

# The Effect of Fast Food Globalisation on Students' Food Choice

Ijeoma Chinyere Ukonu

**Abstract**—This research seeks to investigate how the globalisation of fast food has affected students' food choice. A mixed method approach was used in this research; basically involving quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method uses a self-completion questionnaire to randomly sample one hundred and four students; while the qualitative method uses a semi structured interview technique to survey four students on their knowledge and choice to consume fast food. A cross tabulation of variables and the Kruskal Wallis nonparametric test were used to analyse the quantitative data; while the qualitative data was analysed through deduction of themes, and trends from the interview transcribe. The findings revealed that globalisation has amplified the evolution of fast food, popularising it among students. Its global presence has affected students' food choice and preference. Price, convenience, taste, and peer influence are some of the major factors affecting students' choice of fast food. Though, students are familiar with the health effect of fast food and the significance of using food information labels for healthy choice making, their preference of fast food is more than homemade food.

**Keywords**—Fast food, food choice, globalisation, students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

GLOBALISATION is embedded in human life as man is a global species having the desire to expand, discover and control [1]. Until this present age, it is an on-going phenomenon that has affected virtually every aspect of human life, including food and its mode of consumption [2]. The world is now becoming a globalised village where everything goes at a heightened speed. Arguably, the industrial revolution era which responded to the basic transformation in the world's capitalist system also transformed the world's food system, affecting the nature in which food is sourced, produced, distributed and consumed [3]. The rapid movement of goods, people, resources, ideas, and technology, are characteristics of globalisation which have influenced and shaped food. It is sometimes identified by some levels of internationalisation [4]; featuring food at the podium of the international market through global enterprises. Globalisation has accounted for changes occurring in food chains; starting from sourcing, production, processing to marketing, retailing and consumption. This indicates that globalisation has manifested beyond economic issues extending to cultural identities, including food. People often perceive globalisation from different perspectives; while some believe it is a welcomed phenomenon others think it is negative. Reference [5] observed that since two decades ago changes have continued

to occur in people's attitude towards food and diets despite aspirations to eat healthily demand has constantly increased for convenience and quick service food. These changes are observed to be in the fast food sector, and now fast food exemplifies how globalisation is converging food culture. The global presence of brand products, the similarities of consumption pattern and the success of multinational food companies are some evidences of globalisation in the fast food industry [6].

Fast food is a segment of the food service industry that has witnessed a steady growth over the last decade; ranking the second largest category in the food service industry. The sector saw a growth in value of \$635mn in 2013 up from \$610mn in 2012. The growth in demand for convenient and affordable food has incorporated convenience stores, supermarkets and other food retailers in to the fast food sector [7]; [8]. Reference [6] contends that a major change in the global food industry is the rapid expansion and promotion of the Western fast food; "*fast food is the Western culture's gift through globalisation to the world*". Today, fast food is not just the western culture but the world culture; in addition to the western fast food, different cultural foods are also featured on the platform of quick service food, including Chinese, Indian, and Italian fast food. It has dominated the food habit of the global populace proffering a quick and convenience means for meals; through the dominance, economic strength and the proliferation of multinational fast food companies and supermarkets [9]; [10]. The major target has greatly been towards young adults and children exacerbated by the use of advertisements, promotion, freebies, apps, and social media as a strategy to draw the attention of this market segment. The risk it poses to this segment of the population is of immense concern, jeopardising their food habit and health; especially the university students who face the challenges of independency and academic pressure while in school. As students face the daunting process of choice making while struggling between individual factors, social life, physical environment and their macro environment [11]; the knowledge and information relating to nutritional value, physical components and hygiene of the food products they purchase becomes highly significant [12]. The important question remains as, 'have the global presence of fast food influenced students' food choice and preference?' and 'what factors are responsible?' 'What are the implications for the students?' A conceptual model was developed to give a synopsis of this study. Therefore, it ultimately sets out to investigate the above questions by surveying university students using a qualitative

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and quantitative method of research and offering recommendations as appropriate.

#### *A. The Concept of Globalisation*

The history of globalisation has been traced back to the era of great scientific discovery, slavery and colonialism Reference [13] marked by movement of people, labour, technology and trade. It has linked regions and reduced cultural, social and political boundaries; where different societies emulate other peoples' way of life; as [2]; [14];-[16] noted that it has created a network of societies. Many scholars have defined globalisation in several ways. However, [17]; [18] observed the incongruence that exists in diverse definitions given to the concept; as a multidimensional phenomenon, it has received different interpretation from various perspectives. Some scholars defined it from the economic dimension, technological dimension, and political dimension; yet others through the cultural and social dimensions [19]-[25]. In other words, globalisation has occurred in the entirety of human activities; e.g. Europeans travel to Africa for tourism, phones made in China are sold in US, while Australians eat food imported from America. It is boundless to imagine how societies are linking. The process has involved a high level of interconnectivity and interdependence in technology, culture, communication, travel and trade; which has amplified the level of co-operation and integration between nations; therefore, global impacts are made with developments in a part of the world [26]-[29]. Globalisation can be defined as an intensified geographical and social connectivity which increases the movement of people, goods, capital, technology and cultural symbols [30]-[34]. It also means homogeneity in cultural identity and language. Reference [35] believed that it is the movement of people, labour, capital, commodities, technology and information from one country to another; resulting in a convergence of economic, institutional, social and cultural processes and practices. Reference [22] described globalisation as the increasing global interdependence of societies which tend to reduce the significance of borders and states. In other words, globalisation is a concept that is unifying the world, erasing the differences that existed in various regions and countries and encouraging a form of political, economic, technological and cultural interaction between the regions. Many commentators may have viewed it from different perspectives but this study views globalisation in terms of the movement of food and the global spread of multinational fast food companies; thus, gaining popularity and affecting food choices and preferences.

