Investigation of Determinants of Consumers' Satisfaction among Fast Food Markets in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates consumers´ satisfaction index and its determinants in fast food markets in Asaba, Delta State. The investigation of consumers satisfaction is the first step in evaluating the performance of fast food markets. Specifically, the study determined Consumers Satisfaction Index (CSI) and factors that significantly influence it in fast food markets. Cross sectional data obtained with structured questionnaire from randomly selected 130 consumers were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression. The result indicated a Consumers Satisfaction Index of 60%. Test of hypothesis indicated that there is significant relationship between product price and the quality of satisfaction/utility derived by consumers of fast food.. Further result indicated that price and attitudes of marketers towards customers were the significant determinants **(p<0.05)** of consumers´ satisfaction of fast food in the study area. The study concluded that consumers´ satisfaction level is the bedrock of customer´s loyalty, continuous patronage and better marketing performance. It was recommended that fast food marketers should operate with moderate prices and better attitude towards customers at the counter in their strategic marketing plan.

Key words: satisfaction index, customer, fast food, markets

Introduction

Fast food was defined by Hanson, (2002), as food that provide quicker meal solutions for consumers shortened lunch hours. This has led the rapid development of fast food industries. Consumers satisfy their hunger, enjoy convenience, pleasure, entertainment, save time, interact socially and transform their moods, when they eat out of home (Park, 2004). They also derive benefits from excitement, pleasure and a sense of personal well-being (Finkelstein, 1989; Park, 2004).

In Nigeria, fast food forms an important and increasingly part of household food consumption expenditures, which may be possibly due to ever dynamic life style. The fast food industry has therefore become one of the popular industries in the Nigeria. The global popularity of fast food marketing industry could be adduced to the ever changing tastes of consumers in modern society. International and local fast food chains are trying to satisfy the demand of customers in variety of range of product and services. In Nigeria today, the list of fast food marketing firms in the industry is being extended as high sales volume encourage new entrants to spring up incessantly (Olutayo and Akande, 2009). Most of the major fast food agribusinesses in Nigeria have their outlets in Delta state for such as 'Mr Biggs' and 'Sizzlers'. There is high level of competition for the market share in the fast food industry in Delta State Nigeria. The competition is becoming keener even as the fast food industry is witnessing a boom (Nweke, 2001). As a means of coping with this competition, product and service innovation, advertisement and sale promotion, have become major tools. Once a fast food agribusiness opens aggressive advertisement, customers are attracted to their markets with high expectation. In spite of the upsurge in the setting up of fast

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food agribusiness, retaining customers becomes a challenging issue, as it relates to factors such as price, quality and safety which influence consumer´s behavior.

Many agribusiness organizations have come to acknowledge the critical importance of being customers- oriented and customer – driven in all their operations. Kotler (1997), asserted that it is not enough to be product or technology driven without bringing the power of customers into the centre of business. The fast food industry is a product –offering as well as service rendering industry. This, thus, poses a fundamental challenge for the management of fast food marketing outlets. The failure of any fast food marketing firm to meet the required level of expected satisfaction may be counterproductive.

Cuma, Gulgun, Tiryaki, and Aykut (2007), investigated the relationship between consumers' fast food consumption frequency and their socio-economic characteristics and attitudes; and observed that consumer attitude towards the price of fast food, health concerns and child preference, significantly influence the frequency of fast food consumption Their study did not address important policy issues such as customer satisfaction index and its determinants. The need therefore arises for an empirical investigation into the consumer satisfaction index and determinants of consumers´ satisfaction with fast food in Delta state. The essence is to contribute towards filling the existing gaps in research in consumers' satisfaction.

Satisfaction is as a judgment following a consumption experience - it is the consumer's judgment that a product provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (adapted from Oliver 1997).

Most research confirms that the confirmation or disconfirmation of pre-consumption expectations is the essential determinant of satisfaction. This means that customers have a certain predicted product performance in mind prior to consumption.

