

**CONSUMER PREFERENCE SURVEY OF DE CHOICE FAST FOOD IN UYO  
METROPOLIS, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Citation:** Abasiama Mfon and Imoh Uford (2022) Consumer Preference Survey of De Choice Fast Food in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, *British Journal of Marketing Studies*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp.13-34

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**ABSTRACT:** *The purpose of this study was to provide a description of fast-food consumers, analyze their preferences, determine the adequacy of current packaging material, and recommend improvements in media vehicles and promotional strategy. A sample of 172 consumers entering De Choice Fast Food in Uyo Metropolis, were conveniently selected, while descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data obtained. Findings showed that De Choice Fast Food consumers were predominantly resident in Uyo metropolis, singles, more males than females with some levels of education, relatively young people with average incomes. Of all the consumers, those who liked De Choice Fast Food products thought it was tasty, with great value while those who had complaints said their price was on the high side but that the foods/snacks were spicy. Furthermore, the findings showed that consumers prefer white transparent clear plastic packaging to other materials and that they consider De Choice Fast Food location, parking space and interior to be adequate. More so, they love a variety of music like gospels, pop, rock and traditional music and are mostly reached through De Choice bill boards. From these findings, we concluded that most of the consumers of De Choice Fast Food products were average income earners, quite young and enterprising men and women; the foods were of good taste and great value and billboards were the most effective means of reaching most of the consumers. Based on this, we recommended that a complete repackaging of their service strategy be revisited through process engineering of key service areas.*

**KEYWORDS:** consumer preference, choice fast food, Uyo-Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

The once conservative Nigerian society has been swept by an upsurge of Western influence in their eating habits. The demands and pressures of today's busy lifestyle coupled with technological advancement have significantly altered the values and ways of life of people in the contemporary

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society. The effects of these changes have altered the tradition of cooking and eating at home. More people are eating away from home today due to a number of factors which include increasing urbanization of our society, emerging food technologies, exposure to global media, more women taking up full time employment and changes in socio-cultural values and demographics of consumers (Devanai, 2016; kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Aksoy, 1996). People are now more reliant on ready-to-eat meals offered by businesses for their daily sustenance and popular among them are fast foods. Thus, fast food outlets are springing up in the metropolis of almost all Nigerian state capitals (Fakokunde, Iwarere and Mustapha. 2014).

Fast food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served quickly. It is any meal that is served in a restaurant with short preparation time and served to the customers in a packaged form or take-away (Islam and Ullah, 2010). Fast foods are mostly designed for ready availability, use and consumption (Islam and Ullah, 2010). These foods are deemed to offer more quality and efficient service to target consumers (kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Aksoy, 1996). Consumers' preference for these foods is predicated on the utilitarian functions they seem to offer. Thus, it has become necessary to examine these preferences as regards De Choice Fast Food outlet in Uyo Metropolis.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The past two decades have witnessed a surge in the number of fast-food restaurants in Uyo metropolis. These restaurants have not only provided food for the teeming population but have also generated employment for several families and households. In essence, the growth of fast-food restaurants in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, has contributed immensely to socio- economic development of the state. Generating data on the number of fast-food restaurants, their growth possibilities, competition, technological breakthrough, possible government intervention, etc., may not only help in economic planning but will also assist in improving social welfare schemes for several people. This, to a reasonable extent, is quite remarkable but unfortunately, existing data on fast food business is mostly available from advanced economies of the world like the US, China, UK, India, Australia, Canada, and France (ReportLinker, 2019). Such industry reports about fast food restaurants in Nigeria are unavailable and existing studies on fast food restaurants are very scanty, fragmented and inconclusive (Fakokunde, Iwarere and Mustapha, 2014; Vanguard, 2009). For instance, existing studies on consumer preference survey for fast foods have been restricted to university students in campuses (Priyadarshini, 2016; Prabhu, 2014; Mohammad, 2003), or academic staff (Aksoydan, 2007) without considering the generality of the consumers. Some were focused on determining factors (Mohammad, 2003), consumption patterns (Blesic, Raljic, Pivac and Ivkov, 2018; Prabhu, 2014; Huang and Howarth, 1996), restaurants/outlets (Upadhyay, Singh and Sharma, 2017), brand preference among urban and rural dwellers (Patil, 2017), service quality delivery (Fakokunde, Iwarere and Mustapha, 2014) in India, China, Australia, Kenya, Bangladesh and Ghana (Upadhyay, Singh and Sharma, 2017; Priyadarshini, 2016; Nondzor and Tawiah, 2015; Prabhu, 2014; Islam and Ullah, 2010; Mohammad, 2003).

Furthermore, there is dearth of literature and data on consumers' preference survey in this sector in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State in particular. Equally, consumers' preference surveys for

particular fast food companies are not available. Although most literatures have shown that overall consumers' brand preference could be predicted by repurchase intention and willingness to pay a price premium (Uford & Duh, 2021), this study used the utilitarian functions offered by De Choice Fast Food, as mentioned by (kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Aksoy, 1996), to measure its consumers' preference. It is against this backdrop that this study attempted to fill the gap in literature by investigating consumers' preferences for De Choice Fast Food Company.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study were to:

1. provide a description of De Choice Fast Food consumers in terms of their demographics.
2. analyze consumers' perception of De Choice Fast Food offerings.
3. determine the packaging adequacy of De Choice Fast Food for consumers.
4. examine the significance of the media vehicle used by De Choice Fast Food.

### **Research Questions**

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of De Choice Fast Food consumers in Uyo Metropolis?
2. How do consumers perceive De Choice Fast Food offers?
3. How adequate is the packaging used by De Choice Fast Food in delivering their service?
4. How significant is the media of communication used by De Choice Fast Food?