The world culture theory, describes globalisation as a process by which people understand the world as a society with fused culture [30]. At the centre of this theory is the complexity of homogeneity and heterogeneity of culture; this implies that global forces tend to universalise food cultures, yet individual cultures can still maintain their food cultural identities. However, is globalisation a welcomed paradigm or not? How beneficial or detrimental is it? To address this question, a lot of arguments have existed on whether

globalisation should be applauded or condemned, supported or reversed. According to [36] millennium report, globalisation has offered many opportunities; improved quality of life and provided choices, efficient production and availability of goods and services. Its supporters believe it is a means of distributing wealth and knowledge [37], development and economic growth [38], variety and increase in our eating pattern [39], reduced global inequality, poverty alleviation, and attaining sustainability [40]. However, many detractors of globalisation view the phenomenon as a disrupting force that has left many in perpetual penury, especially the undeveloped part of the world, devoured many of their jobs and crafts, ripped societies of their culture and tradition [41], widened global inequality and a means of enriching business elites and the developed countries; consequently, undeveloped countries and the poor are at a disadvantage; and to some it is a disguise for the expansion of capitalism, causing exploitation, land degradation, and the spread of diseases [38]. Notwithstanding, this paper maintains that globalisation is like a two sided coin which has presented both positive and negative effects. It is on-going process that seems endless; the benefits it offers do not come without negative effects which are felt hard by the less developed regions of the world.

#### *B. Fast Food and Its Consumption among Students*

The widespread of fast food exemplifies food as a product of globalisation. Fast food is a sector in the catering industry that primarily deals with the quick preparation, packaging and service of food to customers [42]. Globally fast food outlets have continued to show resilience despite the recession. The sector has achieved stable growth in business since 2005 increasing by 5% in 2010 an upward turn from 3% in 2009 and increased to 34% in the segment of the food service business [43].

Reference [44] defined fast food as food made from part-prepared or pre-cooked ingredient, packaged and sold in an eatery, restaurant or store to customers who may wish to eat there or take it away. Reference [45] refers to it as foods that are speedily prepared and are sold at reasonable prices which are easily obtainable as alternatives to home-made food. Reference [46] contends it is the provision of food and drinks for immediate consumption within the area of purchase or eating spaces shared with other fast food operators or taken away. For the purpose of this study, fast food is defined as food that is quickly prepared, packaged and sold to consumers over the counter at a relatively low price, in a non-formal dining system; which may be taken away or eaten at the point of purchase. The term includes the products of both the multinational fast food companies and local fast food outlets. The increasing rate at which people eat outside their homes is an indication of the changing global patterns in food consumption; as the quick service system outstrips the traditional dining system [47]. Reference [48] observed that the growth in food consumption outside the home is more apparent in the fast food industry; where outlets are conveniently positioned at strategic locations to attract consumers, such as road sides, terminals, motor ways, schools,

petrol stations, hospitals, Universities, besides shopping malls and parks [48]; [50]. Multinational fast food restaurants such as McDonald, KFC, Pizza hut, Wendy's, Subway are good examples. They typify food retail chain companies that have traded food across national boundaries in recent times; most of which are American and Europe by origin but due to the saturation of their origin market have spread their tentacles in to developing regions of the world [51]. Their success validates the growing interest in fast food consumption [46]; they infiltrate easily into diverse foreign markets using globalisation strategies [51]. Reference [52] delineates such strategies as developing product identity, global brand name, pricing system, unified production, packaging, marketing strategy and distribution system. Some of these strategies are developed to target certain market segment such as students and children. Several studies have revealed a global increase in fast food consumption which is very common among students e.g. [53] discovered that 82% of UK students consumed fast food; while a similar study of university students in Malaysia found that whereas 86 % of the students consumed fast food, 14% do not; and in Pakistan 70% of students consume fast food [46]. A report revealed that 70% of students in Brazil eat fast food at least four or more times weekly [54]. Reference [55] found that approximately 40% of USA young population consume fast food every day. In Bangladesh, the frequency of fast food consumption among university students was 98% [56]. These reports prove the habitual consumption of fast food by students which is unhealthy. Going by researches from Europe by [57]; [58] and from the US by [59] the diet of most university students is not in conformity with the expected recommended dietary intake allowance which leaves them at the risk of heart related diseases and obesity [60]. Reference [61] found a significant association between the consumption of fast food and fat and calorie intake among students. There is no doubt that the consumption of fast food is detrimental to the consumer's health [54]; as it is found to contain low dietary fibres and vitamins, high calories, saturated fat, cholesterol, a high amount of sugar and salt [62]; [63]. Reference [64] contends that frequent consumption of fast food is unhealthy and puts the consumer at the risk of developing obesity, weight increase, and type 2 diabetes, heart and artery diseases. However the Consumption of more vegetables, fruits and grains help to reduce this risk which is associated with high intake of fast food product [44]. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to associate students' consumption of fast food from a long time developed habit. Apart from the challenges of independency that university students face while away from home, studies have also revealed that young people establish eating habit and food preference from home and normally carry it on to adulthood [44]; [65]; as parents with increasing disposable incomes are likely to impress their children by taking them to fast food eateries [45]; therefore the concern is that the habit of fast food consumption by the youths today will become a great issue of unhealthy population tomorrow [66]. Contrary to the desire to cut down on unwholesome food, globalisation has continued to bring fast food closer to

the young generation through information and technological development. They are then left in the dilemma of choice making.

