

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Fast-Food Intake of Private and Public Primary School Pupils in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake of the pupils in Ondo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised private and public primary school pupils in Ondo State. The sample size comprised 400 respondents. Twenty schools (Ten private and ten public) were selected, and twenty pupils were selected from each school using accidental random sampling technique. A validated self-developed questionnaire titled Socio-economic Factors Influencing Fast-food Intake (SFIFI) was used for the study. The reliability coefficient of $r = 0.78$ was obtained for the instrument using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Data collected were analysed using percentages and Chi-square statistics. The result showed that many of the respondents frequently had fast-food. The socio-economic factors such as: parents' level of education, family income, family size and parents' occupation were found to be influencing fast-food intake of pupils in the state. The result further showed that many of the respondents indicated that they usually initiate buying fast-food and dictate which fast-food to buy. The result also showed that there was a significant difference in fast-food intake of private and public primary school pupils in the state ($\chi^2 = 103.34$; $p < 0.05$). It was recommended that the parents and children should be given nutrition education that parents should checkmate the choices of food of their children instead of the pupils dictating to the parents.

Keywords: Socio-economic Factors, Fast Food, Private Primary School, Public Primary School, Restaurant

Introduction

The place of adequate nutrition in the maintenance of the well-being of an individual cannot be overemphasised. Food is the first basic need of an individual identified by Abraham Maslow. It is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for the body. It is usually of plant and animal source and it contains six essential nutrients which are: carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals, fats and oil and water. One can improve his or her health and reduce getting certain diseases by: eating varieties of food; taking physical activities; choosing low fat foods; choosing diets with plenty of grains, vegetables and fruits; choosing moderate sugar, salt and sodium and avoid drinking alcoholic beverages. Diets that are high in saturated fat and cholesterol increase the risk of heart disease. A balanced diet containing antioxidants may lower the risk of heart disease.

Fast foods consumption has greatly increased in Nigeria especially among the children. They are sold in walk-in restaurants. Some fast foods are healthful foods while some are junks. Junk foods are high in sugar, fats or salt. According to Driskell, Kim, and Goebel (2005), children tend to eat fewer fruits and vegetables on daily basis and report high intake of high fat, high calories in form of fast foods. Racette (2005) said that most children naturally like fatty and sweet foods such as yogurt, iced cream, cake and carbonated drinks but the female children consume more than their male counterparts. However, most children are captivated by fast-food through advertisement on television, radio and banners which majorly influences them to keep buying these foods. Parents are the major influence on children's access to food and the types of foods they buy for their children or allow their children to buy.

According to Lindsay (2006), parents are the central influence on children's consumption and an important target in efforts to improve the healthfulness of children's diets. Fitzgerald, Heary, Nixon, and Kelly (2010) opined that the parental control on the adolescents had begun to diminish and so they exercise autonomy on their choices of food but the children do not have such autonomy which indicates that the parents make choices for the children. Martens, Van and Brug (2005) said that parents' attitudes and social factors are the most important predictors of children's food preferences and dietary complexity. The authors explained further that employment status of the parents and their nutrition knowledge can influence the children's choice of food. Thornton, Bentley and Kavanagh (2011) found out that the household education and income independently had significant impact on the children's consumption. Also, Hillary and Robert (2004) found out that proximity to playground and fast food restaurants did not have effect on low-income children. Dammann and Smith (2009) opined that many people would like to regularly consume healthful foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables but such foods were perceived as unaffordable.

Children who develop particular habits and preferences in childhood may establish them as a lifelong pattern. Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz (2002), opined that intergenerational influences demonstrates how information, beliefs, and resources are transmitted from one generation to the next and implies a particular mechanism by which parents' attitudes and beliefs related to fast food affect children's fast-food consumption.

Considering these facts, it should be a major concern to every member of the society to check the intake of

his or her family members especially the children who are the future of the nation. In order to effect this, it is necessary to find out the factors responsible for fast-food intake especially in children.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to examine the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake of public and private primary schools in Ondo state; investigate the frequency of their intake and compare the intake of public and private primary schools in the state.

Research Questions

- i. What are the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake of pupils in Ondo state?
- ii. How often do pupils take fast-food in public and private primary school in Ondo state?

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic factors influencing the fast-food intake of pupils in private and public primary schools in Ondo state.
- ii. There is no significant difference between the fast-food intake of the pupils in private and public primary schools in the Ondo state.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised the private and public primary school pupils in Ondo state. A total of 400 pupils were drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. Twenty primary schools (ten private and ten public) were selected using stratified random sampling technique. From each school, 20 pupils were selected using simple random sampling technique. A self-developed questionnaire titled Socio-economic Factors Influencing Fast-food Intake (SFIFI) was used to examine the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake of the pupils in the State. 396 questionnaires were found usable out of 400 that were administered. The questionnaire contained seven items and the alternate response format was used. The reliability of the instrument was obtained and $r = 0.78$ using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The questionnaire was administered on the respondents in schools with the help of two teachers in each school who acted as research assistants. The copies of the questionnaire were administered and collected on the spot. Data collected were analysed using percentages and chi-square statistics. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1

Research Question 1: What are the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake of pupils in Ondo state?