### **Rationale of the study**

De Choice fast food has made significant growth in its business in recent times despite the stiff competition within the fast-food industry in Uyo metropolis. This has drawn attention not just from major industry players like Crunches Fast-Food and Kilimanjaro Fast-Food etc., but also from the entire populace in Uyo. This giant stride performance in a highly competitive environment has aroused the interest of the authors to seek answers to key issues of De Choice fast food consumers with reference to their food preferences, the adequacy of the food packaging material and the media vehicles adopted by the outlet. The study was conducted to have a proper evaluation of the company's business model and its customers' perception as well as receptibility. The results of this study will be significant to De Choice fast food who will find out the preferences of their consumers. This will place De Choice Fast Food in a position to strategically devise offers that will please their consumers more. Being that the fast-food industry is fast growing, other fast foods outlets will borrow a leaf from De Choice model to design menus that meet their consumers' and or potential customers' preferences and ensure that other aspects of their intangible offerings also communicate quality and acceptability. The society will benefit from the findings of this study as the resultant growth of De Choice and other similar fast foods outlets will enhance a surge in the economy of the state capital with its ripple effects on the socio-economic life of the populace. This study's findings will also serve as reference material for future endeavours in this respect.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **The Concept of Fast-Food Restaurants**

Bender and Bender, (1995) opined that fast food is the general term for limited menu of foods that follow production-line techniques with suppliers specializing in particular areas such as hamburgers, fried rice, chicken pie, fish pie, sandwiches, continentals, etc. These foods are served in formal, standardized and registered restaurants different from the unstandardized offers of ready to eat food vendors (Christopher and Robert, 1994). According to Ogunlade (2008) “fast food” is used as a collective term for the end products that consumers eat or drink. It is considered not merely as a collection of inputs to satisfy human nutritional requirements, but also possesses a multi-dimensional set of consumer-satisfying attributes such as taste, appearance, security, convenience etc. Ariyo (2005), and Raimi and Towobola (2011), add that the term ‘fast food’ was first recognized by Merriam-Webster dictionary in 1951 and referred to food that can be easily prepared and served very quickly in an outlet to consumers. It can be served directly from oven to table (sit-in) or presented in form of take-out packages or containers (take-away). Mohammad (2003) asserted that fast food restaurants are multinational companies that sell a standardized product linked to a global restaurant brand name. These fast food operations normally feature a limited menu, fast service, low prices, and counter self-service using disposable service-ware. Fast food operations have two very important attributes —convenience and a high level of perceived value. Fast food stores are typically located in high-traffic, high-visibility locations where many potential consumers pass by each day. These stores provide a close-by, convenient place to dine for many individuals. Fast food restaurants also offer a relatively low price and a high-perceived value. Moreover, Christopher and Robert (1994) further argued that “perhaps the most obvious of the many attributes of these fast food segment are its reliance on narrow menus, its catering to extremely price-sensitive customer bases, and its development of "habit forming" purchases through top-of-mind advertising.” The fast food industry, originally conceived in Southern California during the 1940s, has not only altered the eating habits of Americans, but also those in many other countries around the world, including Asian countries (Schlosser, 2001). Common fast food menu found in outlets worldwide apart from drinks include pies, chips, fries, sandwiches, pizzas, noodles, chilis, salads, potatoes, rice, ice-cream, coffee, candies, hamburgers, fish, beef, chicken, turkey, hot dogs, continentals and Africana.

Although various sizes, types and kinds of outfits exist worldwide for the purpose of retailing fast foods (Jakle, 1999), this study is concerned with modern day fast food retail outlets, better known as Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs).

### **Consumer Perception and Preference for Fast Food**

Several studies on consumer perceptions and preferences for fast food have been carried out in developed and developing countries. Perception is defined as a process through which individuals are exposed to attend to and comprehend information (Mowen, 1995). As is the case with any product, customers form perceptions of fast-food outlets and make preferences based on their perceptions. These perceptions may be formed by word-of-mouth communication, promotions

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from fast-food restaurants, past personal experiences, and other sources. Some perceptions may be incorrect; differing from country to country (Kara, Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu, 1996).

Most of the researches concerning selection of a restaurant are usually based on identification of determining attributes (Bojanic 2007), such as hygienic factors (Aksoydan 2007), menu price (Baek, Hamand and Yang, 2006), display of menu (Sparks, Bowen and Klag, 2003), experience and incentives (Knutson, Beck and Elsworth 2006a; 2006b), and leisure (Mehta and Maniam, 2002). Yuksel and Yuksel (2002) studied selection of restaurants by tourists in Turkey. Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece (2000), examined consumers' preferences towards restaurants in Hong Kong. Cullen (2005) investigated consumer preferences for Italian and Chinese styled restaurants. Many studies investigated impact of interiors on consumer preferences towards restaurants (e.g., Andersson 1991; Aubert-Gamet, 1997; Baker, 1986; Belk, 1975; Bitner, 1992; Millman, 1986; Stevens, Knutson, and Patton, 1995; Turley and Bolton 1999; Shostack, 1977, 1987; Ward, Bitner and Barnes. 1992) and few other studies underpin the importance of ambiance in restaurant selection (eg. Auty, 1992; Bitner, 1992; and Finkelstein 1989). Studies from Auty (1992) and Andersson and Mossberg (2004) argued that consumer preferences towards restaurants are hierarchical. Many studies have attempted to comprehend consumer preferences towards restaurant by segmenting them on the basis of benefits sought (e.g., Auty 1992; Bahn and Granzin 1985; Koo, Tao and Yeung 1999; Yu-Hua and Morrison 2007; Yuksel and Yuksel 2002).

Studies on university students' preference for fast food showed that young people prefer more to eat out as they are not concerned with food preparation. Also, the need for socialization draws this group to eat out more. They also found out that people, who are usually very busy working, find fast-foods advantageous. Accordingly, their choice of a particular fast-food outlet depends on its flexibility and capacity to adapt to young people's needs. These needs are in fact young people's desires to easily find a place to eat, opened at any time, with products display, to be able to order fast, to eat the food ordered rapidly, to have a place to socialize with their friends and to take away the food or order at home when they do not want or do not have time to have the meal at fast-food outlet (Islam and Ullah, 2010; kaynak, Kucukemiroglu and Aksoy, 1996; Deivanai, 2016; Mustapha et al. 2014) .

Kara, Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu, (1996) examined how the perceptions of customers towards fast food restaurants differed across two countries USA and Canada. The results of the study revealed significant differences in perception between the frequent fast food buyers in USA and Canada and also differences between consumers' preferences for fast-food restaurants in relation to age groups. Rezende and Avelar (2012), attempted to describe the eating out habits of consumers in Brazil. The study revealed that a 'search for variety' was a motivator for eating outside the home. The desire for 'convenience' was an important element on many occasions of consumption. The younger people and people with higher incomes possessed more intensive consumption and more favourable attitudes towards eating out. The study also revealed that although eating out was a very popular trend, many of the consumers did not voice any intention of eating out more frequently. An attitude towards eating out was not all so positive, with certain levels of suspicion or mistrust on the part of the consumers' frequency of buying.

