

EXPLORING CONSUMER AWARENESS TOWARDS FAST-FOOD CONSUMPTION IN DELHI NCR

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ABSTRACT

This paper titled "Exploring Consumer Awareness Towards Fast-Food Consumption in Delhi NCR" is designed to explore the consumer profile regarding fast-food consumption and analyze the awareness levels of the same within the Delhi NCR region. A self-structured questionnaire was developed for data collection, based on extensive literature review and consultation with research supervisors. The survey was distributed through e-mail and social media, using Google Forms. Altogether, questionnaire was distributed to 200 respondents and 162 had filled the form, but the number of valid and complete responses was 155, between November and December 2024. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic information, fast-food consumption patterns, and consumer awareness level. The first section deals with demographic information that reflects the diversity of consumers, including age, gender, and income. Varied consumption frequencies and preferences included street food and North Indian fast food. Consumer awareness was the third part wherein knowledge about hygiene, health risk, nutritional content, list of ingredients, and marketing was studied on a five-point Likert scale. Hygiene and health risks, therefore, were the major priorities due to public health awareness. Knowledge of the details regarding nutrition was present but was lacking in depth. Brand recognition and sustainability practices were moderate levels of awareness that had a lot of scope for improvement in education. Such studies will prove to be extremely beneficial for public health initiatives as well as marketing strategies concerning the fast-food consumers in Delhi NCR.

Keywords: Consumers, Awareness Level, Fast Food, Consumption, Delhi-NCR.

Introduction

The pace of urbanization and change in lifestyles has now moved on to changes in food habits with the live example of metropolitan cities like Delhi NCR. Convenience factor, affordability and a broad range of products fit well into fast food culture of urban consumerism (Naidoo et al., 2017). It is mainly because of buzzing environment of the region and the types of diversified population that forms the fast lifestyle of consumers which fuels growth for fast-food chains and outlets with respect to diverse consumer segments from different age brackets. However, this overconsumption of fast-food raises much concern as it questions the awareness and sensitivity possessed by the consumers related to nutritional value, health effects, and socio-environmental impacts overall (Amorim et al., 2022; Marcone et al., 2020). Notwithstanding its high degree of acceptance, the significant gap yet remains in the understanding of possible factors influencing consumer choice and how much a consumer understands concerning the impacts the consumption of fast foods has on health (Burton et al., 2009; Xue et al.,

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2021). Consumer awareness is the initiator for forms of diet and preferences. It is knowing what is in fast food in terms of its ingredients, calories, health risks with too much intake, and the moral issues arising in food production and supply chains (Reisch et al., 2013; Schrempf, 2014). The health buzz is turning minds in places like Delhi NCR even about what they eat. Convenience will always coexist with health consciousness in complex strings of contradictory behaviors. For instance, many of the consumers are concerned about obesity, lifestyle diseases, environmental sustainability, and other such issues, and they do often express their concerns; however, their eating behaviors contradict these issues (Malik et al., 2013; Wolfson et al., 2022). This duality issue requires an urgent investigation into different levels of awareness and the behavioral motivations that lead to fast-food consumption in the region.

The promotion of fast-food companies has been driving consumers' perspective (Bragg et al., 2020; Dhar & Baylis, 2011). Use such as taste and cost along with speed in all advertisements take much precedence over discussing nutrition content and any other longer-term health effects (Stan, 2017). Young people, the main client group, have further intensified the publicity campaign through social media and digital channels (Dunlop et al., 2016). These newly emerged initiators are still vulnerable to trends and peer influence, having not become sufficiently knowledgeable to amplify their choices. Therefore, there is a necessity to analyze advertising in terms of its role in shaping consumer perceptions for understanding more thoroughly the greater dynamics of fast-food eating in Delhi NCR. Rising lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular conditions associated with unhealthy diet have made it imperative to create increased consumer awareness. There is a growing public health foray into healthy eating behaviors through policy and other public health interventions, which will be made effective if underpinned by a proper understanding of consumer attitudes and knowledge gaps. A study into the level of awareness of consumers in the Delhi NCR region concerning fast food practices was carried out, investigating variations of demographic characteristics, knowledge of nutrition, and marketing strategies, among other things. Through these aspects of study, it is hoped that policymakers, health advocacy group members, and fast-food companies would understand the information better and effect strategy development that makes wise health consumer choices easy.