### *C. Food Choice*

Reference [67] defines food choice as a person's set of value and strategies for prioritizing, negotiating, managing and balancing personal values about food. Making choice of food signifies a classified behaviour that is pertinent in our society today; especially as it is affected by global and local factors [68]. Young adults who leave home to attend university education may be at the risk of experiencing a negative food choice trajectory; which normally leads to inability to make a healthy food choice [69]. At this stage, basic information on general nutrition and recommended dietary allowance becomes necessary. Reference [70] in their study of food choice found that a product related strategy and personal strategy were the major significant strategies adopted by student consumers in food choice. A product related strategy involves the use of product label information to aid decision making in food choice, while, the personal strategy is the use of personal knowledge, familiarity, sensory evaluation to aid decision making. The use of [71] model is significant in understanding students' decision making practice in food choice. The main components of the model are 'Input', 'process' and 'output'. Focusing on the process stage [70] argue that it is a crucial stage in making a choice of food and involves "recognition, pre- purchase search and evaluation of alternatives". The student is faced with the task of making preference by comparing two or more alternative products [72]; many factors may be considered such as familiarity, meaning that a student may choose a product which is popular and well known to him; likewise cost and available label information. The question remains, has globalisation through the increased popularity and availability of fast food among students affected their choice to consume fast food or prefer it?

Food preference is the selection of a particular food over another [73]. Globalisation has undoubtedly affected consumers' preference and value for consumption of food product; providing opportunities and freedom to make choice [74]. Reference [11] described several factors that influence students' choice and preference of food as they transit to independent life in the university. Such factors they classified as individual factors, the social network, physical environment, and macro environment. Firstly, the individual factor includes: Preference, taste, time, self-discipline and convenience. These are factors usually within an individual's power to determine whether they are important or not in his choice of food. Secondly, social network factors comprise of friends, social life and peers. To an extent students may have some degree of control over these factors; however, most times the later tend to subjugate and have great influence. Thirdly, the physical environment as a factor determined by the supplier; therefore, its ability to influence choice depends on the producer; these include: Price, appeal, quality, availability and accessibility. Fourthly, the macro environment

is far more an external factor, as such it also depends on the producer to present the product in a convincing manner to the consumer; such factors include: information, media and advertisement.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in the University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom. One hundred and ten students were randomly selected to represent the study population for the purpose of in-depth study, proper data management and to avoid the research being bias. To study the effect of the global presence of fast food on food choice, Students were selected because, arguably, they are most likely to be influenced and attracted by fast food product due to the academic environment and age bracket [56].

This research work uses a mixed method of research which is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approach [75]; [76]; as it seeks to investigate numerical variables e.g. students' frequency in consumption of fast food and also investigates opinions and students' choice of food. Secondly, the Quantitative method could be used to draw a generalization, while the qualitative method will give in-depth information [77]. The use of both primary and secondary data was engaged; which are the existing sources of data and the questionnaire based survey. The existing information (secondary data) on the research key words were drawn from past studies available in different academic databases, both electronic and manual. The questionnaire based survey which seeks to pull together first-hand information from the respondents (primary data) was developed in two formats. Firstly, to collect quantitative data, self-completion questionnaires were given to the respondents (UCLAN students) in the school library to collect information on the popularity and familiarity of fast food among students, their choice of food, and factors that influence their choice for fast food and the reasons. Secondly, a semi structured interview was conducted with four students to collect qualitative data, and investigate their views and opinions on why they would prefer or not prefer fast foods and their reasons. This pattern was chosen because it will provide an overall perspective of students' opinion, Knowledge and behaviour towards fast food from both negative and positive aspect.

A five-point Likert-scale was generated to enable the respondents select the most appropriate point that corresponds to the degree of their agreement with the statements. The points are coded for easy understanding with 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' denoting two extreme ends. This approach has the advantages of measuring attitudes and behaviours and also allows responses to be quantified [78].

The data collection process took place in June 2014 in the University of Central Lancashire, in the library precisely. A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study. The questionnaires were developed and manually distributed to respondents who are willing to participate in the study; as

willingness is the key to a satisfactory and successful survey [79]. A semi structured interview was conducted face to face with four respondents. These interviews seek to ascertain interviewees experience, familiarity, ideas and knowledge of fast food and its health implications. Two male and two female students were selected on the criteria that one person from each gender consumes fast food and the other does not.

Multi-method design was adopted to analyse data collected from questionnaires. Computer software was used for data analysis because it is easier, quicker and more accurate than manual analysis. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for quantitative data analysis. SPSS was used because it is easy to use, quick in data processing, has the advantages of managing data effectively and offers a wide range of data presentation. Due to the limited range of charts available in SPSS, charts for this research were derived from Microsoft excel which were presented alongside with the discussion. To authenticate findings, analysis of variance (ANOVA) [78] was further conducted using the Kruskal Wallis Test, [80] which is a nonparametric test used when data is a nominal or ordinal data. It was the statistical technique used to test the hypothesis developed at certain a point in analysis. It considers the level of variability in the observation within each group studied and the variability in the group mean. The qualitative data generated from the interview held was analysed and discussed alongside the quantitative data. Important points made by the interviewees were presented as quotations in the analysis section.

### *A. A Conceptual Model of the Globalisation of Fast Food, Students' Choice and Preference*

A conceptual model/framework is a graphic or narrative explanation of the main issue of a study; it describes the key concepts, the phenomena, factors or variables in a study and presents their relationship [81]; [82] defined it as connecting several related concepts to give a wider understanding, predict or explain all about research. The conceptual model for this research work presented in Fig. 1 is a simple graphic illustration of how globalisation has influenced fast food through several factors like economic, technological, cultural and social factors [41] which have supported the growth in the fast food industry. As fast food gains global popularity it has arguably affected students' food choice and preference. Certain characteristics of fast food become the influencing factors why most students would prefer to consume fast food, such as: Taste, convenience, cheapness, quality, quick service accessibility and attractive packaging [56]; [83]. Similarly, fast food choice may also be determined by the student's economic, technological, social and cultural background [11]. Fast food preference is equally based on the varieties of available fast food of which students must prioritize according to values. This research work investigates how the global presence of fast food has affected students' food choice.