Anand (2011), explored the impact of demographics and psychographics on young consumer's food choice towards fast food in Delhi, India. The key determinants impacting consumers' food choice were found out to be passion for eating out, socialisation, ambience and taste of fast food and convenience for dual-income families in urban India. Findings indicated that fast food companies can no longer rely on convenience as USP in India, unless the implication of same on consumer's health is given equal importance in the years to come.

Finally, research in this sector indicates that a myriad of factors affect consumer perceptions and preferences towards restaurants and fast foods like demography (e.g., Cullen 2005; Aksoydan 2007; Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece. 1999; Withiam 1985), psychology (e.g., Cullen 2005), restaurant type (Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece. 1999), occasion (e.g., Cullen 2005), and values (Blöse and Litvin, 2005).

### **Fast Food Packaging**

Products packaging is primarily for the purpose of protection and preservation but could also serve as a valuable marketing tool to the producer (Meyers and Lubliner, 1998) in influencing consumer purchase decision. This is because consumers can make assumptions about food tastes and subsequent product experiences based on the packaging (Cardello, 1994; Schifferstein, Kole, and Mojet, 1999). The packaging chosen for food products often communicates a message to consumers, which makes choosing an appropriate packaging material critical for companies in the quick service restaurant industry. Materials commonly used to package fast food products include: paper, paperboard, plastic, foil, and cardboard (Foodservice Packaging Institute, 2007). Widaningrum (2014), identified three basic materials for packaging fast food take-away as plastic, paper and polystyrene foam. In his study of 274 respondents, he found out that packaging material was the most attribute that affected consumers' preference of take away food packaging. Consumers have come to associate certain materials with particular products because they perceive these materials to be appropriate for the distinct product (Raudenbush, Meyer, Eppich, Corley, and Petterson, 2002). Understanding the qualities conveyed to consumers by various styles of packaging could ultimately be used in the new product development process and to help improve consumers overall experience in QSRs (Thackson, 2013).

### **Media Vehicle for Fast Food Outlets**

Media type used by fast food outlets has been the least researched aspect in quick service restaurants industry as very few studies (Hoffman, 2017) seem to link consumers preference of fast food to media choice by particular fast food outlets. The study of Hoffman (2017), has highlighted the advantages offered by the use of new media in influencing the buying experience of consumers in the fast food industry. In exploring the use of social media by two fast food companies Taco and Chick-fil-A, Hoffman asserted that the social media has offered new opportunities than the traditional advertising and print media as companies can create content that are cheaper and easily accessible to consumers where orders can be placed and processed with remarkable speed.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study design

The descriptive research design was used for the study.

### Population

The population of this study consists of all consumers of De Choice Fast Food in Uyo Metropolis, totaling about 720 customers (De Choice Digest, 2019).

### Sample Size Determination/ Sampling Procedure

Taro Yamene's (1973) formula for determining sample size was applied to this number to obtain a sample of 257 consumers as shown below;

According to Taro Yamene,

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population

n = sample size

e = error limit (0.05) on the basis of 95% confidence level

$$\text{Therefore } n = \frac{720}{1+720(0.05)^2} = \frac{720}{1+720(0.0025)} = \frac{720}{1+1} = \frac{720}{2} = 257$$

$$N = 257$$

Thus, the sample size for the study was 257.

The convenience sampling technique was used to select 257 respondents to participate in the survey. This was done by giving copies to consumers who were responsible for the purchase as they went into the restaurant. The copies were given to only those who were willing to participate in the survey.

### Method of Data Collection

A questionnaire with simple dichotomous items was developed, open-ended questions, and a semantic differential scale. (See: Appendix 1). A five man team was used from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August in 2019, to administer copies of questionnaire between 7.30am-11am in the mornings; 1pm-3pm in the afternoon and 5pm – 9pm in the evenings using the drop and pick method as customers came in to purchase food with the permission of the manager. One hundred and seventy two (172) copies of the returned copies of questionnaire representing 67% were deemed correctly filled and useful for the purpose of the study.

### Instrumentation

The basic instrument that was used to generate information was a self-developed questionnaire containing simple dichotomous questions; check list questions, open-ended questions, and a semantic differential scale (See Appendix 1) on consumers' demographics, perceptions and preferences on food packaging, music, media, etc.

### Method of data analysis

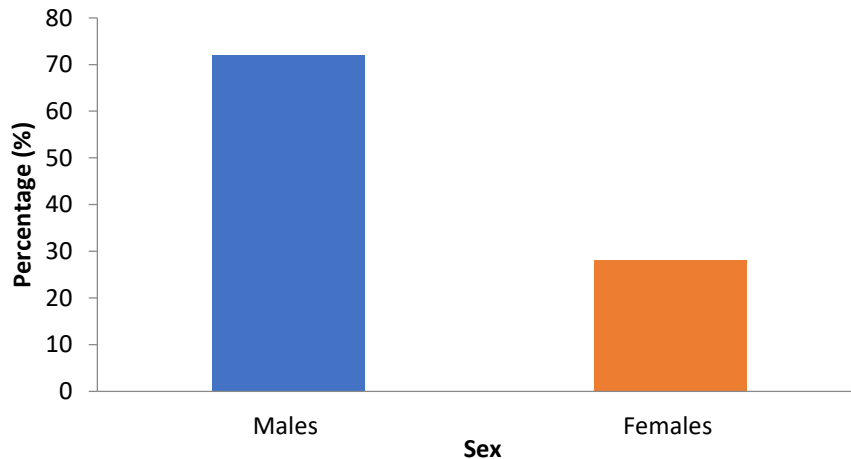
The data were tabulated using a computerized statistical package –IBM SPSS-23 and results analyzed, rounded up and presented in bar charts and tables.

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis and findings of the study were presented using the study objectives as a framework. The following section includes information about the demographics of De Choice Fast Food consumers, their perceptions of the foods offered, perceptions of food packaging, information on media, etc.