During consumption, customers experience the product performance and compare it to their expected product performance level. Satisfaction judgments are then formed based on this comparison. The resulting judgment is labeled positive disconfirmation if the performance is better than expected, negative disconfirmation if it is worse than expected, and simple confirmation if it is as expected. In short, customers evaluate product performance by comparing what they expected with what they believe they received.

In economic theory, satisfaction is a measure of utility which is intended to be derived to the maximum from economic activities involving choice and commitment of resources. Utility is what is inherent or latent in a product that is traded and purchased. Consumers' satisfaction has direct effect on customers' loyalty and continuous patronage. This has implications for the growth and sustainability of fast food marketing agribusiness.

There were ambiguities in the measures of customers' satisfaction and opinions concerning fast food markets in the study area. Literatures have it that satisfaction could be based on indicators or components such as: consumers' food quality/taste satisfaction, service satisfaction, price satisfaction, hygiene satisfaction, promotion, customer care, communication and food safety/ health satisfaction and related issues(Source?). Existing information is not clear as to which of the satisfaction indicators exercise some dominance over others in the measurement of consumer's satisfaction, especially with respect to fast food consumption. Evaluating consumers' satisfaction through a customer survey research of this nature can reveal the relevant characteristics of consumers as well as give insight into opinion about the fast food agribusiness firms in the study. Many factors could explain consumer satisfaction with respect to fast food. These factors could have their seperate assumptions in relation to consumer satisfaction. These factors and their relationship wth consumer satisfaction deserve investigation

Most of the works that have been done relating to this research work considered just three variables or determinants of customer satisfaction [customer satisfaction using a collective preference disaggregation model (Siskos,2001)] but this study is meant to bridge the gap in previous research by considering five variables/ determinants of customer satisfaction .The findings of this study will be beneficial to both the owners of fast food agribusiness as well as the managers An important puzzle worthy of investigation is the evaluation of how satisfied with respect to evaluating fast food marketing agribusiness. You are almost done with the introduction without

telling the reader: the basis of the evaluation; what you specifically mean by outlets and how it is related to consumers' satisfaction; recent and relevant literature making a case for the problem that relates fast food outlets with consumer satisfaction.

The goal of this article is to investigate the determinants of consumer satisfaction so as to extend the understanding of consumers' behavior with regard to fast food. The specific objectives are: (1) to describe the socio economic characteristics of consumers of fast food; (2) to ascertain Consumers Satisfaction Index with respect to fast food; (3) to investigate the relationship between service quality and consumers satisfaction; (4) to investigate the relationship between product price and consumer satisfaction with respect to fast food market 5) to evaluate the determinants of consumer's satisfaction of fast food markets in the study area.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study
This study was guided by the following hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between product price and consumer satisfaction in fast food market.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality in fast food markets.

H_3: The food quality is positively related with customers satisfaction

H_4: The physical appearance of the fast food market s positively related with customer satisfaction.

Research Methodology
This study was carried out in Asaba metropolis. This area was chosen for this study due to the presence of good number of fast food consumers. Asaba consist of five quarters (Umuezi, Ugbomata, Umuaji, Umuagu and Umuonaje). Ibo and English are the common languages people speak in Asaba. Asaba consist mainly of civil servants and business men. This is why most of the customers of fast food outlets in Asaba comprises both the civil servants and business men. The surveyed fast food firms were Flames, Crunches Sizzlers, Favourite, Otres, Ultimate, Macdons, Mr Biggs, Harps, Hobbs and Grills. The cluster sampling technique was used in this research. This technique was considered appropriate because the quarters have similar characteristics. The study area was divided into five quarters Umuezi, Ugbomata, Umuaji, Umuagu and Umuonaje; these quarters were treated as clusters in the study. Twenty six (26) people were randomly selected from each cluster (quarter). This gave a total of 130 respondents that participated in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques
The study was based mainly on primary data. This was collected by the researcher from the respondents. Well structured questionnaire was the data collection instrument used for the study. The questionnaire consisted of sections according to the specific objectives of the study. It consists of quantitative and qualitative variables, such as the socio economic characteristics of the respondents, consumers satisfaction index, product quality, product price and service quality. The qualitative variables were rated or ranked. The practice of rating variables with numerical scores is not new in research. Following Hague and Hague, (2017), who reported that customers express their satisfaction in many ways ranging from extremely satisfied, satisfied, delighted, to very dissatisfied ,responses of consumers of fast food were ranked in this study. The respondents were given the keys of the scale, such that were able to give a number to express their level of satisfaction with respect yo fast food. In this study a 4 point Likert-type scale was used. The lowest figure indicates extreme dissatisfaction and the highest shows extreme satisfaction. The questionnaire was made to pass through instrument reliability and validity tests. The essence of this was to ensure that the questionnaire is able to capture the relevant information or data for the study. Collected data for this study were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages, graphs were used in describing the socio economic characteristics of fast food consumers. Tools such as correlation and multiple regression models will be also used as stated in the objectives;