*B. Relationship between Globalisation, Fast Food, Students' Choice and Preference*

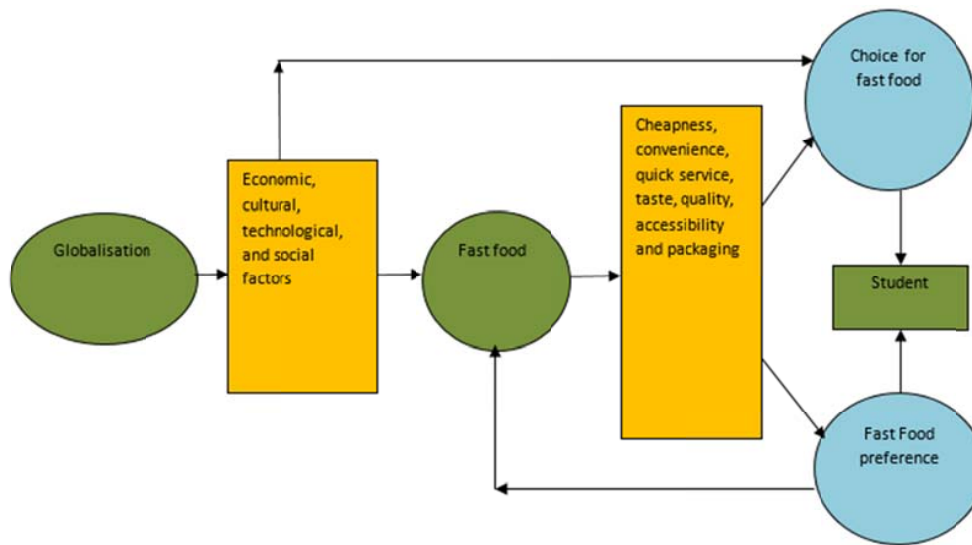


Fig. 1 A conceptual model of the globalisation of fast food, students' choice and preference

III. RESULT

*A. Respondents' Characteristics*

Table I shows the demographic data of the respondents. It reveals that an equal number of males and females were sampled; 60% were between the ages of 21-25 years which forms the majority, while 3% were between the ages of 41-50 years which forms the minority of the population. This data is an indication that most university students are young adults who are likely to fall within the ages of 21-30 years. 58% of the respondents were undergraduates, While 42% were postgraduate students. Part-time workers formed the greater part of the population representing 42% while 37% are not working and 21% are full time workers. The nationalities revealed that 43% of the respondents were British nationals, 11% were Nigerians, 9% were of mixed background, 7% were Chinese and 5% Indians; while 26% comprises of other nationalities.

*B. Students' Food Choice*

Students' choice of fast food over homemade food was explored, findings revealed that 35% of the respondents agree that students would choose and prefer fast food over homemade food; equally, 35% disagree with this opinion. 22% of the respondents were undecided, 5% of the respondents strongly agree while 3% of the respondents strongly disagree. However, a comparison of respondents' opinion against gender (Fig. 2) shows that whereas an equal

number of males and females agreed that students would prefer fast food over homemade food, 63% of respondents who disagree were females; while 80% of the respondents who strongly agreed were males.

TABLE I  
RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	52	50%
Female	52	50%
<b>Education status:</b>		
Undergraduate	60	58%
Postgraduate	44	42%
<b>Age:</b>		
Under 20	9	9%
21-25	63	60%
26-30	18	17%
31-40	11	11%
41-50	3	3%
<b>Work status:</b>		
Full-time	22	21%
Part-time	44	42%
Not working	38	37%
<b>Nationality:</b>		
British	45	43%
Nigerians	12	11%
Chinese	7	7%
Indian	5	5%
Mixed background	9	9%
Others	26	26%

**Students preference of fast food over homemade food**

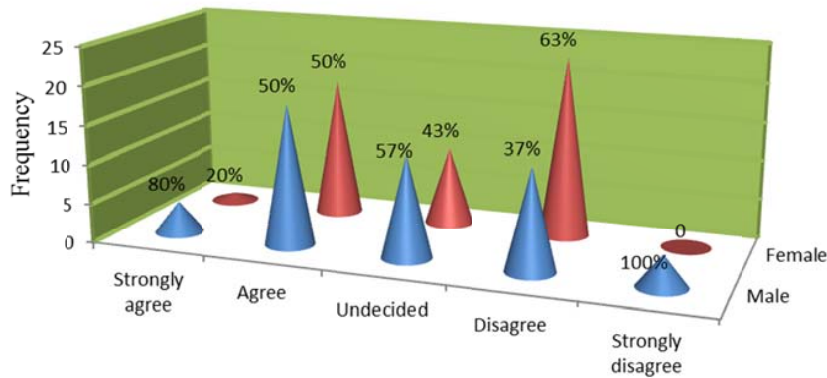


Fig. 2 Students preference for fast food over homemade food compared against gender

Yet, another comparison was made between students' preference for fast food and their weekly consumption. It was discovered that the greater number of respondents who agreed that students prefer fast food over homemade food consumed fast food 4-6 days a week. This result indicates that students would choose to consume fast food over homemade food and male students would prefer it more than their female counterparts.

1. Students' Weekly Consumption of Fast Food and Gender

Further analysis was carried out through a cross tabulation of students weekly consumption of fast food and gender in Fig. 3 to investigate the differences in fast food consumption between the male and female students.

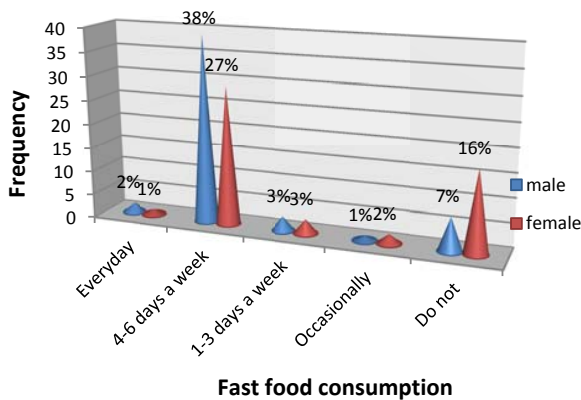


Fig. 3 Students weekly consumption of fast food compared with gender

38% of the male respondents consumed fast food 4-6 days a week which is higher than their female counterparts who scored 27%. For those who consume it every day male respondents also scored slightly high than the female, 2% and 1% respectively. 16% of female respondents do not consume fast food, which is higher than 7% of the male respondents who do not consume it. 2% of the female students occasionally consume fast food as compared to 1% of their

male counterparts. From this result it shows that male students consume fast food more than the females.