### Analysis of De Choice Fast Food Consumers' Demographics/ Preferences

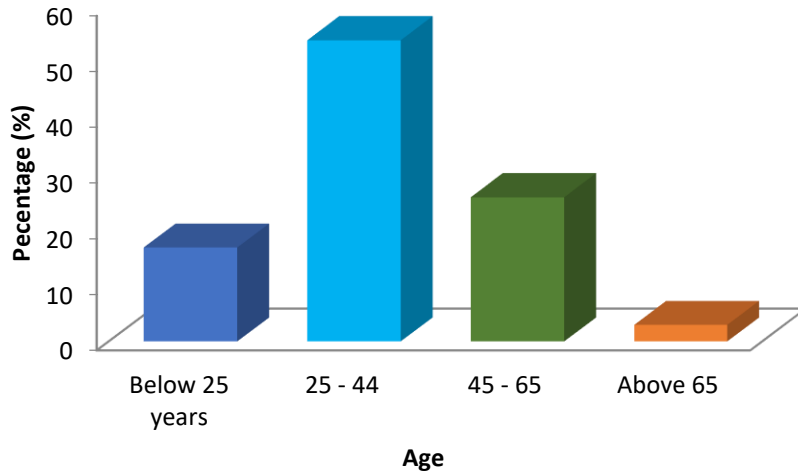
The demographics information collected for the study from the regularity of visits to income level provides a detailed description of De Choice Fast consumers. The presentation of these findings is shown in figures and tables as follows;



**Fig. 4.1: Sex characteristics of De Choice Fast food (Field survey, July 2019)**

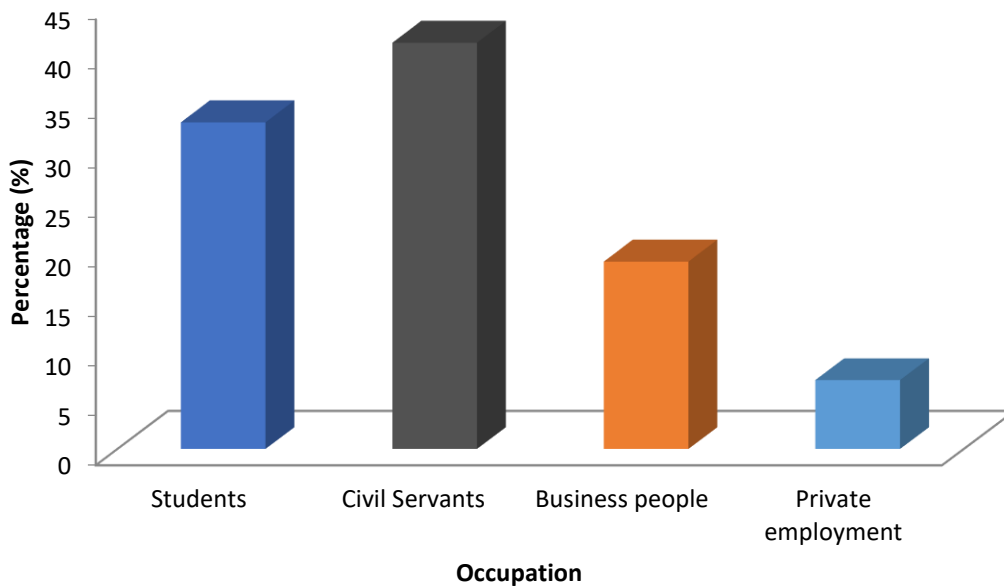
As indicated on Fig. 4.1, the sex distribution of De Choice Fast Food customers showed that 124 were males representing 72% and 48 were females representing 28% of De Choice Fast Food consumers.





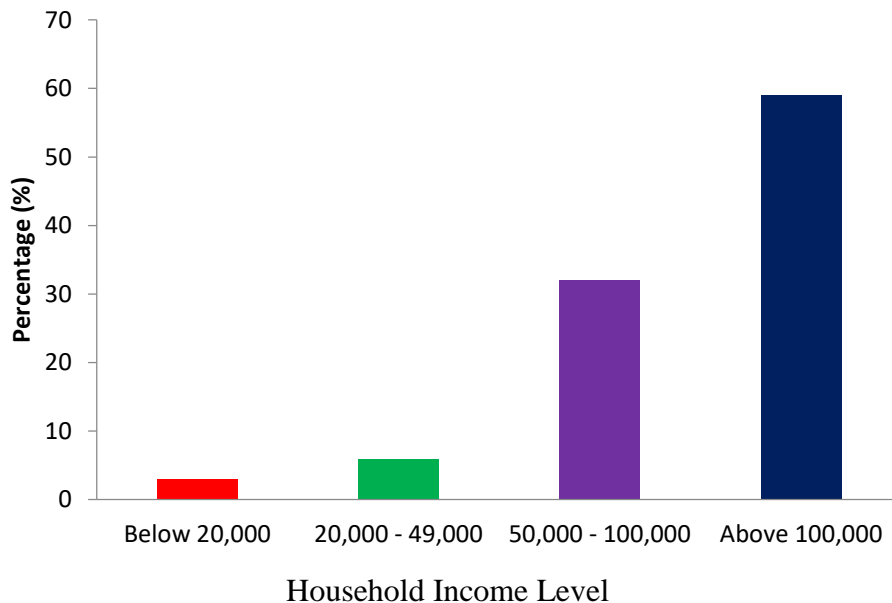
**Fig. 4.2: Age distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers (Field survey, July 2019)**

The age distribution on Fig. 4.2 showed that 29 consumers representing 17% were below 25; 93 consumers representing 54% were between 25 and 44 years of age; 45 consumers representing 26% were between 45-65 years while only 5 consumers representing 3% were above 65 years.