Review of Literature

• Concept of Fast Food

Fast food is preparation and service of food which the buyer encounters in forms of speed, convenience, and economy while satisfying the fast pace of modern life according to Zheng (2004). The phenomenon of fast food originated in the Western world in the mid-twentieth century, only to be caught up later by the world, as the one through which a standardized menu, quick service, and mass production techniques have nowadays become popular (Peiranova, 2010). Fast food typically includes food like hamburgers, pizza, fried chicken, sandwiches, and an extensive range of snacks and drinks, all prepared for consumption in very little time either in premises or as take away (Turbutt, 2020). The beauty of fast food is that it quickly curbs hunger with a familiar taste and experience across outlet locations, regardless of distance (Akram et al., 2020). However, such an ease has its price, which is a low nutritional value because the majority of fast food contains high calories, saturated fats, sugars, and sodium but is mostly deficient in other essential nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals (An, 2016). Over the years, fast food has turned out to be more of a cultural emblem, signifying that globalization embraces the integration of cooking traditions (Grosplik & Ram, 2013; Mak et al., 2012). It accommodates tastes and preferences in local levels through offering region-specific flavors as many fast-food outlets use to attract a mixed demographic of customers (Rai et al., 2023). In urban areas, fast-food is a convenient option for people with hectic lives, dual-income families, and students who need cheap and easy-to-eat foods (Middha et al, 2021). Fast-food has been heavily criticized over the years for its association with obesity, diabetes, and heart diseases and environmental impacts from packaging waste and the resource-intensive supply chain (Garnett et al., 2014). This has resulted in growing pressure within the industry to include healthier options, transparent labeling, and sustainability, reflecting the changing expectations of increasingly health-conscious and environmentally aware consumers.

• Fast-food in Indian Context

India's fast-food industry has grown incredibly within the last few decades with increasing urbanization, higher disposable incomes, and demographic change to a younger, working population (Mohamed, 2024). The Indian fast-food is also an excellent combination of international food culture with the native Indian flavor to suit the taste buds of the Indian people with the vast diversity in their taste and cultural habits (Kumari, 2024). Global fast-food chains like McDonald's, KFC, and Domino's have adapted their offerings by offering vegetarian options, spicy variants, and McAlloo Tikki, Masala Pizza, and Zinger

Rice Bowl for the Indian palate and dietary norms (Arup, 2019; Krishna, 2014). International chains have been accompanied by homegrown fast-food brands like Haldiram's and Bikanervala, which have seized the opportunity of quick-service food to offer traditional Indian snacks like samosas, chaat, and dosas in a modern and convenient format (Muramalla, 2013). The Indian fast-food market is also dominated by street food culture, wherein affordable, freshly prepared items like Samosa, chole bhature, vada pav, pav bhaji, pani puri, Chinese food items etc. continue to attract a massive consumer base, blurring the lines between traditional and fast-food (Dalal, 2016; Mall, 2014). This coexistence of global and local influences has made the landscape very dynamic and competitive, making India a very unique market for fast food. However, rapid growth in the consumption of fast-food has also raised concerns over the public health impact of fast food, especially in urban areas where obesity and lifestyle diseases are increasing (Senapati et al., 2015). Moreover, concerns about food safety, hygiene standards, and the environmental impact of fast-food businesses are being debated among consumers and regulators alike (Omari & Frempong, 2016). As more and more consumers become conscious of their health and sustainability, the need for healthier options, transparency in sourcing ingredients, and more eco-friendly practices within the fast-food sector in India has been on the rise, which in turn shapes its evolution according to the shifting preferences and values of Indian consumers (Samaddar & Mondal, 2024).