2. Factors Affecting Students' Choice of Fast Food

Certain factors such as taste, price, convenience, peer influence, habit, variety and fast food as a healthy option; were considered to affect students' choice of fast food. Fig. 4 shows the performance of these factors. Over half of the respondents (52%) strongly agree that price is the most important factor affecting students' choice to consume fast food and a minimal of 3% strongly disagree with price; 48% strongly agree with convenience, 36% with taste, 17% with habit and 14% with peer influence. Approximately, 39% and 33% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively with health as a factor that can influence students' choice to consume fast food; this is followed by variety with 7%. Descriptive statistics was carried out to further investigate this result.

TABLE II  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' CHOICE OF FAST FOOD

Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Taste	104	1.00	5.00	1.8558	.86370
Price	104	1.00	5.00	1.7885	1.05824
Convenience	104	1.00	4.00	1.6827	.77915
Peer influence	104	1.00	5.00	2.6250	1.07204
Habit	104	1.00	5.00	2.3077	.93556
Variety	104	1.00	5.00	2.8942	1.11406
Health	104	1.00	5.00	3.8462	1.13864
Valid N (list wise)	104				

The descriptive analysis in Table II shows the mean average and the standard deviation of each response score away from the mean. Price is the major factor with a mean score of  $1.8 \pm 1.1$  standard deviation; it indicates a minimal deviation of scores from the mean. This is followed by convenience, taste, habit, peer influence, variety and health which appear to be the least motivating factor for students to consume fast food; with a mean score of  $3.8 \pm 1.1$  standard deviation showing the farthest deviation of scores from the mean.

### 3. Effect of Fast Food Globalisation on Students' Food Choice

As the demand for quick food service continues to grow [47], the development in the fast food industry has continued to evolve through the globalisation strategies of fast food operators [52]. This has arguably brought fast food more closely to the door step of students through improved technology and communication, increase in the number of fast food outlets, diminishing cultural food boundaries, an increase in demand for quick food service and family upbringing and social life. Fig. 5 presents the performance of these factors.

prefer fast food over homemade food. Reference [85] suggests that students' preference to consume fast food may increase the consumption of unbalanced diet by young adults; therefore, the need to educate and inform this segment of the population is of paramount importance [56]. The interview result shows that students are aware of the negative implications of fast food on the consumer's health as confirmed by [56] however, its consumption is inevitable. They suggest it contributes to obesity, overweight, poor quality diet, diabetes and clogging of the arteries; and can impair cognitive abilities [86].

## IV. DISCUSSION

### A. Students' Food Choice

The result of analysis revealed that students would choose and prefer to consume fast food over homemade food; this is similar to several researches on students' preference for fast food such as [56] who found that most university students prefer fast food in Bangladesh; 98% were fast food regulars. Reference [45] reported 85% of Malaysian students prefer to consume fast food; while [53] found that 82% of UK students consumed fast food. A comparison further proves that more males than females would prefer to consume fast food over homemade food. Considering that males are less associated with cooking, they may tilt towards consuming readymade food than their female counterparts [84]. Comparing students' weekly consumption of fast food and their preference further revealed that the greater number of respondents who agreed that students prefer fast food over homemade food consumed fast food 4-6 days a week. Conclusively students generally