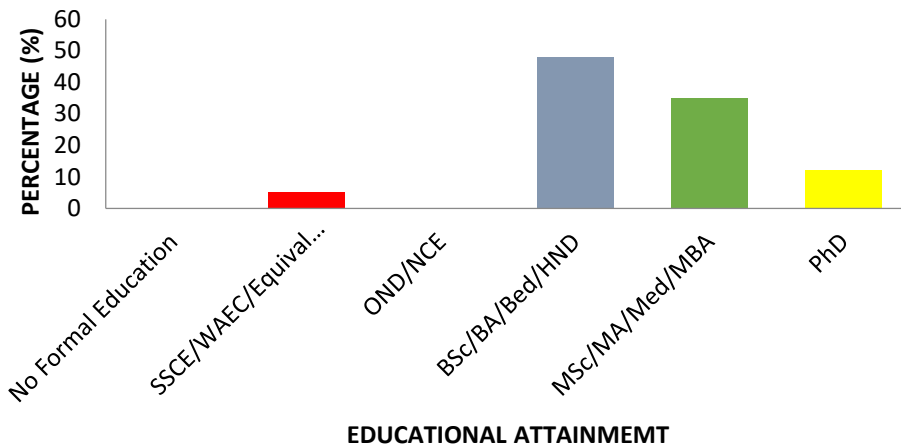


**Fig. 4.3: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers by Occupation (Field survey, July 2019)**

Figure 4.3 on occupation shows that civil servants patronizing De Choice Fast Food were 70 representing 41%, students were 57 representing 33%, and business people were 33 representing 19% while 12 people representing 7% were in private employment. Figure 4.4 on Income distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers showed that 5 consumers representing 3% earned below ₦20,000; 10 representing 6% earned between ₦20 - ₦49,000; 55 representing 32% earned ₦50- ₦100,000 while 102 representing 59% earned above ₦100,000.

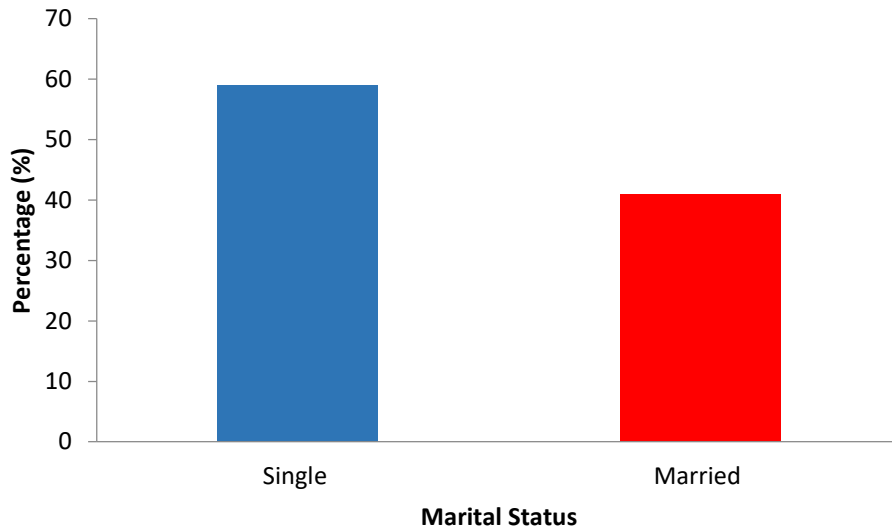


**Fig. 4.4: Income Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers (Field survey, July 2019)**



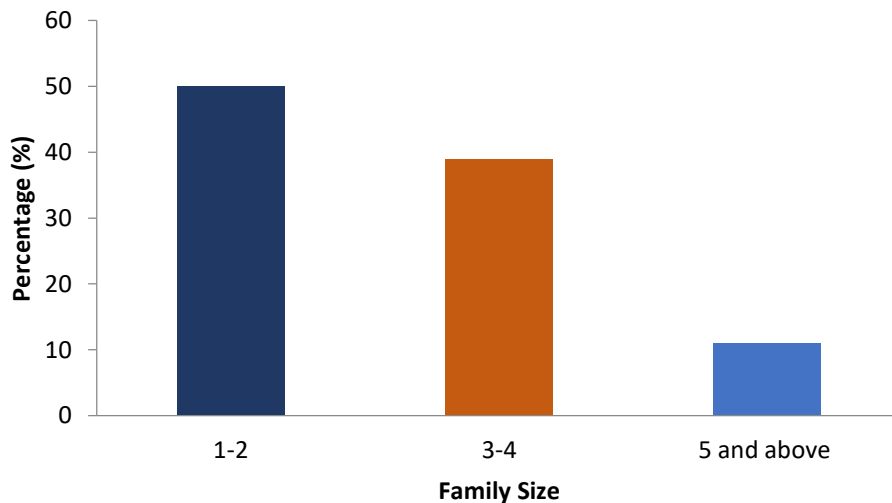
**Fig. 4.5: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers based on Educational Attainment (Field survey, July 2019)**

Figure 4.5 on educational attainment showed that majority 48% (83) of De Choice’s consumers had BSc/HND/Bed, 35% (60) had MA/MSc/ Med/MBA; 5% (9) had SSCE while 12% (20) had PhD. There was none without a formal education and none with NCE/OND.



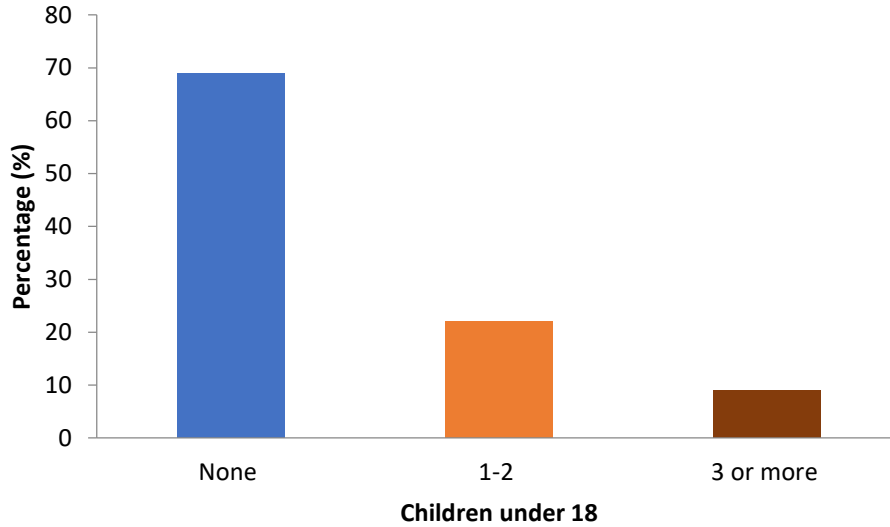
**Fig. 4.6: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers based on marital status (Field survey, July 2019)**

Fig. 4.6 on marital status of De Choice Fast Food consumers showed that 101 representing 59% were single while 71 representing 41% were married.