Objective 1; (To describe the socio economic characteristics of consumers of fast food).This objective was achieved using descriptive statistical tools such as mean percentage, standard deviation and frequency distribution table.

Objective 2; (To ascertain consumers satisfaction index of respondents). This objective was achieved using **descriptive statistics**.

Objective 3; (To investigate the relationship between service quality and consumers satisfaction), this objective was achieved using spearman rho correlation.

Objective 4; (To investigate the relationship between product, price and quality of satisfaction of fast food). This objective was achieved using spearman rho Correlation as shown below;

Objective 5; (To examine the determinants of customers satisfaction of fast food industry).]. To study all the determinants of customers satisfaction which are; product quality, service quality, price, decoration and customer care. This objective was achieved using multiple regression analysis.

Model Specification
The implicit specification of this model is given as:
$$\Sigma Y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, \text{--------} x_n)$$
Where;
Y = Consumers satisfaction (customer's response score ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

$$\text{C.S. Index} = \frac{x}{4} \times \frac{100}{1},$$
Where: x = customer response score
The explicit form of this model is given as;
$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 P + \beta_2 Pq + \beta_3 Sq + \beta_4 Cc + \beta_5 Id + \mu$$
Where;
P = Price (customer responses ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

Pq = Product quality (customer responses ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

Sq = Service quality (customer responses ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

Cc = Customer care (customer responses ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

Id = Interior decoration (customer responses ranged from extremely satisfied =4, satisfied =3, delighted =2, to very dissatisfied =1)

μ = Stochastic error term

α = Intercept term

$\beta_1 - \beta_5$ = Coefficients of parameter estimate

Results and Discussion
This chapter covers the findings on socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, relationship between product, price and quality of satisfaction of fast food, relationship between service provided by fast food and consumers satisfaction and evaluation of the determinants of consumers of fast food in the study area.

Socioeconomic Characteristics of consumers of fast food
The socioeconomic characteristics of respondent considered in the study area include Gender, age, marital status, occupation educational attainment, household size, frequency of visit to fast food marketing outlet per month, monthly income, monthly expenditure.
The result of the socioeconomic characteristics of fast food consumers are presented in Table 1

Table 1 Distribution of Socioeconomic Characteristics of fast food Consumers in the study area