• **Consumer Awareness Towards Fast-food Consumption**

Consumer awareness about fast-food is the key factor that is essential to alter eating behaviors and change health outcomes in today's speedy world (Farah & Shahzad, 2020). Awareness implies what a consumer knows about nutritional information, health effects, environmental implications, and ethical considerations that apply to fast-food (Sharma et al., 2022). With the increasing health consciousness around the world, consumers are now paying more attention to the calorie count, fat content, and additives that exist in their meals, although the level of awareness varies by demographic factors such as age, education, and socio-economic background (Eze & Mena, 2024). In urban areas, where fast-food is available, convenient, and at an affordable price, many consumers acknowledge its association with health risks like obesity, heart diseases, and diabetes, but this acknowledgment does not always translate into a healthier choice because of preferences in taste, convenience, and affordability (Bahadoran et al. 2016; Stender et al., 2007). Awareness campaigns by fast-food chains generally get diluted due to advertisements promoting taste, speed, and value but fail to focus on the health issues associated with frequent consumption (Kolhe, 2023). In fact, how packaging and labeling influence the consumer towards awareness remains under researched, where consumers have often tended to overlook the nutritional data printed on the packaging of fast-food products (Penzavecchia et al., 2022; Soraghan, 2019). Despite these challenges, there is a growing shift towards healthier and sustainable choices, as seen in the demand for organic, low-fat, and plant-based options in fast-food menus (Greene et al., 2024). Public health campaigns, educational initiatives, and media coverage have been instrumental in promoting awareness, urging consumers to think beyond immediate satisfaction and consider the long-term impact of their dietary choices. However, awareness gaps still persist, especially in areas with less access to education or alternative food sources, and there is a need for targeted interventions to help fast-food consumers make informed decisions.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the profile of consumers related to their fast-food consumption in Delhi NCR.
- To examine consumers awareness level towards fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR
- To propose suggestive measures and strategies to enhance consumer awareness and promote healthier and more informed fast-food consumption choices in Delhi NCR.

Research Methodology

The research paper "Exploring Consumer Awareness Towards Fast-Food Consumption in Delhi NCR" focuses on the profile of consumers about their fast-food consumption and assessing their level of awareness towards fast-food consumption in the Delhi NCR region. To do this, a self-structured questionnaire was developed with utmost care and attention, considering the existing literature that has been reviewed and taken into consideration, along with the suggestions of research supervisors to cover all aspects. Google Forms were used for the questionnaire to allow for an easy reach and gathering of information. The questionnaire was disseminated to consumers in the Delhi NCR region using an email and social media as vehicles, and convenience sampling enabled a diverse participant pool by reaching out to the targeted set of consumers. The survey was conducted over two months-November and December 2024 with the questionnaire being sent to the 200 consumers. From the distributed

questionnaires, 162 were returned and out of those, 155 were valid and appropriate for analysis. The questionnaire was divided into three sections in order to systematically collect appropriate data. The first section captured the demographic profile of the respondents, with variables such as age, gender, occupation, and income levels, which are important to understand the characteristics of the consumer base related to fast-food consumption in the region. The second section of the questionnaire addressed the first objective of the study: examining the profile of consumers related to their fast-food consumption habits. Questions in this part were framed to capture more explicit information on how frequently consumed, types of fast foods preferred, and the determinants of the consumers' preference in Delhi NCR area. Questions framed in this part are expected to depict the comprehensive scenario of the consumption behavior and preferences among the respondents. The third part of the questionnaire is structured to achieve the second objective of the paper—analysis of consumers' awareness regarding fast-food consumption in Delhi NCR. It covered the following 12 parameters based on consumer awareness, which involve hygiene standards, health hazards posed, ingredients used, nutritional levels, and marketing practices and others. The respondents rate their awareness on a Likert scale of five points rating their level of awareness as not aware at all to extremely aware. Percentage method has been used in the presentation of consumer profile data for analysis of the first objective. This approach allowed for transparent and clear insight into the distribution of demographics and consumption habits among participants. To meet the second aim, central tendency techniques were used to derive the weighted mean for each awareness parameter, in order to find out how generally aware the respondents are. Rankings were derived based on the weighted means and assigned to the parameters of awareness, with the most recognized and least recognized areas of consumer awareness regarding fast food in the region. In this regard, such methodology helped the study capture both qualitative and quantitative insights, thereby providing a robust framework for assessing consumer awareness and consumption profiles in the Delhi NCR area.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

• Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Parameter	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	103	66.5
	Female	52	33.5
Age	18-25 Years	60	38.7
	26-35 Years	54	34.8
	36-45 Years	31	20
	46-55 Years	10	6.5
	56-65 Years	5	3.2
Marital Status	Single	83	53.5
	Married	72	46.4
Educational Qualification	Intermediate	34	21.9
	Graduate	86	55.5
	Postgraduate	26	16.8
	Doctorate	5	3.2
	Others	4	2.6
Occupation	Student	72	46.4
	Government Employee	31	20
	Private Job	34	21.9
	Self-Business	11	7.09
	Others	7	4.5
Annual Income	Not Earning	74	47.7
	Up to 3 Lakhs	16	10.3
	3-6 Lakhs	24	15.4
	6-10 Lakhs	20	12.9
	More than 10 Lakhs	21	13.5
Family Status	Nuclear Family	98	63.2
	Joint Family	57	36.8
Residential Status in Delhi NCR	Local Resident	94	60.6
	Visitor	61	39.4

Table 1 gives detailed demographic information about 155 respondents by looking at all aspects of their profiles. According to gender, most respondents are male, which counts for 66.5% 103 people, while female counts at 33.5%, which is 52 individuals. The distribution by age indicates that the greatest proportion aged between 18 and 25 years constitutes 38.7% 60 people, which is immediately followed by those in the category of 26 to 35 years at 34.8%, 54 people. The age group 36-45 years had 20% (31 respondents) and the age group 46-55 years had 6.5% (10 respondents). In terms of marital status, 53.5% (83 respondents) were singles, and 46.4% (72 respondents) were married, which is a quite balanced distribution. When considering educational qualification, most were graduates, and that was 55.5% (86 people), followed by intermediate education 21.9% (34 respondents). Postgraduates 16.8% (26 respondents), doctorate holders were 3.2% (5 individuals), and others, such as those with vocational or non-traditional education, represented 2.6% (4 respondents). Among the respondents, 46.4% (72 respondents) were students, 20.0% (31 respondents) were government employees, 21.9% (34 respondents) were working in private jobs, were self-employed were 7.1% (11) and others comprised freelancers or part-time workers were included as 4.5% (7 respondents). Meanwhile, annual income about half of them (47.7%, 74 respondents) reported no earnings; 10.3% (16 respondents) earned less than 3 lakhs; 15.4% (24 respondents) reported an income between 3-6 lakhs; 12.9% (20 respondents) reported incomes between 6-10 lakhs; 13.5% (21 respondents) earned more than 10 lakhs. About family status, 63.2% (98 respondents) live in nuclear families, while the other 36.8% (57 respondents) has joint families. Lastly, residential status in Delhi NCR revealed that 60.6% (94 respondents) are locals, while 39.4% (61 respondents) are visitors. The data specifies that the entire population is a young and educated lot. Most of the people form a category of students, whereas a major part of them is yet to earn. Most respondents live in nuclear family setups based in a local region of Delhi NCR, although there is a substantial number of visitors.

