dan rakan sebaya (p = 0.023) merupakan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kekerapan pengambilan makanan segera. Daripada jumlah responden yang mempunyai anak, majoriti (85.0%) mengakui bahawa anak mereka yang mempengaruhi mereka untuk makan makanan segera. Analisis menunjukkan tidak terdapat hubungan signifikan di antara kekerapan pengambilan makanan segera dengan Index Jisim Tubuh (BMI) dan juga lilitan (WC). Walaupun terdapat beberapa faktor pinggan mempengaruhi pengambilan makanan segera, namun, pengambilan makanan segera di Kota Kinabalu menunjukkan pengambilan makanan segera mungkin masih minina.



#### **ABSTRACT**

## FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG VISITORS OF SHOPPING COMPLEXES AT KOTA KINABALU

This survey was conducted mainly to investigate fast food consumption among visitors of shopping complexes at Kota Kinabalu, factors that influence their fast food intake, and to examine the frequency of fast food consumption in relation to body mass index and waist circumference. The survey involved 500 respondents, and was carried out through questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 11.0. Respondents were categorized into three age groups: aged 10-19. 20-39 and 40-59. There were more female respondents (52.8%) than male respondents (47.2%). Frequency of fast food restaurant visits was categorized into five categories. Analysis revealed that majority of the respondents (30.4%) reported they seldom visited fast food restaurants, only 4.0% of the total respondents frequented fast food places 2-3 times a week. Most respondents (52.4%) like fast food, and level of acceptance towards fast food decreased significantly with age (p = 0.000). Teenagers (aged 10-19) and young adults (aged 20-39) showed greater acceptance towards fast food, and at the same time, consumed fast food more frequently compared to middle-aged adults. Convenience was reported as the main reason of eating at fast food restaurants (79.6%). The most popular fast food outlet was Kentucky Fried Chicken (63.4%). This is probably because KFC offered menus that suit most consumers' taste and is suitable for all races. Fried chicken expectedly topped the list of favourite fast food items (61.6%). Most of the respondents (77.2%) were not satisfied with the price offered by the fast food restaurants. Taste of foods was the most emphasized criterion while portion size of fast food was ranked as the least important criterion. Advertisements (p =0.037), value promotion (p = 0.016) and friends (p = 0.023) were factors identified to have significantly influenced frequency of fast food consumption. Out of the total number of respondents who have kids, majority of them (85.0%) admitted that their kids influenced their fast food consumption. Frequency of fast food consumption and an increase in body mass index and waist circumference were not significantly related. Although some factors do influence fast food intake, the present trend of fast food intake showed that fast food consumption in Kota Kinabalu is still minimal.



# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BK Burger King

BMI Body Mass Index

CHO Carbohydrate

KFC Kentucky Fried Chicken

NRA National Restaurant Association

McD McDonalds

RDA Recommended Daily Allowance

RM Ringgit Malaysia

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Science

UK United Kingdom

US United States

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

WC Waist circumference

WHO World Health Organization



# LIST OF SYMBOLS AND UNITS

% Percentage

g gram

kg kilogram

kcal kilocalories

kJ kilojoules

m meters

< less than

> more than

n number

\$ dollar



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# **CHAPTER 1**

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Introduction

According to Stanton (1996), fast food is food prepared and served quickly at a fast food restaurant or shop. Fast foods are generally cooked items which are available with minimal waiting time. Fast food is usually finger food that can be eaten quickly and without cutlery (Stanton, 1996). Fast food is often highly processed and prepared in an industrial fashion, that is, with standard ingredients and methodical cooking and production methods. The food in fast food restaurants is commonly cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot, or reheated to order. Many fast food restaurants are part of restaurant chains or franchise operation, which distribute standardized foodstuffs to individual restaurants from central location (Bingham, 1977).

Fast food, in the context of this study, refer to foods such as fried chicken, hamburgers, French fries, pizza, and soft drink which are accessible in most franchise fast food restaurants, such as KFC, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Burger King. Due to global travel, communication and media, the globalizing market has led to a common culture worldwide. The fast food restaurant is one typical form of global business (Emerson, 1990).

Fast food has become an increasingly popular form of eating in Malaysia (Neo, 2003). Together with local franchises such as Sugar Bun, US-based chains



such as McDonald's, KFC, Burger King and Pizza Hut have mushroomed across urban and rural Malaysia. The number of fast food restaurants has increased more than double from 1972 to 1995, and by now estimated there were 247,113 nationwide (Wainwright, 2002). Fast food has historically been thought of as a younger generation consumer product. Fast food is especially popular among adolescents, who on average visit a fast food outlet twice per week (Paeratakul *et al.* 2003). In Malaysia, at present, 70 percent of the customers who patronize fast-food outlets are students in their teens (Neo, 2003).

