

# Factors affecting Consumer's Preference of Fast-Food Product in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine and assess the determinants that impact the decision-making process of consumers in the Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City with regards to fast food products. The dependent variable in this study is consumer preference, while taste, cost, quality, and service are considered as independent variables. A descriptive and causal research design was employed in this study, with a sample size of 384 participants, primarily comprising students from Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City universities. Primary data is obtained through the utilization of a structured questionnaire. Statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis conducted through the use of SPSS software are commonly employed to ascertain the relationships between the dependent variable, consumer preference, and the independent variables, namely taste, cost, quality, and service. The correlation analysis reveals noteworthy associations among taste, cost, quality, service, and consumer preference. The findings of the regression analysis indicate a statistically significant and positive relationship between consumers preferences for fast food items and factors such as taste, quality, and service. This suggests that consumers prioritize these factors when making decisions regarding fast food options. Conversely, the study suggests that consumer preference is minimally influenced or unaffected by cost, as observed among the participants.

**Keywords:** Consumer Preferences, Taste, Cost, Quality, Service

## I. Introduction

The prevalence of fast food in certain societies can be attributed to the confluence of social and occupational shifts, which have accentuated the inclination towards dining outside the home. According to Stamoulis et al. (2004), there has been an upward trend in the prevalence of working families on a global scale. Consumer preference, as defined by Rapurohit and Vasita (2011), refers to the act of selecting an option from a variety of alternatives that most effectively satisfies a customer's needs or desires. The preference of customers is clearly evident in their purchasing behaviour and product search activities. The analysis of consumer preferences pertaining to fast food items is crucial for understanding the evolving patterns of fast-food consumption and the factors that shape consumers' choices. The consumption of fast food is undergoing notable trans-

formations in the rapidly evolving global landscape. Individuals residing in urban areas exhibit a heightened inclination towards fast food consumption compared to their rural counterparts, primarily attributable to time limitations. The phenomenon of economic growth has resulted in the adoption of an urban lifestyle, which has engendered a heightened level of busyness among individuals and subsequently dissuaded them from engaging in home cooking activities. Consequently, consuming externally prepared food, particularly lighter options, emerges as the more favorable choice. Various factors are considered by individuals when making decisions regarding fast food, as highlighted by Islam and Ullah (2010). Based on contemporary patterns observed in urban areas of developing countries, there has been an increase in the frequency of dining out among individuals, leading to significant growth in the fast-food sector within these regions (Kaynak, Aksoy, & Kucukemiroglu, 1996). The increasing popularity of fast food has been observed both domestically and internationally, driven by the time limitations associated with leading a busy, competitive, and urban lifestyle (Platania & Privitera, 2006). Individuals who possess demanding timetables, such as employed adults and students, often find themselves constrained by limited time availability. Many students who reside outside of their familial homes often find themselves responsible for independently preparing meals, a circumstance that can impede their pursuit of academic objectives. Individuals are aware of the necessity to optimize their time all service, thus resorting to fast food as a means to efficiently manage their time and allocate a portion of it for recreational activities (Kharel, 2015). An emerging trend is evident in the manner in which fast-food establishments and their offerings entice patrons. The rapid expansion of the fast-food industry underscores the necessity to ascertain the factors influencing consumer preference for these dining options and to assess their overall satisfaction with fast food. A few factors that influence the dining preferences of individuals at fast-food restaurants must be emphasized. Nepal is renowned for its diverse selection of fast-food establishments, which are gaining significant traction within the fast-food sector of the country. French fries, Onion rings, Momo, pizza, burgers, chowmein, sausage, rolls, sandwiches and more are among these. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the factors contributing to the increasing preference for these fast-food products and evaluate the overall satisfaction of customers with respect to this matter.

The following inquiries are thus the focal point of this research:

- Which factors influence the selection of particular fast-food items?
- Is there a correlation between the independent variables (taste, cost, quality, and service) and the dependent variable (consumer preference)?

The particular goals are listed below.

- To investigate the correlation between consumer preference (the dependent variable) and independent variables such as cost, taste, quality, and service.
- To investigate how consumers' preferences for fast food items are influenced by factors such as cost, taste, quality, and service.

## Hypotheses

The main goal of the study's research hypotheses is to identify the key element influencing consumers' preferences for fast food items.

H1: Consumer preferences are significantly influenced by the taste of fast food.

H2: Consumer preferences are significantly influenced by the cost of fast food.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between quality factors and consumer preferences regarding fast food consumption.

H4: Consumer preferences for fast food consumption are significantly influenced by the service of fast-food restaurants.