• **Profile of respondents related to Fast-food Consumption**

Table 2: Profile of Respondents Related to their Fast-Food Consumption

Parameter	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of Eating Fast Food	Daily	16	10.3
	2-3 times a week	60	38.7
	Once a week	36	23.2
	Occasionally	30	19.4
	Rarely	13	8.4
Normally Preferred Fast Food	North Indian (Samosa, Chole Bhature etc.)	67	43.2
	South Indian (Idli/Dosa with Sambhar)	21	13.5
	East Indian (Momos)	20	12.9
	West Indian (Pav Bhaji, Vada pav etc.)	4	2.6
	Italian (Pasta)	7	4.5
	Chinese (Chowmein, Chilli Paneer)	20	12.9
	Others	16	10.3
How do you usually order fast food?	Online Delivery Apps	69	44.5
	Visiting Outlets	71	45.8
	Drive Through	2	1.3
	Others	13	8.4
Place you prefer to eat fast food	Quick Service Restaurants (McDonald's, Domino's Pizza, KFC etc.)	55	35.5
	Cafes and Coffee Shops (Starbucks, Costa Coffee etc.)	17	11
	Food Courts in Malls	9	5.8
	Street Food Vendors	62	40
	Others	12	7.7

The first objective of the study is to examine the profile of consumers related to their fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR. Table 2 is indicating profile of consumers related to their fast-food consumption. The detailed profile of respondents' fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR, as presented in Table 2, offers very rich information on the consumer behavior pattern of this region based on 155 responses. On the count of frequency of eating fast food, 10.3% or 16 of the respondents consume fast-food every day, which reveals that a relatively smaller group of people take fast food as part of their

regular diet. Most, 38.7% (60 respondents), reported to eat fast food 2-3 times a week, which would be of moderate frequency. This reflects that most of the consumers are including fast food in their regular weekly diets. In addition, 23.2% (36 respondents) reported to have it once a week, which again fits the trend of occasional indulgence. About 19.4% (30 respondents) said that they consumed fast-food, occasionally indicating that a very significant portion consumes fast-food less frequently possibly because of health considerations or other lifestyle choices. A much smaller group was reported at 8.4% (13 respondents) stating that they rarely eat fast food, indicating that this group is more health-conscious or perhaps prefers home-cooked meals or other dining options.

When looking at the commonly preferred type of fast food, 43.2% (67 respondents) preferred North Indian fast food such as samosas and chole bhature. This preference could be based on cultural tastes, wide availability of the items, affordability, and convenience. 13.5% (21 respondents) opted for South Indian fast food like idli and dosa with sambhar. It might be due to the fact that it is a more popular, healthier option and it has been portrayed as a comfort food in India. Similarly, 12.9% (20 respondents) opted for East Indian fast food, such as momos, which are popular in Delhi-NCR among the youth due to their affordability and quick preparation. West Indian fast food, such as pav bhaji and vada pav, was chosen by only 2.6% or 4 respondents, which can be an indication of a regional preference and limited choice in some areas of Delhi-NCR. 4.5% or 7 chose pasta as the Italian fast food, indicating a niche choice towards non-Indian fast foods. Chinese fast food with foods like chowmein and chilli paneer was chosen by 12.9% or 20, which was high because it was popular among Indian youth because of its speed and economy. 10.3% or 16 selected 'Others' to indicate different preferences apart from the three major choices.

Of course, ordering habits, 44.5% (69 respondents) chose ordering fast food through online delivery apps, with the increasing digital trend and greater reliance on technology in ordering food, possibly stimulated by issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and doorstep delivery convenience. Interestingly, a slightly higher percentage, 45.8% (71 respondents), opted to dine at fast-food outlets, indicating that physical dining is still an important activity, perhaps for the sake of experience and social life. A minimal 1.3% (2 respondents) resorted to drive-through services, suggesting that though it is possible, it is not so common in Delhi-NCR. About 8.4% (13 respondents) chose 'Others,' which could include options such as calling the outlet directly for food delivery or pick-up.