variables	frequency	percent	mean/ mode
GENDER			
Male	72	55.4	Female
Female	58	44.6	
Total	130	100.0	
AGE(In years)			
Less Than 25	38	29.2	
25-50	66	50.8	(25-50years)
51-75	26	20.0	
Total	130	100.0	
Marital Status			
Married	47	36.2	
Divorced	2	1.5	Single
Single	72	60.0	
Never Married	3	2.3	
Total	130	100.0	
Occupation			
Trader	10	7.7	
Teacher	18	13.8	
Contractor	7	5.4	
Civil servant	43	33.1	
Others	52	40.0	
Total	130	100.0	
Educational Attainment			
No Formal Education	9	6.9	
Secondary	17	13.1	Bachelor Degree
NCE/HND	17	13.1	
Bachelor Degree	58	44.6	
Others	29	22.3	
Total	130	100.0	
Household Size			
Less than 3	54	41.5	
3-5	40	30.8	Less than 3 persons
5-8	30	23.1	
9 times and above	6	4.6	
Total	130	100.0	
Frequency Of patronage To Fast food Marketing Outlet Per Month			
Less than 3 times	42	32.3	
3-5 times	44	33.8	4 times
6-7 times	21	16.2	
8 times and Above	23	17.7	
Total	130	100.0	
Monthly Income			
Less than ₦10000	21	16.2	
₦10000-₦50000	29	22.3	₦70000
₦50000-₦90000	39	30.0	
₦90000-₦130000	**27**	**20.8**	
₦130000 and Above	**14**	**10.8**	
Total	**130**	**100.0**	
Monthly Expenditure			
Less than ₦5000	38	29.2	
₦5000-₦10000	58	44.6	₦7000
₦10000-₦15000	34	26.2	
Total	130	100.0	

Source: Field Data 2016

The distribution of socio economic characteristics of fast food consumers is shown in Table 1

Age: The result of the study shows that majority (51%) of the fast food consumers are within the age bracket of 25-50years.This implies that most of the consumers of fast food in the study area are

young adult who are in their economically active age group. This finding is consistent with previous study that examined the young consumers segment in food service industry. According to Murray and Zentner (2001) most fast food consumers are financially independent.

Gender: The result of the study shows that male (55%) dominate the respondents patronizing fast food agribusiness in the study area while the remaining (45%) were females. Although both the males and females are consumers of fast food, the male dominate possibly because majority of the males are single and do not have settled family. This result could be due to the natural tendency of single male not to cook at home but prefer to patronize fast food outlets at their leisure. Most men consider patronizing fast food outlets with their spouses as modern lifestyle and for pleasure.

Marital status: The study shows that majority (62%) of the respondents are single. This implies that singles patronizes fast food agribusiness in the study area compared to married due to their independency rate. Although, both the married and singles are consumers of fast food, the single dominate because of their independency rate and freedom to hang out at any time and place.

Occupation: The result of the study revealed that majority of the respondents are civil servant (48%). Although, trader (8%), Teacher (14%), contractor (5%) and others (25%) also patronizes fast food. The civil servants dominate possibly because the study area is dominated civil service offices and banks compared to others.

Educational Attainment: The study shows that majority (48%) of the fast food consumers had Bachelor degree. The Bachelor degree dominate respondents patronizing the fast food area possibly because due to their educational attainment they has the highest perception about fast food agribusiness consumption.

Household size: Distribution according to household size shows that majority (42%) of the fast food consumers had household size lesser than 3 in the study area, this a clear and obvious indication that majority of the fast food consumers has a small household size implying that the lower the size the higher the consumption therefore household sizes lesser than 3 are nor patron to fast food in the study area.

Frequency of visit to fast food: The study shows that majority (41%) of the fast food consumers visited fast food less than 3 times per month. Although some visited above 3 times but the percentage of those that visited less than 3 times dominated possibly because during they go there on special occasions and they tend to spend more during those times.

Monthly income level: The result of the study shows that the respondent who earn ₦50000-₦90000 (30%) dominate people patronizing fast food compared to those who earn higher than that or lower than that. this implies that the middle class people patronizes fast food compared to the high class and lower class earners.

Monthly expenditure: The result shows that respondents who spend ₦10000-₦15000 (32%) dominate people patronizing fast food. This implies that most of the consumers spend a little portion of their income on fast food products.

Consumers Satisfaction Index.

The Consumers' Satisfaction Index of fast food consumers is presented in Table 2

Table 2 Satisfaction Index of Fast Food Consumers

Rating	Frequency (F)	x	Fx
Highly Satisfied	41	4	164
Satisfied	65	3	196
Partially Satisfied	24	2	48
Not Satisfied	-	-	-
Total	130		307

cut off point = 2.40

satisfaction index = $\sum \mathbf{Fx}/\sum \mathbf{x} = \dfrac{307}{30} = 2.40$

mean satisfaction index = 2.4

Percentage satisfaction index = 2.4/4 x 100/1 = 60% .