People eat fast food for reasons such as convenience, availability, trends, busy lifestyle, fun, taste and social interaction. Many Malaysian adolescents are becoming increasingly more westernized (Berita Harian, 2000) and people pursue greater convenience when eating. Therefore, the increase in fast food consumption is likely to continue (Paeratakul *et al.* 2003). There are other factors that influence the fast food intake such as social influence and fast food advertising (Rashad, Chou & Grosman, 2004), which greatly impact the development of fast food industry.

Trends in fast food restaurant visit show that the quality of diet, especially of children and adolescent has deteriorated over the past several years (St-Onge, Keller & Heymsfield, 2003). It is an evident from the study by Paeratakul and colleagues (2003), that fast food consumption may lead to excess energy intake and, in turn, increase the risk of overweight and obesity (Pereira, Kartashov & Ebbeling, 2003). The increases in energy intake have been shown to be associated with five main food habits, namely increased food consumption away from home, increased energy from salty snacks, increased in soft drink, increased in pizza and increased portion (Nielsen, Siega-Riz & Popkin, 2002). All the five main food habits are of relevant to trends in fast food consumption. An earlier study showed that children who eat fast food more than twice a week are 86 percent more likely to end up obese than those



who rarely or never consume fast food (Bowman et al. 2004). However, the national prevalence of overweight and obese individuals in Malaysia is not as high as the European countries and United States (Flegal et al. 1998).

Consequently, many people have raised concerns about the nutritional quality of fast food, not only for children and adolescents but also for adults (French *et al.* 2001a). Previous studies have shown that despite its high fat content, fast food provides an adequate intake of protein and carbohydrate (Paeratakul *et al.* 2003). However, few studies were done to examine the actual fast food intake and its effects on any nutrition or health-related outcome (Bowman *et al.* 2004; French, Harnack & Jeffery, 2000), and most of these are cross-sectional design. Several factors inherent to fast food as it now exist could promote a positive energy balance (Ludwig, Ebbeling & Pawlak, 2002; Flegal *et al.* 2002), and thereby increase risk of weight gain and obesity, including excessive portion size, with single large meals often approaching or exceeding individual daily energy requirement. This study may be contribute due to the concern of the increase availability of fast food, and that fast food consumption might be one potentially important dietary factor affecting health and obesity epidemic (Flegal *et al.* 2002; Jebb & Prentice, 2003).

# 1.2. Objectives

- To investigate the fast food consumption among visitors of shopping complexes in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.
- To examine the factors that influence fast food consumption of the respondents.
- To examine the frequency of fast food consumption in relation to Body
   Mass Index and waist circumference of respondents.



# **CHAPTER 2**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.1. Fast Food

#### 2.1.1. Definition of fast food

Fast food is food prepared and served quickly at fast food restaurant (Scanlon, 1993). Fast food is a multi-billion dollar industry, which is continuing to grow at rapid pace in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century in many countries as less people cook at home. Fast food is often highly processed and prepared in an industrial fashion, for instance, with standard ingredients and methodical cooking and production methods (Rande, 1996). Fast food outlets often provide take-away or take-out food in addition to a sit-down service. Drive-through allows food to be ordered and delivered without leaving the car to further speed service. Fast food is usually finger food that can be eaten quickly and without cutlery (Stanton, 1996).

Fast food menu often consists of hamburgers, French fries, chicken, nuggets, pizza, ice cream and soft drink although many fast food restaurants offer some other less easily consumed choices like mashed potatoes or salads. Chinese cuisine, although often served as take-away, is not always considered as fast food. McDonalds is a noted company which supplies fast food. It is a phenomenally successful enterprise, in terms of financial dominance and world-wide expansion.



Many people equate fast foods with convenience foods. This is incorrect since convenience products are often eaten at home. They require active participation because they must be heated, stirred, baked, thawed, and are supplemented with other foods (The Swiss Association of Nutrition, 2003). The characteristics of fast food, therefore, are that they require little time, offer a limited selection (Dittmer & Griffin, 1997), are finger food, and the silverware and plates are disposable. These characteristics readily illustrate the difference from traditional dining culture.

Fast foods are quick, reasonably priced, and readily available alternative to home cooking. While convenient and economical for a busy lifestyle, fast foods are typically high in calories, cholesterol, fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar (The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, 2002). The fast food chains and restaurants have responded to the increasing awareness of the public about nutrition and have attempted to help people who concerned about their health. For example, they now make ingredient and nutrition information available on their menus. Despite these changes, however, in order to have a balanced and healthy diet, it is necessary to choose fast foods wisely and carefully.

#### 2.1.2. Fast food restaurant

Fast food restaurant is a restaurant characterized by food that is supply quickly after ordering and using minimal service. The food in these restaurants is commonly cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot, or reheated to order. Many fast-food restaurants are part of restaurant chains or franchise operations, which ship standardized foodstuffs to the individual restaurants from central locations. There are also simpler fast-food outlets, such as stands or kiosks, which might or might not provide shelter or chairs for customers.