When it comes to the preferred place to eat fast food, 35.5% (55 respondents) chose Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) like McDonald's, Domino's Pizza, and KFC, which indicates a clear preference for well-established, branded food chains that promise convenience and consistency in quality. The maximum preferences were for street food, as 40% preferred street food (62 responses), which emphasizes that they prefer affordability, eating outside, and cultural acceptance in Delhi-NCR of the idea of street food. A choice between cafes and coffee shops - like Starbucks and Costa Coffee - was the preferred one for 11% respondents (17). Such shows the existence of niches with a huge amount of interest in a relatively casual or often even upper-end fast food. Only 5.8% (9 respondents) preferred food courts in malls, perhaps because the same are perceived to be costly and offer fewer varieties as compared to street food and QSRs. The 'Others' category was chosen by 7.7% (12 respondents), implying that some of the respondents prefer different, perhaps niche locations like small food shops, home deliveries, or specialty fast-food places. These findings describe the complexity and heterogeneity of fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR, guided by various factors, including convenience, cost, cultural preferences, and lifestyle changes. The popularity of online ordering and its association with a high proportion of the population visiting outlets directly highlight that consumers approach fast food with a duality in which they pursue convenience with the use of technology and then dine out. It reflects that despite the popularity of branded fast-food chains, street food still contributes a major part of local eating habits because of affordability, taste, and accessibility. A choice for favorite food types and places signifies the kind of adaptation required to blend the traditional Indian tastes and international tastes, catering to shifting consumer preferences and social trends while leading to the consumption of fast foods.

• **Consumer Awareness Level Towards Fast-food Consumption in Delhi NCR**

The second objective of the study is to examine the consumers awareness level towards fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR. Table 3 is indicating consumers awareness level towards fast-fod consumption in Delhi-NCR. The analysis of the data indicates some important insights in relation to consumer awareness about fast food on various parameters. The parameter "Awareness of hygiene standards" ranked first, with a weighted mean of 3.48. It suggests that the highest awareness was exhibited by respondents regarding

this category. This would imply that hygiene practices followed while preparing and serving fast food are of prime importance for consumers. Hygiene awareness has been growing over a number of factors among which increased attention to food safety protocols since the COVID-19 epidemic, public health campaigns around hygiene, and the height of expectations that consumers of the food establishments have risen. This awareness has become an integral part of consumer expectations by dining out or ordering fast foods, owing to reinforced regulation measures, media coverage, and the role of organizations advocating for food safety. Next in line is "Awareness of health risks of fast food," followed by a weighted mean value of 3.43. This implies that even though consumers are highly aware of the health risks associated with consuming fast food, their awareness may not be comprehensive enough to create a drastic change in behavior. This is due to the impact of public health campaigns, articles, and documentaries related to long-term effects of unhealthy eating habits such as obesity, heart disease, and other chronic diseases. The media helps educate customers about the damaging effects of overconsumption of fast foods. Health advisory warnings and campaigns by health organizations on putting warning labels have all helped in their understanding. However, the difference between awareness and action still may prevail, as knowing alone does not always promote healthy eating. The third rank is "Awareness of fast-food brands," with a weighted mean of 3.28, which indicates the extent to which consumers are aware of brand names. This awareness means most consumers are aware of the most popular fast-food chains, but it is less distinct compared to awareness of hygiene and health risks. Fast food chains are very visible through widespread advertisements, sponsorships, and social media marketing that facilitate such awareness. Consumers often encounter branding on myriad channels such as television, print media, online portals, and even word-of-mouth. However, brand awareness does not equate to detailed knowledge about these companies' practices, ingredients, or their nutritional information. The awareness may be an effect of the frequency with which consumers encounter certain brands in daily life or effective marketing campaigns that catch their attention.