Percentage of consumers satisfaction = 60% and 40% not satisfied.

The result shows that the Consumers satisfaction index is 2.40 we can infer that on the average the consumers are Satisfied with the products and services of the fast food markets in the study area. This is equivalent to 60% level of satisfaction and 40% level of dissatisfaction. This finding is consistent with the general assumption that consumers can be Satisfied but not highly satisfied. This result gives an impression that operators of fast food markets still have room for improvement in upgrading their product quality and services so that consumers satisfaction can improve. And improvement in the consumers satisfaction will translate to increase in demand for fast food in the study area. This level of satisfaction could be due to some exogenous factors.

Relationship between product price and quality of satisfaction of consumers.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix showing the Relationship between Product Price and Quality of Satisfaction of Fast Food Consumers

Variables	The fast food products are affordable and gives maximum satisfaction	The prices are high at high quality of product	Prices are appropriate for the various products offered for consumption	Products quality are directly related to price
The fast food products are affordable and gives maximum satisfaction	1	.261 (.003)***	.516 (.000)***	.325 (.000)***
The prices are high at high quality of product		1	.259 (.003)***	.267 (.002)***
Prices are appropriate for the various products offered for consumption			1	.298 (.001)***
Products quality are directly related to price				1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table.3 shows the relationship between product price and quality of satisfaction. The result of the study shows that fast food products are significantly(p< 0-05) and positively related with offered prices (0.52). This result implies that prices truly reflect product quality. In this sense, price is a reliable predictor of product quality. the higher the price ,the higher the quality of products offered by fast food marketing outlets in the study area. This result clearly shows that consumers get value for their money and are not exploited by the fast food firms.and affordable and gives maximum satisfaction and prices are appropriate for the various for the other. The products offered for consumption are close substitute (0.05). This implies that the consumer can forgo one for the other

Table 4 Correlation Between Service Quality and Consumer Satisfaction

	Extent of rendering service swiftly and efficiently	Extent of making consumers aware of service	Responding to consumers suggestion in respect to the service rendered	Counter services are prompt	There is service delivery with courtesy by the staffs of the fast food marketing firms	Environment is comfortable for the consumption of products	Provisions are made for special occasions (such as Birthday)
Extent of rendering service swiftly and efficiently	1	.225 (0.10)	.105(.231)	.276 (.001)***	.197 (.024)***	.100 (256)	.357 (.000)***
Extent of making consumers aware of service		1	.130(.138)	.195 (.026)**	.001 (.995)	.034 (.697)	.215 (,014)***
Responding to consumers suggestion in respect to the service rendered			1	-220(.012)***	-.206 (.018)***	.014 (.877)	.137 (.118)
Counter services are prompt				1	.216 (.013)***	.017 (.850)	.149 (.090)
There is service delivery with courtesy by the staffs of the fast food marketing firms					1	.005 (.957)***	.164 (.061)
Environment is comfortable for the consumption of products						1	.239 (0.001)***
Provisions are made for special occasions (such as Birthday)							1

Note: The values in parenthesis are the corresponding t-values.

*** Significant at 1% = correlation coefficient is significant at the 1% level.

**Significant = correlation coefficient is significant at the 5% level.

Table 5 Determinants Of Customers Satisfaction

Variables	Coefficients	Standard	t-stat
Intercept		1.214	5.220***
Price	0.426	0.201	2.420**
Product quality	0.061	0.235	0.299
Service quality	0.383	0.307	1.515
Customer care	0.661	0.11	3.942***
Interior decoration	0.390	0.334	1.788

R = 79%
R^2 = 62%
$R^2_{(adj)}$ =48%
*** Significant at 1%.
**Significant at 5%.

Factor analysis shows that customer care with a T value of 3.492 sig at 1% is the most important determinant of customer satisfaction index in the fast food marketing agribusiness.