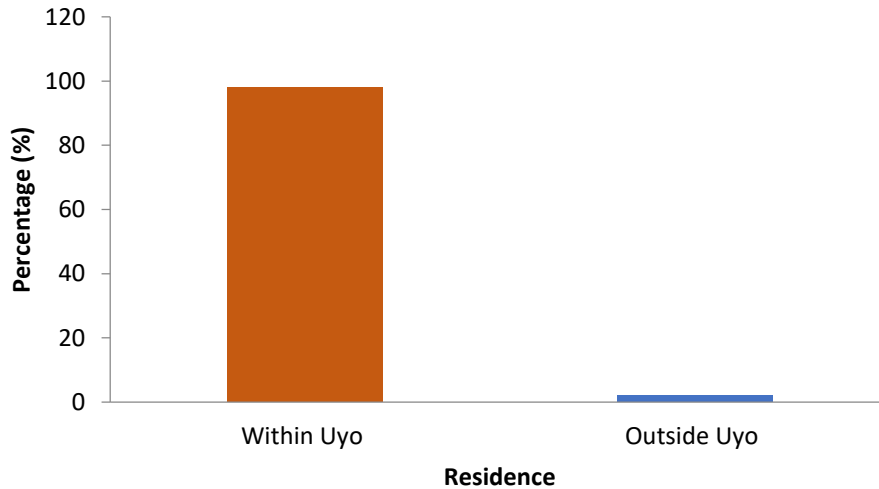
**Fig. 4.7: Family size distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers (Field survey, July 2019)**

Fifty percent (86) of De Choice’s consumers in Fig 4.7 had a family size of 1-2; 39% (67) had 3-4 while those with a family size above 5 were 11% (19)



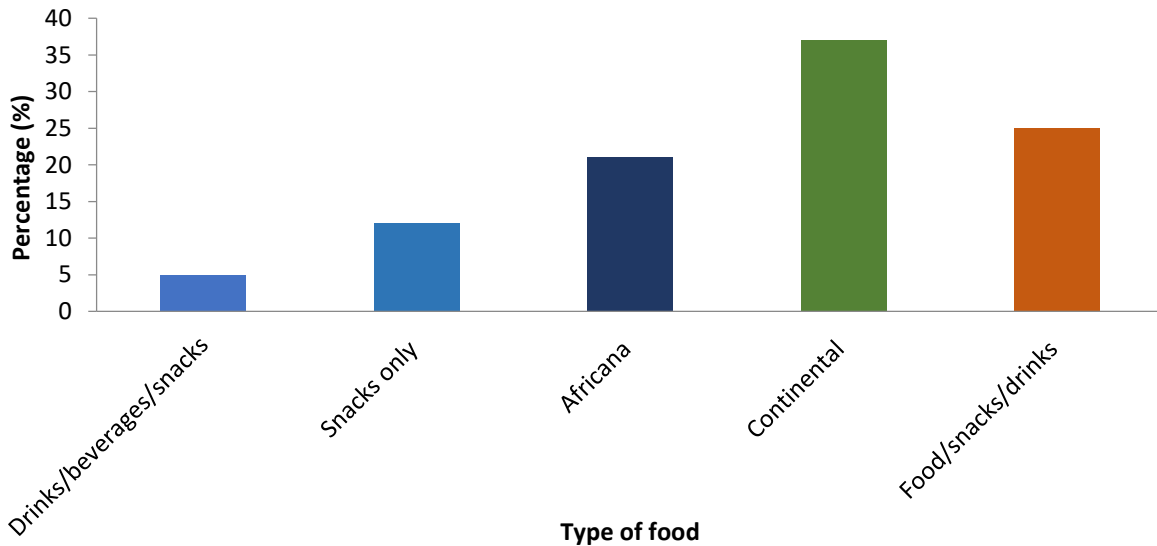
**Fig. 4.8: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers’ families with children below 18 years (Field survey, July 2019)**

Fig 4.8 showed those consumers without children below 18 years were 69% (119); those with 1-2 children below 18 years were 22% (38) while those with 3 or more children under 18 were 9% (15).



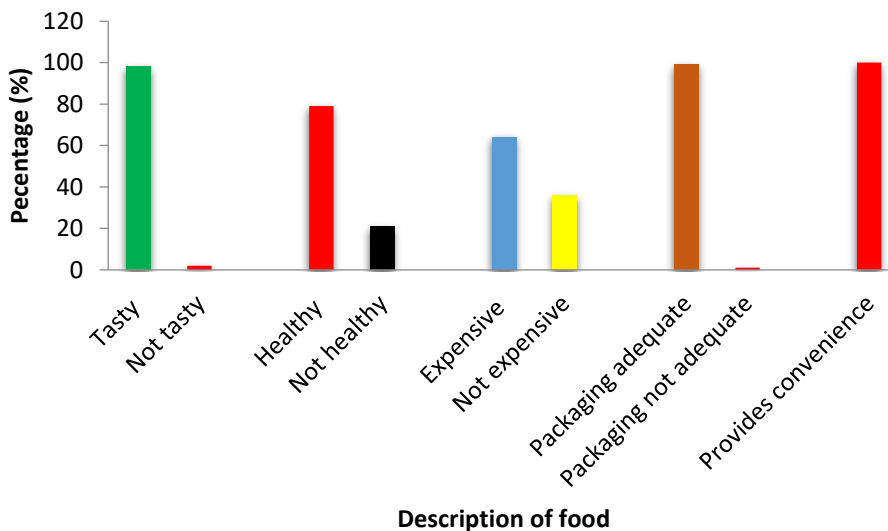
**Fig. 4.9: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers on residence (Field survey, July 2019)**

Figure 4.9 shows that 98% representing 169 consumers resided within Uyo while only 2% (3) resided outside of Uyo metropolis.