## II. Literature Review

Based on the findings of Deivanai's (2016) study, customer satisfaction with fast-food establishments is influenced by several key factors, including the provision of satisfactory service, high-quality food offerings, reasonable pricing, pleasant indoor and outdoor environments, efficient staff performance, and a conveniently accessible service. In their study, Phan and Nguyen (2016) examined fast-food establishments in Vietnam and observed that customer satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by several factors. Specifically, they found that when the food quality is high, the pricing is fair, the quality is favourable, and the service is satisfactory, customers tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction and are more likely to engage in repeat patronage. In addition, the researchers formulated practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the performance of Vietnamese fast-food establishments and ensuring customer satisfaction. Naziret et al. (2014) conducted a study with the aim of comprehending the factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in fast-food establishments. It has been determined that various factors, such as the quality of food, level of staff service, quality, affordability, and perceived safety, play a pivotal role in the decision-making process when choosing a fast-food establishment. Based on a study conducted by Malasi (2012), it was found that a significant proportion of individuals express satisfaction with their choice of fast-food establishments and express a desire to revisit them. Furthermore, it has been found that while patrons generally express contentment with the service provided by fast-food establishments, there exist specific aspects that could be enhanced. Based on Monteiro's (2000) study, customer satisfaction with fast-food establishments is primarily influenced by three key factors: the quality of the food, the cleanliness of the environment, and the overall service quality. The significance of incorporating vegetarian options, exploring novel culinary experiences, and acquainting oneself with the local customs was relatively diminished. Comer and Wikle (2014) posits that factors contributing to customer satisfaction in the context of fast-food consumption include affordability, social influence, availability of healthy options, quality of service, taste of food, and convenient geographical proximity.

Based on the findings of Islam and Ullah (2010), consumers exhibit a primary concern for various factors when selecting a fast-food establishment. These factors include the reputation of the

brand, proximity to the consumer, consistency in food taste, cost, food quality, availability of promotional offers, cleanliness and hygienic conditions, sales techniques employed by staff, and the overall aesthetics of the restaurant. Ashraf et al. (2014) posit that a satisfied customer base in the fast-food industry is influenced by six key factors. These factors include the quality of the food, the level of service provided, the range of food options available, the quality of the dining environment, the affordability of the food, and the ease of accessibility. With the exception of the financial aspect, it has been observed that all of these factors have a positive correlation with individuals' level of happiness. In a study conducted by Malviya et al. (2013) it was found that customers in Peshawar, Pakistan, expressed satisfaction when they were provided with exceptional service and when they encountered a reputable brand. Additionally, it was found that various factors have an impact on customer satisfaction, such as advertising, service quality, customer expectations, brand reputation, geographical service, pricing, and the quality of the food provided. In their investigation of Chinese restaurants, Liu and Jang (2009) identified cleanliness, service quality, food taste, and reliability as the primary determinants for ensuring customer satisfaction and fostering customer loyalty. It has also been found that the success of Chinese restaurants is heavily contingent upon these factors.

### Conceptual framework

#### Independent Variable

#### Dependent Variable

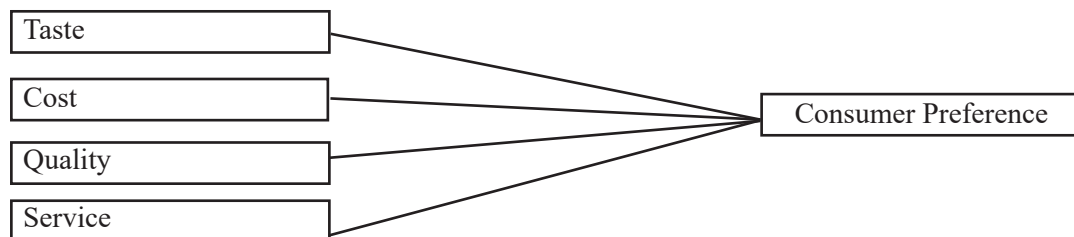


Figure: Conceptual framework

### III. Methodology

To elucidate the current state of affairs, a descriptive research design was employed, while a causal research design was utilized to investigate the interplay between cause and effect. This investigation specifically employs a survey instrument that has been designed to gauge the preferences of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City consumers regarding fast food products.

The study encompasses the entire population of fast-food consumers who reside in the Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. Each participant demonstrates distinct preferences in terms of cost, quality, taste, and service. In accordance with a convenient non-probability sampling technique, 384 participants were chosen to comprise the survey set. Correlation analysis was employed to investigate the associations between the independent variables (quality, taste, cost, and service) and the dependent variable (consumer preference). Furthermore, regression analysis was employed

to determine the influence of the four independent variables on the dependent variable, which pertained to consumer preference.