The R value (79%) indicates that about 79% of changes in customer satisfaction index is due to the combine effect of the exogenous variable which means that 79% of the exogenous variable contributed to the consumers satisfaction. The t -test indicated that of the five variables two were significant which are price (sig at 5%) and customer care (sig at 1%) while the other three variables (product quality, service quality and interior decoration) are not significant. F statistics was adopted to test the joint significance of the model. F- calculated value of 4.48 is greater than F- critical value of 2.96. This indicates that the model is generally significant.

The R^2 value (62%) indicates that 62% of changes in customer satisfaction index is explained by exogenous variables in the model. The F. cal (79%) is greater than F. cri(2.96), this shows that the values of R^2 and F-ratio, thus provide reliable measures of the overall explanatory power of the model.

Price
T-value shows that this variable is positive and significant (.426) in the model. This implies that better prices are moderate and affordable and can significantly influence consumers will be able to purchase more of the fast food products. This will increase/ boost the consumers satisfaction index through increased patronage. This variable was significant and entered the model in line with a priori expectation of positive relationship with consumers satisfaction index in fast food agribusiness. This implies that consumers satisfaction in the fast food agribusiness is sensitive to price. A better price will lead to more consumers satisfaction index whereas a worse price will lead to low consumers satisfaction index. This will lead to an increase on consumption and customers loyalty.

Customer´s care
Service Quality
Research identifies many characteristics that are associated with service quality. Business researchers Benjamin Schneider and David Bowen assert that "service organizations must meet three key customer needs to deliver service excellence:" security, esteem, and justice.(Benjamin and David,1995). Research identifies an array of service quality factors that are important for customers, including: timeliness and convenience, personal attention, reliability and dependability, employee competence and professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, assurance, availability, and tangibles such as physical facilities and equipment and the appearance of the personnel. Research shows that these characteristics also apply to citizen satisfaction with public service quality. Timely service is an especially strong determinant of quality across different types of public services.

Fairness and outcomes are additional factors important to public service customers (Center for the study for Social Policy, 2007; David,.and Peter.2001)

This variable entered into the model with a positive sign in line with a priori expectation, This variable was significant with a gradient of 0.661. The positive relationship between consumers satisfaction and customer care as evident in the study indicates that an increase in customer care will lead to an increase in consumers satisfaction. When customers are not cared for and attention not given as needed there will tend to be a shift in consumers loyalty which will lead to decrease in the rate of consumption. Customer care or attention has direct relationship with consumers satisfaction. The focus of this study is to assess the level of customer satisfaction with a particular product, service or experience;identify factors that contribute to customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction; determine the current status or situation of a product or service; compare and rank providers; estimate the distribution of characteristics in a potential customer population; or help establish customer service standards.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study specifically intends to examine consumers satisfaction index which can be influenced by several independent factors. Although five factors were hypothesized the finding has made it clear that price and customer care exercise dominant and positive influence on consumers satisfaction in fast food markets in the study area. Based on this outcome, it is important for the fast food agribusiness to consider these factors for improving consumers satisfaction index from the present level as shown in this study. The estimated consumer satisfaction index in this study can be used to improve the fast food marketing agribusiness in the study area. The index shows how satisfied a consumer is and the proportion of satisfied customers of fast food markets, it helps the fast food agribusiness to benchmark itself and devise the relevant coping strategies. The surveyed fast food markets can review their operations upward since the satisfaction index (60%) gives an impression that there is still room for improvement with respect to customers'. Satisfaction. Only then consumers are satisfied, loyal, buy more and even recommend the firm to other consumers. Periodic surveys of customer are needed for the purpose of tracking their satisfaction over time. The efforts made to estimate consumers satisfaction index in this study has made it possible to quantify the opinion or perception of consumers with respect to products and services provided by fast food markets.

Based on the research findings the following recommendations were made;

1) Fast food operators should always lay emphasis on service delivery to customer .

ii) There should be promptness in providing services to consumers at the counter and care for their comfort and safety

iii) Consumers suggestions should be taken into consideration in order to boost consumers satisfaction during marketing planning.

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