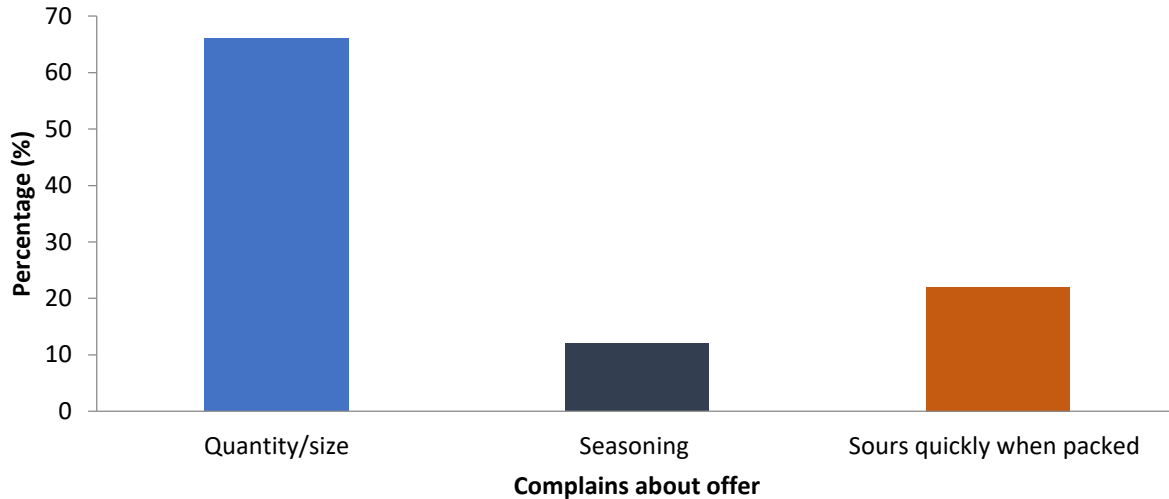
**Fig. 4.10: Distribution of De Choice Fast Food consumers based on food usually bought (Field survey, July 2019)**

Figure 4.10 shows that 5% (9) consumers of De Choice Fast Food usually buy drinks/beverages and snacks; 12% (21) buy only snacks; 21% (36) buy native food (africana), 37% (63) buy continental while 25% (43) buy food and snacks.



**Fig. 4.11: Consumers Description of De Choice Fast Food (Field survey, July 2019)**

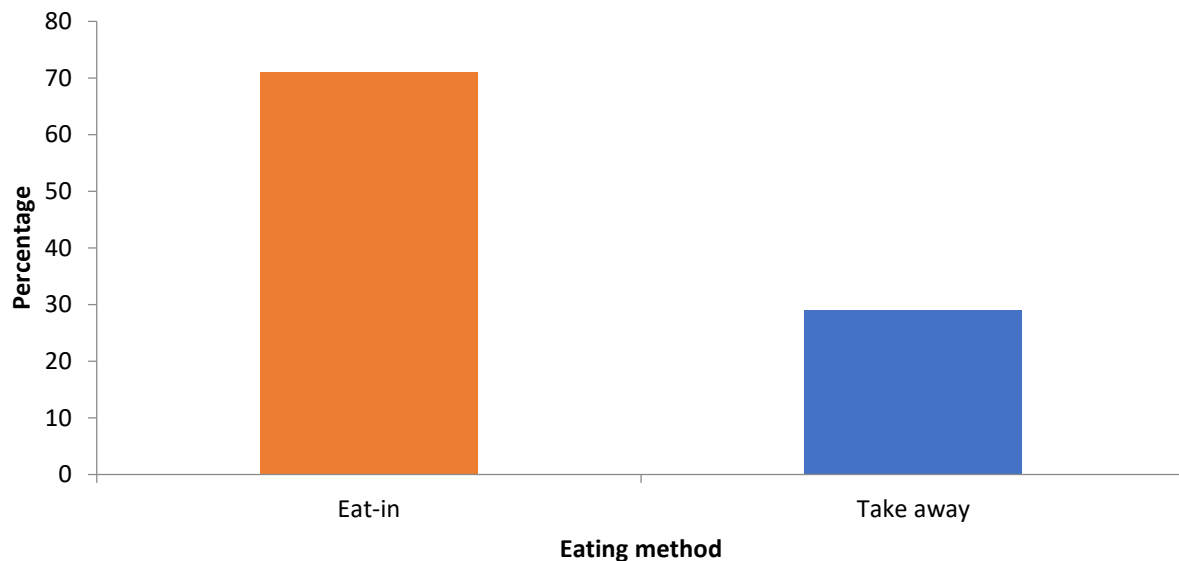
Figure 4.11 on description of De Choice Fast Food shows that 98% (169) said that the food is tasty, 79% (136) said the food is healthy, 64% (110) said the food is expensive, 99% (170) opined that the packaging is adequate while all the consumers agreed that it provides convenience for them.



**Fig. 4.12: De Choice Fast Food consumers' complains about the food offer (Field Survey, July 2019).**

Figure 4.12 shows that 66% (113) of the consumers' complaints were on the quantity/size of the offer being small. Twelve percent (21) complained about the seasoning being too spicy while 22% (38) complained that the food sours quickly if packed and kept for a long time.

Figure 4.13 shows that 71% (122) prefer to eat in while 29% (50) prefer take away.



**Fig. 4.13: De Choice Fast Food consumers' eating method (Field survey, July 2019)**

**Table 4.1**  
**Table showing frequency of visits by De Choice Fast Food consumers**

<b>Frequency of visits</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Every day	24	14
Twice a week	81	47
2 – 4 times a week	29	17
Occasionally	38	22
Total	172	100

Field Survey, 2019.

Table 4.1 shows the frequency of visits to De Choice Fast Food by consumers. Fourteen percent (24) of the consumers visit every day; 47% (81) visit twice a week; 17% (29) visit 2-4 times a week while 22% (38) consumers visit occasionally.

**Table 4.2**  
**Table showing consumers' most preferred time of visit to De Choice Fast Food**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Morning	38	22
Afternoon	43	25
Evening	77	45
When free	14	8
Total	172	100

**Field Survey, 2019**

Table 4.2 shows that 22% (38) of the consumers most preferred time of visit is in the morning; 25% (43) in the afternoon; 45% (77) in the evening while 8% (14) claimed that they visited whenever they could.