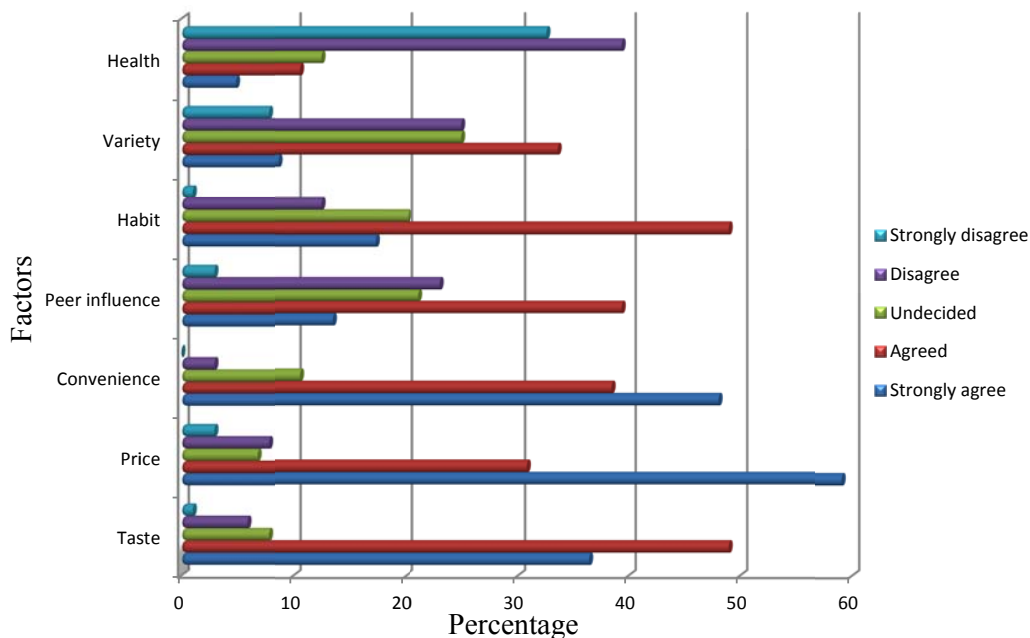
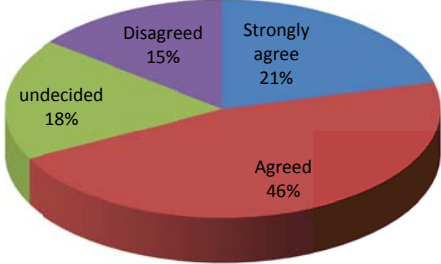
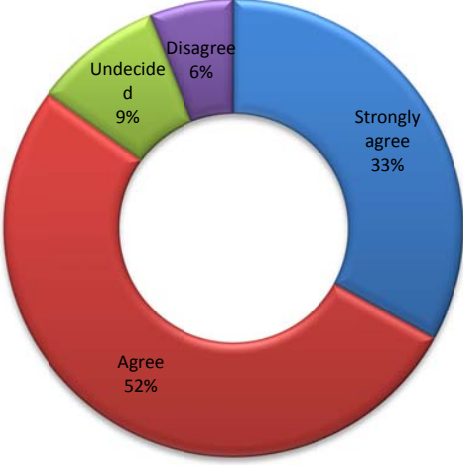
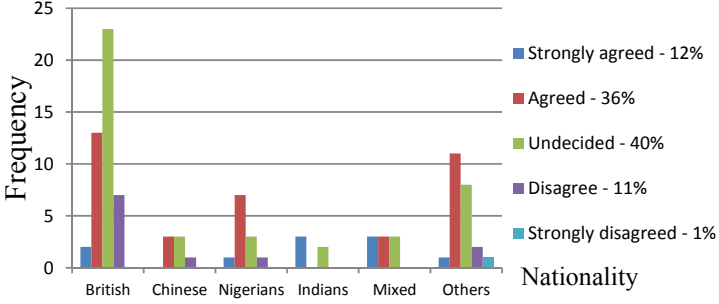
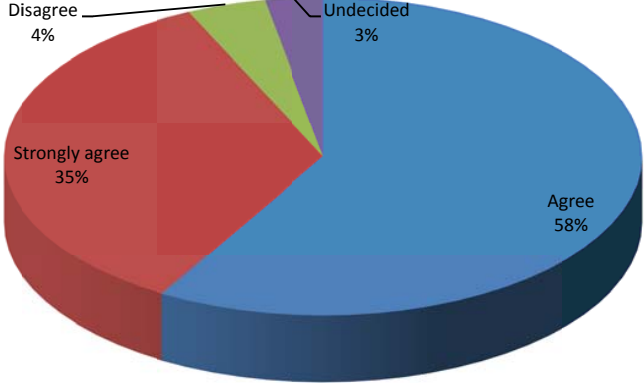


Fig. 4 Factors affecting students' choice of fast food

Factors	Result																																										
improved technology and communication	 <table border="1"> <caption>Survey Results for improved technology and communication</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agreed</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>undecided</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagreed</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Agreed	46%	Strongly agree	21%	undecided	18%	Disagreed	15%																																
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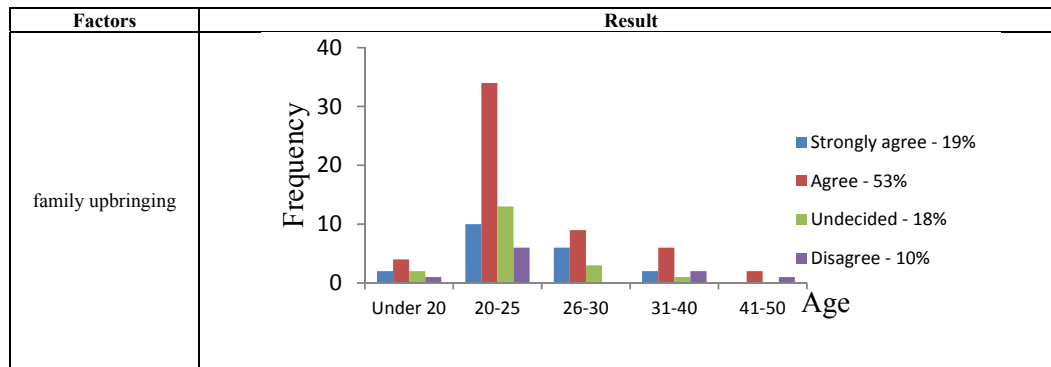


Fig. 5 Result for effect of fast food globalisation on students' food choice

### B. Factors Affecting Students' Choice of Food

To explore the reasons why students would choose fast food over homemade food; factors such as price, taste, convenience, habit, variety and health were considered. The descriptive analysis in Table II shows the mean average and the standard deviation of each response score away from the mean. Price was found to be the major factor considering the low financial status associated with students they tend to consider affordability while making purchasing decisions. This is followed by convenience; as technology has increased the expediency of fast food and consumers can order food online and delivery is almost immediate; fast food becomes a more convenience means for a meal. The interview responses reveal that students consume fast food due to the busy nature of the university life. "...When I have a lot of University work to do, it is easy to get a treat from McDonalds..." (Interviewee1). Respondent 4 observed that young people who are studying or in busy jobs have no time to make their own food and would consume fast food because it is convenient. According to respondent 3, "students are associated with fast food due to academic pressure...." Taste was the third factor. Reference [87] found that taste is an important factor for students in the choice of fast food; this is evident in Interviewee 2's statement, "I just feel when I go to a fast food and have burger that they are tastier, that is why I order cheese burger". This is followed by habit, peer influence, variety and health which appear to be the least motivating factor for students to consume fast food. These findings correspond to reference [56] who found price, taste and convenience to be important factors in students' choice of fast food. References [45]; [88] discovered that affordability, convenience and quick service motivate students to consume fast food, making it easy and less time consuming to have a meal. It also substantiates the characteristic that differentiates fast food services from other restaurant services; which are convenience, affordability and quick service. Health was the least motivating factor, which suggests students' knowledge of the negative health implication of fast food consumption. [56] Indicated that students are well informed of the negative consequence of fast food consumption. The interviewees identified obesity, overweight, cardiac diseases and poor quality food as the negative effect of fast food on health.