#### IV. Results

##### Correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis has been conducted in order to ascertain the level of correlation between multiple variables and the degree to which these variables are correlated with each other.

Pearson	Preference	Taste	Cost	Quality	Service
Preference	1				
Taste	0.550**	1			
Cost	0.400**	0.010**	1		
Quality	0.523**	0.080**	0.620**	1	
Service	0.466**	0.010**	0.523**	0.710**	1

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

The table presents the Pearson's correlation coefficient results, which indicate the relationship between consumer preference and the independent variables examined in the study. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between taste and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.550$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, a strong positive correlation was observed between quality and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.523$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, a moderate positive correlation was found between service and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.466$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Lastly, a weak positive correlation was identified between fast food cost and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.400$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The degree of correlation exhibits variability. The variable "cost" exhibits the lowest correlation ( $r = 0.400$ ) with consumer preference among the variables considered, whereas the variable "taste" demonstrates the highest correlation ( $r = 0.550$ ). Based on the obtained p-value being less than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the findings indicate that each of the independent variables exhibits a statistically significant and positive association with the dependent variable, with a significance level of 1 percent.

##### Regression analysis

**Table 3:**

Results of Multiple Regression on Independent and Dependent Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	1.789	0.257		6.96	0.00
Taste	0.225	0.100	0.18	2.25	0.00
Cost	0.325	0.675	0.05	0.48	0.75
Quality	0.255	0.078	0.340	3.27	0.00
Service	0.250	0.126	0.230	1.98	0.04

### Dependent Variable: Consumer Preference

The table above displays the coefficients, where a higher beta coefficient signifies a more pronounced impact on consumer preference. The findings of the study indicate that taste plays a substantial role in shaping consumer preferences, as evidenced by the beta coefficient of 0.225. This implies that there is a linear relationship between a consumer's preference and taste, with a coefficient of 0.225 indicating that for every unit change in taste, the consumer's preference changes by the same magnitude. The beta coefficient of 0.255 suggests a statistically significant relationship between quality and consumer preference. This implies that a one-unit increase in quality is associated with a 0.255-unit increase in consumer preference. The beta coefficient value of 0.250 suggests that the variable of service exerts a statistically significant influence on consumer preference. Specifically, a one-unit increase in service is associated with a 0.250-unit increase in consumer preference for fast food items. However, the cost exhibits a marginal beta coefficient of 0.325, indicating that it does not have a noticeable impact on consumer preference. This finding indicates that a marginal change in consumer preference of 0.325 units is correlated with a unitary change in cost.

The model's summary table shows that the R-value is 0.520, the R-squared value is 0.680, and the adjusted R-squared value is 0.6766. According to the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value, the four independent variables (cost, taste, quality, and service) account for 68% of the variance in consumer preference, while the remaining 32% is attributable to other factors that are relevant to the selection of fast food. Statistical significance for the regression model is found in the ANOVA table ( $F = 12.00$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $df = 379$ ). This result indicates that the four distinct factors of fast-food brand preference (taste, cost, quality, and service) are all highly effective predictors.

In summary, the findings of the study indicate that the preferences of consumers for fast food items are significantly influenced by factors such as service, quality, and taste, while cost appears to have minimal impact.

### V. Conclusion

The principal objective of this study is to identify the foremost determinants that impact consumers' inclinations towards fast food products. The primary objective of this study was to assess the correlation and impact of four variables - taste, cost, quality, and service on the preferences of fast-food consumers in the Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. By employing methods such as frequency distribution, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, the SPSS 20 software was utilised to analyse the data collected from 384 respondents via a structured questionnaire. The findings from the analysis of primary data indicate that consumer preferences regarding fast food are primarily influenced by taste, Cost, quality, service, and taste subsequently rank in importance. When individuals consume fast food, they exhibit heightened sensitivities to taste components. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate that consumer preferences regarding fast food purchases are highly correlated with taste. Strong correlations are also observed between quality and service with customer preferences, while the least correlation is observed with the cost of fast food. In regards to their fast-food consumption, participants seem

to prioritize taste, quality, and service over cost. A multiple regression analysis was employed to ascertain the impact of the four independent variables - taste, cost, quality, and service – on consumers' preferences for fast food items. Taste is the most influential of these factors that significantly affect consumer preferences; quality and service follow suit. However, the available research indicates that cost does not significantly influence consumer preferences. In conclusion, this study discover that consumer opinions and preferences are significantly influenced by the taste of fast-food products, the quality and comfort of the dining area, and the convenience of the service. Conversely, customer preferences appear to be less influenced by the cost of fast food.



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