The fourth-ranked parameter is "Awareness of ingredients in fast food" with a weighted mean of 3.27. This reveals moderate consumer knowledge of the content of their meals. In this regard, awareness can be associated with the increasing tendency of consumers to demand transparency in food production and the shift towards clean eating. Most fast-food chains have begun to make ingredient lists and other nutritional information available. However, no consumers are entirely interested in or believe these disclosures. Increased scrutiny of food labeling and consumer rights likely have fueled this awareness. Consumers may look at ingredient lists for dietary preferences, allergies, or ethical reasons, but this awareness may remain shallow, at least compared to concerns such as hygiene or health risks. "Awareness of nutritional content of fast food" ranks fifth with a weighted mean of 3.23. This indicates that despite the fact that a large portion of consumers are aware of calorie and nutritional content of fast food, their information could be inadequate to significantly change their eating habits. Nutritional information is often available on packaging and in marketing materials, and many fast-food establishments are mandated by law in some areas to report calorie content and other information. But this does not necessarily translate into a healthier approach. The data suggests that the education should be more informative about nutrition, its interpretation, and informed decision-making based on the nutritional information. Increasing awareness of nutritional content is a positive aspect, albeit with the need for it to improve upon the most important parameters in terms of nutritional awareness. Sixth, "Awareness of packaging and sustainability" has a weighted mean of 3.21, which shows that there is moderate awareness on the part of consumers regarding the environmental impact of packaging. This is a trend that has been increasing in recent times as more consumers become conscious of sustainability practices, such as the type of materials used in packaging. The trend towards eco-friendly packaging and recycling programs, influenced by both consumer demand and regulatory frameworks, has contributed to this awareness. However, consumer awareness of packaging as a critical aspect that creates sustainability concerns might not be the issue influencing their choices in terms of food. Inasmuch as the environmental issue of packaging may still lag behind more pressing issues with regard to taste, cost, and convenience, calorie count awareness ranked seventh on the weighted mean at 3.17, an indication that most consumers somehow know how many calories each fast food contains, however not seriously. This could be due to the fact that most fast food restaurants often include calorie content on their menus or packaging. The inclusion of calorie information has caused some consumers to pay attention to their calorie intake; however, knowledge does not necessarily translate into action in most cases. While some consumers pay attention to the number of calories they consume, for others, this factor does not matter or they don't care and focus more on other aspects such as taste or value. There is a great deal of variation in the awareness here with consumers being only slightly well-informed but with calorie counts being considered as a lesser priority.

Ranking number eight, "Awareness of marketing strategies of fast food," with a weighted mean of 3.14, indicated that respondents have been moderately aware of the fast-food companies' methods in promoting their products. This awareness can be because fast food advertising is present almost everywhere; from television commercial, internet advertisements, to social network campaigns and sponsorship. Although such marketing strategies are prevalent, the average consumer may not always be aware of them, such as in limited-time offers, celebrity endorsements, or loyalty programs. The awareness of marketing strategies could thus be a result of consumer vigilance combined with the degree to which these strategies resonate or are noticed by the public. "Awareness of discounts/deals/loyalty programs offered by fast-food outlets," ranks ninth with a weighted mean of 3.08, which means that most consumers are aware of the marketing efforts, but it still is not their key purchase driver for fast food. Discount programs and loyalty programs can be great avenues to attract and retain customers. However, general awareness in this regard is not rampant. This could be because promotion is only for a short term or that other aspects like taste, convenience, and location are significant to the consumers more than the possible savings through the deals and loyalty programs. "Promotion awareness of campaigns" is ranked in the tenth position with the weighted mean of 3.01, which signifies that the consumers may become aware of some promotional activities but not much. The different types of promotions, from time-limited menus to special events, may result in uneven awareness levels. Consumers are not always reminded or concerned about promotions unless they are specifically targeted or highly advertised. Lastly, "Awareness of consumers' rights towards fast food" has the lowest weighted mean of 2.96, which means that this is the least known area among the respondents. With this in mind, consumers lack adequate awareness on the purchases of food products regarding some rights including the right to adequate information, refunds, and knowledge about food safety standards. The low public debate on consumer rights in the context of fast food may mean that issues in this area are only highlighted when a specific case attracts attention. Educational campaigns aimed at consumer empowerment might help increase awareness and comprehension in this area. In brief, the data shows consumers have different levels of awareness in different areas of fast food. Hygiene and health risks top the list, while consumer rights remain an unheeded topic. The results of such studies are reflections of influences from consumer behavior, public health campaigns, regulations, and the general awareness culture surrounding food choices and dining experiences.