Interviewee 2 observed, "I know obesity is certainly a common one; and it can make people overweight". This was also the opinion of interviewee 3 "yeah...yeah... Fast food is basically junk food it makes the Western world obese". "... it also contains a lot of preservatives like sodium...." Respondents identified the content of fast food that can lead to obesity as fat and oil; reference [5]; [89] state, it is a known fact that diets with high content of fat, sugar, sodium preservatives, and energy dense food, which is referred to as 'junk food' have some adverse consequences on health such as obesity, overweight, diabetes and clogging of the arteries; and can impair cognitive abilities [86].

#### 1. Development in Technology and Communication

Improved technology and communication was considered as a globalisation factor that has popularised fast food and simplified its purchases among students. Fig. 5 indicates that close to half of the respondents agreed that improved technology and communication have made fast food popular among students. Technology and communication has increased the accessibility of fast food; people can place their orders online and within a short time get their delivery. This finding supports [6] who asserts that the changing food habit which had made fast food popular could be attributed to the growth in the development of information and technology, the expansion of the print media and advertisement; both manual and electronic through the distribution of leaflets, vouchers, meal deals, social media and websites. For instance, 'JUST EAT' is an international company that offers online takeaway ordering services. Customers use 'JUST EAT' apps, laptops, desk tops or smart phones to place their orders and delivery is almost immediately. The company has recognised the UK as their largest market which contributed almost 70% of the company's profits in 2013 [90]. Domino is another company that offers similar services; [91] reports that 50% of its total sales in the UK are made online and the majority are through mobile. This is an example of the impact globalisation has on fast food as [56] observe that globalisation is a significant factor for the growth of fast food as it is characterised by the movement of people, the exchange of ideas and technology.

## 2. Increasing Fast Food Outlets

Another reason attributed to the globalisation of fast food and students' familiarity with fast food is the growing number of fast food outlets. Increase and expansion of multinational fast food companies and independent outlets is an indication of fast food globalisation. As the demand for fast food increases due to its convenience and affordability, fast food companies have continued to increase the accessibility of their products; having their retail outlets located around schools, offices, petrol stations, airports, shopping areas, etc. [54]. Unfortunately, young adults and children have remained their target. Through further investigation it was discovered that the highest number of respondents who were optimistic that the growth of fast food outlet has made it popular among students consume fast food either 1-3 days or 4-6 days weekly. This is an indication that the increase in the number of fast food outlets has made fast food popular among students and increased their consumption. The finding is in agreement with [54] who found that increased availability of fast food has resulted in increased consumption. Similarly, [45] observed that the increase in the consumption trend of fast food is supported by the growth in the number of outlets. Also researches have proved the widespread and proliferation of both independent and multinational fast food outlets to have accounted for changes in eating pattern; as people tend to eat more away from home [9] and changes in life style has resulted to lesser time spent at home. Reference [92] found that proximity of fast food outlets to schools resulted to an increase in consumption of fast food by students; which is a strategy used by fast food retailers to infiltrate the student market. This can increase the demand for fast food products; as noted by reference [93] that positive shift in the consumer's demand can be a motivating factor for an increase in supply. For example, in the UK, Chain fast food companies like Mcdonalds, subway, Gregge continue to make plans for expansion as demand for their products increase; although, generally, a decline of 0.4% in the number of outlets from the peak of over 39,000 outlets in 2006 is reported by [94] which may be a positive sign for a healthier society.

## 3. Increase in Demand for Quick Food (Fast Food)

Increase in demand for quick food (fast food) and its consumption indicates a change in food patterns as a gradual shift from the normal dining system to the quick service system continues to evolve [47]; this can equally be attributed to globalisation. Young adults are caught in the web of these changes and tend to follow the latest and fashionable food ways irrespective of the consequences; therefore, increase in demand for quick food service was considered as a factor that has made fast food popular and familiar among students. Fig. 5 confirms that over two-third of the respondents were in agreement that students are familiar with fast food due to the increased rate at which quick food is demanded. We are in a society where time is valued and people want things done quickly even the food we eat. Reference [47] noted that the slow food system is being replaced with a quick service system as the demand for food consumption outside the home

increases; coupled with the economic recession which made consumers to cut down on spending [94]. Interestingly, reference [84] found that such demand among students could be attributed to an independent life style in the university; and in some cases lack of time for home cooking; subsequently, they undergo changes in their eating pattern which exposes them to the risk of developing a wrong food pattern [95]. They tend to go for fast, cheap and convenient food. Reference [56] advocates a basic orientation on dietary guidelines and healthy eating as a means of educating students on how to eat healthy. Reference [96] suggests that since most outlets feature healthy section, consumers should make choices from items under the 'healthy' or 'light' sections of the menu. It was also recognised that the use of labels and menus are important in identifying healthy options; meanwhile interview respondents suggest that students should spend more on healthier foods, rather than fast food; and if possible fast food should be replaced with food options rich in fruits and vegetables.

## 4. Less Cultural Food Boundary

Cross tabulating the opinion of respondents with nationality revealed that a greater number of the students were not sure if less cultural food boundary is a globalisation factor that can make students choose to consume fast food. However, research has shown that globalisation through migration and improved technology such as in communication and transportation has increased the movement of food from one part of the world to another creating a common diet among regions [4]; [22]; [14]. Reference [6] observed that fast food which is a western food culture is rapidly expanding and promoting globally. In the UK fast food has gained foothold and likewise other cultural foods like Indian, Chinese, Italian and French cuisines [97]. It is common to find food from other region of the world in West and vice-versa. This has affected the global food consumption pattern. In some cases, cultural foods have been modified to incorporate food patterns from other regions [98].