Generally, a fast food restaurant has a simple and limited menu. Each food in the menu will be processed to increase its convenience, uniformity of production and service (Powers, 1995). Fast food restaurant exist since the late 1940's. Some franchise fast food restaurants that are popular all over the world are such as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hut. For example, the first McDonald's was opened in 1948 in San Bernardino, California. McDonald's has the most restaurants with 12,380 locations and has over 364,000 employees (Burskey et al. 2002). Its "golden arches" logo and mascot Ronald McDonald are famous trademarks that are recognized worldwide.

# 2.2. Fast Food Industry

# 2.2.1. Development of fast food industry

In rapidly urbanizing Asia, where the fast food market is estimated to be worth at least US \$ 200 billion, there exists much potential for growth for both trans-national giants such as McDonald's and KFC, as well as for home-grown chains (Neo, 2003). Industry experts agree that the combination of convenience and affordability will continue to drive the growth of the fast food industry worldwide. Malaysia, like other Asian neighbours, is witnessing a trend towards fast foods, also including semi-prepared foods and take-away meals. Some 36 percent of its 23 million population are aged 15 years and below (Neo, 2003), and this points to a potentially large consumer base for the fast food business.

Fast food establishments date back to 1905, when the Sears and Roebuck mail-order firm in Chicago opened a restaurant for their employees that could feed 8400 people in 1 hour and 20 minutes (Chaudhry, 1993). Franchising (the selling of individual food service units by a food service chain to investors who own and



operate their units under the name of the chain) originated with the A&W Corporation which started a small root beer stand in 1919. The fast food industry has enjoyed a phenomenal growth. In 1955, McDonald's one and only fast food restaurant was located in Des Plaines, Illinois (Uebelherr, 2004). In 1992, McDonald's has over 12,000 restaurants in more than 59 countries, worldwide. The U.S National Restaurant Association estimates that 45.8 million people eat at fast food restaurants each day (Ensminger et al. 1995).

The astounding success of the fast food industry is not an accident. It is primarily attributable to the dual achievements of uniformity and mass production (DeMaria, 2003). Providing an identical product at multiple locations has created familiarity and induced confidence regarding quality among customers. The industry now enjoys the success begotten by a product that suit most consumers' tastes and has the attributes of being quick, convenient, inexpensive, and hand-held. The formula for success employed by the fast food industry has now been adopted as the standard model for business in virtually every segment of society (DeMaria, 2003).

# 2.2.2. Fast food industry in the world

Based on the data by Consumer Reports on Eating Share Trends (CREST) on 1990, sales of fast food in the world is roughly \$109.5 billion and increase by 2% every year (Clauson, 1998). The like towards fast food is not only limited to the western countries, but also the Middle East countries. For instance, in Egypt, there are more than ten types of fast food chains opened since 1993. In Singapore alone, more than 200 fast food restaurants can be found. The first fast food premise was opened in the late 1970s (Neo, 2003). The increase demand of fast food might be due to the rapid economy change of that country. A study done by Kassim Chan Management Sdn. Bhd., showed that demand in the frozen raw materials increases tremendously in

conjunction with the increase demand in fast food. The world demand toward fast food and convenient food are estimated to cost US \$400 billion (Salam, 2000).

The key to fast food industry worldwide success is that people everywhere know what to expect when they pass through these restaurants. This does not mean, however, that the fast food corporations have resisted change or refused to adapt when local customs require flexibility. For example, McDonald's restaurants in India serve Vegetable Mac Nuggets and a mutton-based Maharaja Mac, innovations that are necessary in a country where Hindus do not eat beef, Muslims do not eat pork and others. Another instance, in Malaysia and Singapore, McDonald's underwent rigorous inspections by Muslim clerics to ensure ritual cleanliness; the chain was rewarded with halal certificate, indicating the total absence of pork products.

The growth of fast food industry has been nothing less than astonishing. According to DeMaria (2003), fast food has become "so routine, so thoroughly mundane, that it is now taken for granted like brushing teeth". In the United States, more dollars are now spent on fast food than on higher education, newspapers, magazines, books, movies, videos and recorded music combined: \$ 110 billion in 2001 (Schlosser, 1998). It is not surprising, therefore, that this enormous growth has had a proportionate impact on economic, social, and cultural aspect of American life (Schlosser, 1998). Scenario in Malaysia will soon become like what happen in the US. The fast food sector in Asia is estimated to be worth a massive US\$ 200 billion (Neo, 2003).

#### 2.2.3. Fast food industry in Malaysia

Industry experts say the fast food market in Malaysia is poised for a growth of between 20 to 30 percent per annum in the coming years (National Restaurant



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