Socio-economic factors	Public n = 197		Private n = 199		Total n = 396	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Parents' occupation						
Civil service	39	19.8	110	55.3	149	37.6
Artisan	49	24.9	24	12.1	73	18.4
Trading	69	35	36	18.1	105	26.5
Farming	40	20.3	20	10.1	60	15.2
(Others) politics	0	0	10	4.4	10	2.5
Family Income						
≥ 20,000 naira	63	32	4	2	67	16.9
21,000 – 60,000 naira	75	38	56	28.1	131	33.1
> 60,000 naira	59	30	139	69.9	198	50
Family size						
≥ 3 children	43	22	104	52.3	147	37.1
4 – 6 children	75	38	60	30.2	135	34.1
> 6 children	79	40	35	17.5	114	28.8
Parents' level of education						
No formal education	20	10.2	2	1	22	5.6
Primary education	75	38	5	2.5	80	20.2
Secondary education	59	30	56	28.1	115	29
Tertiary education	43	21.8	136	68.3	179	45.2

Out of 396 respondents, as many as 149 (37.6%) were from civil servant parents, 73 (18.4%) were from

artisan parents, 105 (26.5%) were from traders, 60 (15.2%) were from famers while 10 (2.5%) were from politicians. Also out of 396 respondents, as many as 198 (50%) came from parents who earn above 60,000 naira monthly while 131 (33.1%) were from parents who income is between 21,000 and 60,000 naira. On family size, 147 (37.1%) were from small families while 135 (34%) were from medium families. On parents' level of education, as many as 179 (45.2%) were from parents with tertiary education, 115 (29%) were from parents with secondary education, 80 (20.2%) were from parents with primary education while only 22 (5.6%) were from parents with no formal education.

Table 2

Research Question 2: How often do Pupils take Fast-Food in Public and Private Primary School in Ondo State?

Type of school	How often do pupils take fast-food?							
	Frequently		Sometimes		Never		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Public	33	16.75	63	31.98	101	51.27	197	100
Private	123	61.81	54	27.13	22	11.06	199	100
Total	156	39.4	117	29.5	123	31.1	396	100

Out of 396 respondents, as many as 156 (39.4 %) and 117 (29.5%) frequently and sometimes had fast-food while 123 (31.1 %) never had fast-food. When comparing the intake of public and private pupils, 33 (16.75%) respondents frequently had fast-food in the public school while 123 (61.81%) respondents in private school frequently had fast-food. As many as 101 (51.27%) respondents from the public school never had fast-food while only 22 (11.06%) respondents from private school never had fast-food.

Two hypotheses were tested in this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the socio-economic factors influencing the fast-food intake of pupils in private and public primary schools in Ondo state.

Table 3

Chi-Square Analysis on the Responses of the Respondents on the Socio-economic Factors Influencing Fast-Food Intake of pupils

Variable	n	df	Calc. χ^2	Crit. χ^2	P value	Decision
Parents' occupation	396	4	68.88	9.49	0.05	Sig.
Family income		2	87.03	5.99		
Family size		2	43.95	5.99		
Parents' level of education		3	124.38	7.82		

Table 3 showed that when the responses of the respondents on the socio-economic factors influencing fast-food intake were subjected to χ^2 test, the results indicated that the calculated χ^2 value of the variables; parents' occupation (68.88), family income (87.03), family size (43.95) and parents' level of education (124.38) were greater than the table value of 9.49, 5.99 and 7.82 respectively, df: 4, 2 and 3 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis 1 which states that there is no significant relationship between the socio-economic factors influencing the fast-food intake of pupils in private and public primary schools in Ondo state, was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the fast-food intake of the pupils in private and public primary schools in the Ondo state.

Table 4

Chi-square Summary of the Difference between the Fast-food Intake of Public and Private Primary School Pupils

Variables	N	df	Calc. χ^2	Crit. χ^2	P value	Decision
Public	33	2	103.34	5.99	0.05	Sig.
	63					
Private	101					
	123					
	54					
	22					

Table 4 showed that, when the fast-food intake of pupils in the public and private primary schools in Ondo state were subjected to χ^2 test, the result showed that the calculated χ^2 value of 103.34 is greater than the χ^2 critical value of 5.99, df: 2 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis 2 which states that there is no significant difference between the fast-food intake of the pupils in private and public primary schools in the Ondo state was rejected.

Discussion

The results of the findings showed that out of 396 respondents, as many as 156 (39.4%) and 117 (29.5%) of the

respondents frequently and sometimes had fast food respectively while 123 (31.1%) never had fast food. This finding is in support of the opinions of Driskell, Kim, and Goebel (2005) and Racette (2005) that children report high intake of high fat, high calories in form of fast foods and sweet foods such as yogurt, iced cream, cake and carbonated drinks. The result of the study also revealed that parents' occupation, family income, family size and parents' level of education are factors in determining the fast food intake of pupils as 149 (37.6%) were from civil servants which was closely followed by 105 (26.5%) who were respondents from traders. This finding may be as a result of lack of enough time of mothers in these classes to prepare food at home as compared with their counterparts who are artisans and farmers. The findings of Martens, Van and Brug (2005) supported that employment status of the parents and their nutrition knowledge can influence the children's choice of food. Also the findings of Thornton, Bentley and Kavanagh (2011) supported that the household education and income independently had significant impact on the children's consumption.

The result also indicated that 101 (51.3%) respondents from public primary school indicated that they have never taken fast food before which was quite expected. The finding of Dammann and Smith (2009) supported that many people would like to regularly consume healthful foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables but such foods were perceived as unaffordable.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that socio-economic factors such as parents' occupation, family income family size and occupation were key factors influencing fast food intake of pupils.

Recommendations

Considering the results of and conclusions from this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (a) Parents and children should be given nutrition education that will help parents checkmate the choices of food of their children.
- (b) Parents should strive towards providing home-made food for their children and discourage snacking.
- (c) Fast food restaurants should change to giving low fat foods; diets with plenty of grains, vegetables and fruits; giving moderate sugar, salt and sodium

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