**Table 4.3**  
**Table showing number and percentage of consumers who had seen or heard De Choice Fast Food advert by type of media**

<b>Type of media</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Television	-	-
Radio	14	8
Billboards	132	77
Stickers/fliers	26	15
Social media	-	-
Total	172	100

**Field Survey, 2019**

Table 4.3 shows the number and percentages of consumers who had seen or heard De Choice Fast Food advertisements by type of media. Eight percent (14) consumers had heard De Choice's

adverts on radio; 77% (132) had seen De Choice's billboards; 15% (26) had seen the stickers/fliers while none has seen the adverts on television or social media.

**Table 4.4**  
**Table showing number and percentage of De Choice Fast Food consumers by whom they buy food for**

Item	Number	Percentage (%)
Buy for self alone	77	45
Buy for self and friends	60	35
Buy for self and family	35	20
Total	172	100

**Field Survey, 2019**

Table 4.4 shows the number and percentage of De Choice's consumers by whom they buy food for. Forty-five percent (77) consumers buy food for themselves; 35% (60) consumers buy for themselves and friends while 20% (35) consumers buy for their family.

**Table 4.5**  
**Table showing music preference of De Choice Fast Food consumers by sex**

Sex	Gospel	Pop	Rock	Traditional
Male	16% (27)	22% (38)	19% (33)	15% (26)
Female	15% (25)	3% (5)	5% (9)	5% (9)
Total	31% (52)	25% (43)	24% (42)	20% (35)

**Field Survey, 2019**

Table 4.5 shows that 16% (27) males prefer gospel music against 15% (25) females that prefer it totaling 31% (52) consumers that prefer gospel music. Twenty two percent (38) males prefer pop music against 3% (5) females making it a total of 25% (43) consumers that prefer pop music. Rock music is preferred by 19% (33) males and 5% (9) females. Traditional music is preferred by 15% (26) males while 5% (9) females prefer it.

**Table 4.6**  
**Consumers' perception of De Choice Fast Food location, parking space and interior**

Item	Number	Percentage	Total
Location: Strategic	170	99	100
Not strategic	2	1	
Parking space: Adequate	163	95	100
Not adequate	9	5	
Interior: Adequate	167	97	100
Not adequate	5	3	

Table 4.6 shows that 99% (170) of De Choice's customers consider the location of De Choice Fast Food strategic. Ninety-five percent (163) said the parking space was adequate while 97% (167) said the interior was adequate.



## **FINDINGS**

De Choice Fast Food consumers are predominantly residing within Uyo metropolis. Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the consumers are males from 25 to 65 years of age and predominantly students and civil servants within the income level of ₦50,000 and above with first and second degrees. They are both single and married with a family size of 1-4 people. A greater number do not have children below 18 years of age. A greater number usually buy continental dishes with snacks and drinks, and they prefer eating-in. Most of De Choice Fast Food consumers perceive the food to be tasty, healthy, expensive, offers convenience with adequate packaging that is of high standard. A significant number complained about the quantity/size of food being small while a few said the seasoning is too spicy and that the dishes sours too quickly if packed and kept for a long time. Majority of the consumers visit twice a week and mainly in the evenings.

In addition, the study showed that most consumers had seen De Choice Fast Food billboards which obviously are the most successful medium for De Choice Fast Food. A further consideration is that the consumers liked all the types of music. Most of the consumers buy food for themselves and friends. Consumers perceive the location of De Choice Fast Food to be strategic while the interior and parking spaces are seen to be adequate.

Several consumer preference surveys for fast food carried out basically on students confirmed that fast foods are convenient, time saving, delicious, good for a change and fun, as well as preference of the environment. Those who do not consume fast food however perceive fast food as unhealthy, quite expensive and too foreign as related to local dishes. Results of Priyadarshini's (2016) study showed that majority of the respondents, 64%, visit fast food restaurants weekly. Majority of the respondents, 63% prefer visiting fast food restaurants in the evenings. Majority of the respondents, 70% spend >15% of their monthly income on fast food. Majority of the respondents, 40% choose fast food restaurants due to the convenient pricing. Majority of the respondents, 61% prefer eating in the restaurants rather than taking out.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. De Choice Fast Food consumers are predominantly students and civil servants between 25 to 65 years of age with income level of ₦50,000, residing within Uyo metropolis.
2. Consumers perceive De Choice Fast Food to be of great taste, with good value but small, expensive and sours quickly if kept for a long time.
3. De Choice Fast Food packaging is considered by consumers to be adequate and superb.
4. The most significant medium for De Choice in reaching consumers is the billboard.

## **Study Implications**

The study highlighted the demographics of De Choice fast food consumers and their preferences in terms of their perception of the food offerings, the adequacy of their food packaging and their media vehicle preference. The implications of the study include that:

1. De Choice fast food has tapped into the students and civil servants' segments of the consumer markets but has a large untapped market within the privately employed rank and high potentials within the business class.
2. Although De Choice fast food has explored the billboards as its major vehicle for advertising, it is yet to harness the benefits of internet advertising with its huge advantages in the fast-growing e-Markets.
3. Furthermore, although De Choice fast food consumers are comfortable with the plastic packaging of De choice foods, health agencies have been consistently condemning the use of plastic packaging for hot foods.

### **Study Recommendations**

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are made.

1. De Choice Fast Food management should target more of the students and civil servants around its environment but with greater emphasis on the untapped business and privately employed community.
2. De Choice Fast Food marketing strategy should advertise its product offerings as superior in both taste and quality and aim for more prestigious image.
3. De Choice Fast Food should continue with its current packaging that consumers perceive to be adequate and of high standard while researching on alternative packaging to meet the health requirement standards.
4. A greater proportion of De Choice advertising budget should be spent on billboards to reach more segments of the market, while also exploring the use of Facebook and other e-channels in reaching to other consumers.

### **Future Research work**

Future research in this area could focus on significant factors that would determine consumer preference for fast foods in selected fast foods outlets. Examples include:

1. Social class structure and consumer preference for fast food.
2. Income level and consumer preference for fast foods.
3. Professional affiliations and consumer preference for fast foods.
4. Plastic food packaging of fast foods outlets and its effect on consumer health and satisfaction

Equally, comparative studies could be carried out between/among two or more fast foods outlets. For example, Comparative study of consumer preference for fast foods in De Choice and Crunchies or Kilomanjaro of Chicken Republic.

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