## 5. Family Upbringing and Social Life

Family upbringing and social life were discovered to be reasons for the popularity and familiarity of fast food because family dining out or the purchase of fast food to form part of the family diet has become a common phenomenon in our society [99] which still indicates fast food globalisation. This is accelerated by women active participation in the work force and the effort of parents to provide their children with good social life; thus introducing them to fast food and exposing them to its hazards. Interviewee 1 noted "*em...Mum normally goes to work and Dad would order fast food like pizza for dinner*". Fig. 5 clearly indicates that young adult students up to the age 25 are of the opinion that family upbringing and social life are factors that familiarise students with fast food. This age bracket can probably be influenced by their parents and family; they are likely to be introduced to fast food by their parents. This tally with the opinion of [45] as they noted that parents with increased disposable incomes are likely to impress or give their children a treat at fast food outlets or as a

social activity. This finding corresponds with the interview conducted to substantiate the results where all the respondents linked their first experience of fast food to their parents and then friends; parents take them out for a meal or a treat. "Mum will take us to McDonalds for lunch..." (interviewee 1). "I think it was when I was young; when I do good things to my parents, they will usually take me to McDonalds or KFC and each time I enjoyed myself..." (Interviewee 2). Parents have potential influence on the eating habit and the choice of food made by their children [100]. They take them out to make them happy or due to time constraints purchase fast food as a meal. However, [101] contends that some parents are very health conscious and do not support fast food consumption by children. Yet, rationally, young adults are enticed by the modern social life style [102] which is part of globalisation influence on our society, they are likely to socialise more with friends as compared to the older age group. Going out with friends and peers also acquaints students with fast food. As respondent 1 noted "...I and my friends visit a McDonalds that is in a twenty-four hours supermarket". "em...Definitely I go out with friends" (interviewee 2).

Further analysis was carried out using a Kruskal Wallis nonparametric test to determine the difference in the opinion of different age groups. To further investigate the result, a hypothesis was formulated. Whereas the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) states that: there is no difference in the opinion of different age groups to family upbringing and social life as a reason for the familiarity and popularity of fast food among students, the alternative hypothesis  $H_1$  states: that the opinions of different age groups differ. The Kruskal Wallis (KW) test in Table III revealed a probability of no significance difference in the opinion of different age groups as to whether family upbringing and social life is a responsible factor to the familiarity and popularity of fast food among students. Where  $p\text{-value} > \alpha$  ( $0.43 > 0.05$ ); In other words, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This implies that statistically, the opinion of different age groups does not vary significantly.

TABLE III  
KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST STATISTICS

count	Family upbringing and social life		
Grouping variable	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Age	3.804	4	.433

$p\text{-value} = 0.05$ ; where  $\alpha < \text{or} > 0.05$

Introducing children to fast food makes way for addiction when they finally settle for independent life in the University; and consequently they usually make a less healthy food choice and are at the risk of obesity and associated diseases. Reference [56] indicates that fast food addiction signifies a severe concern for public health and should be tackled as such.

In summary, this research has found that globalisation has amplified the evolution of fast food, making it popular among students; its global presence has positively affected students' food choice and consumption. Findings revealed that price; convenience, taste, cravings, peer influence and variety are factors affecting students' choice for fast food. Parents and friends were found to be the influencing factors that

familiarise students with fast food. Although students are conversant with the health implication of fast food and the importance of information in making healthy choices, they would prefer to consume fast food over homemade food.

## V. CONCLUSION

Conclusively this study investigated the globalisation of fast food and analysed the influence of the global presence of fast food on students' food choice. This study was carried out among the students of the University of Central Lancashire, North West of England. It employed the uses of both primary and secondary research methods; as the existing information on the research topic were reviewed and students were also practically studied. It provides a framework in understanding how fast food globalisation has affected students' food choice. A conceptual model was developed, which demonstrates the relationship between globalisation of fast food and students' food choice and preference. Fast food originally perceived as American culture is becoming a world culture; as people seem to tilt towards the quick food service system, which offers convenient, quick and affordable meals. As globalisation is characterised by the movement of people, resources, finances, technology and ideas, it has also account for the movement of fast food across national and regional borders [14]; perhaps creating the habit of eating outside home. Dining away from home has characterised the changing global food consumption pattern. The accelerated change is observed to be in the fast food industry [48]; as both independent and chain outlets increase in number and are strategically positioned in locations convenient enough to attract consumers, such as road sides, terminals, motor ways, schools, petrol stations, hospitals, universities, shopping malls and parks [49]; regrettably, young adults and children are the most targeted. This study concludes that fast food is prevalent among students. Certain factors which characterises globalisation such as technology, the increase in the number of fast food outlets, reduced cultural food boundaries, demand for quick food services, family upbringing and social life have continued to bring fast food closer to students. Students' choice for fast food was dependent on several factors like: price, taste, convenience, habit, and variety. From the results and analysis it is concluded that globalisation has positively influenced the widespread of fast food outlets and has certainly affected students' choice and consumption of fast food despite their knowledge of its health implication.

Regardless of students' peripheral knowledge of fast food effect on health, it is essential to educate them on the consequences of fast food consumption; as they could easily become addicted to its consumption at the beginning of their university life prior to any knowledge on its health implications. Therefore, university authorities through the Students Union could include talks and seminars on eating healthily on campus in the students' fresher's programme. Similarly, universities could also consider the advertisements and the distribution of freebies and promotional materials offered by fast food operators to students during the fresher's programme.

It is expedient that fast food operators should not only be mindful of the returns made through this market segment, but should be customer-oriented by offering quality healthy food and using healthier ingredients in food preparation.

Based on the findings that students are likely to prefer fast food over homemade food, it is recommended that if need be to consume fast food, students should use fast food labelling information and menus to make a selection of healthier food options for a healthier life.

Policies guiding the activities of fast food operators should further be reconsidered and strengthened to protect the interest and health of young adults.

Since it was found that more males than females are likely to consume fast food, and the latter are more conscious of health issues than the former; it is therefore recommended that further research be carried out to investigate students' motivational factors and gender differences in fast food consumption. Finally, a larger population can be studied to ensure a more positive generalisation.

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