Table 3: Consumers Awareness level Towards Fast-food of Delhi NCR

Parameters	Not at all Aware (1)	Slightly Aware (2)	Somewhat Aware (3)	Moderately Aware (4)	Extremely Aware (5)	Total	Weighted Total	Weighted Mean	Rank
Awareness of fast-food brands	16	33	29	46	31	155	508	3.28	3
Awareness of nutritional content of fast food	12	40	37	33	33	155	500	3.23	5
Awareness of ingredients in fast food	17	30	29	52	27	155	507	3.27	4
Awareness of health risks of fast food	16	32	26	32	49	155	531	3.43	2
Awareness of hygiene standards	17	23	29	40	46	155	540	3.48	1
Awareness of calorie count	17	36	35	37	30	155	492	3.17	7
Awareness of marketing strategies of fast food	23	31	30	43	28	155	487	3.14	8
Awareness of discounts/deals/loyalty programs offered by fast-food outlets	30	31	25	35	34	155	477	3.08	9
Awareness of promotional campaigns	20	41	35	35	24	155	467	3.01	10
Awareness of packaging and sustainability	19	33	30	42	31	155	498	3.21	6
Awareness of ethical/local sourcing	15	41	30	46	23	155	486	3.14	8
Awareness of consumers rights towards fast food	28	42	16	46	23	155	459	2.96	11

• **Suggestive Measures and Strategies to Enhance Consumer Awareness and Promote Healthier and More Informed Fast-Food Consumption Choices in Delhi NCR**

The third objective of the study is to propose the suggestive measures and strategies to enhance consumer awareness and promote healthier and more informed fast-food consumption choices in Delhi NCR. Based on the findings of first and second objective, following are the suggestive measures:

- Promote healthier options from fast-food chains and disclose detailed nutrition information to promote consumer awareness and healthy eating habits.
- Food outlets must maintain high hygiene standards as consumer awareness is already high, and this impacts their dining choices.
- Use eco-friendly packing, promote recycling efforts, and capitalize on consumer concern with the growing environment.
- Enhance consumer education on the composition and sourcing practices of fast-food products to serve newly emergent demands for greater transparency.
- To harness the trend of ordering food online build easy-to-use applications which give rewards to customers about their interaction with the fast foods.
- Fast food should be diversified to various tastes; thus, fast-food outlets should offer more local and international flavors to keep on being attractive to consumers.
- Emphasize affordability and cultural appeal of street food to leverage the vast market segment that prefers it over branded outlets.

Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to explore the profile of consumers in terms of fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR. The findings of the survey indicate a wide-ranging consumer profile in relation to their fast-food consumption in Delhi-NCR. Most consumers eat fast food multiple times a week; it forms part of their routine. Other consumers will eat less, considering reasons such as health and personal lifestyle. North Indian fast food, such as samosas, was most liked, showing a cultural and traditional tendency. Street food vendors and Quick Service Restaurants were liked for their price and convenience, which would mean that the popular and upscale options were in equal demand. The two approaches of ordering online using delivery apps and visiting outlets indicate a preference for both convenience and social dining. The second research objective was to assess consumer awareness toward fast food in Delhi-NCR. According to the results of analysis, different levels of consumers' awareness regarding fast-food consumption were observed in Delhi-NCR. Hygiene and health hazards are very strong concerns where growing awareness amongst consumers due to public health initiatives and safety measures could be reflected. Brand is significant which has been reinforced by significant marketing activities everywhere, yet does not show greater consciousness regarding the issues related to brands. Awareness of ingredient lists and nutritional content is present but is not profound enough to impact eating behaviors. Packaging sustainability and calorie counts also exhibit moderate awareness but are not significant influences. Marketing strategies, discounts, and consumer rights are less well known, indicating areas where more education may be needed.

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