

Factors Influencing Patronage and Effectiveness of Consumers' Demographic Attributes On Preference for Foodservice Outlets in Ilorin, Kwara State

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Abstract

Predicting factors influencing consumers' preference for foodservice outlets without empirical investigations could be a tough task and could yield an unreliable outcome given that such factors depend on a number of independent and dependent variables arising from consumers' point of view. This study investigated factors influencing consumers' preference of foodservice outlets in Ilorin, Kwara State. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from 685 non-randomly selected consumers from 7 purposely selected foodservice establishments. A modified questionnaire from past studies was validated through a pilot study which resulted in a reliability value of 0.869. Results of data from the main study revealed that all the factors examined were influential to consumers' preference for foodservice outlet. Accordingly, the top factors are the quality of food served ($\bar{x} = 4.30$ & $\sigma = 1.14$), staff courteousness and friendliness ($\bar{x} = 4.26$ & $\sigma = 0.94$), the location of the foodservice outlet ($\bar{x} = 4.25$ & $\sigma = 1.02$), affordability in terms of cost/price of food items ($\bar{x} = 4.24$ & $\sigma = 1.03$) and, cost-and-quality of food served ($\bar{x} = 4.24$ & $\sigma = 1.02$). Furthermore, consumers' demographics do not influence the perception of factors influencing patronage of foodservice outlets in Ilorin metropolis. This study recommends that similar studies are replicated in major cities witnessing growth in foodservice business across Nigeria so that tailor-made outcomes are available for an individual situation.

Key words: *Foodservice outlet, Service quality, Food quality, Consumers' demographic attributes*

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I. Introduction

There has been an increase in the practice of eating out of home all over the world. This rise in the number of people eating away from home has been attributed to many reasons including affordability as a result of the growing purchasing power of consumers', availability due to an increasing number of outlets and innovations in service delivery, consumers' search and wants for convenience, gender flexibility as more women are taking up career works consequently spending less time in the kitchen - leading to a reduction in families time to cook and eat at home and the growing population and urbanisation that sees more people are eating out of the home. In response to the ever-increasing customers' habit of eating outside, the foodservice industry from all over the world is responding positively as it continues providing millions of meals a day in a wide variety of types of operation (Cousins, Lillcrap & Weekes, 2014) to various types of consumers.

One of the interesting things about the culture of eating outside of homes is the divergent reasons that make customers to do so. Consumer's reasons for eating out vary from country to country and from one location to another. Even within the same country, states or municipality, people eat outside for different reasons. For instance, people who are living in the city have a high tendency to consume fast-food compared to the people living in rural areas. In this case, the reason herein could be time factor as city dwellers are most likely don't have much time to prepare food at their home. Another reason may be due to the busy nature of city dwellers who are likely tied down with serious employment and other business commitment that require more of their time in exchange for remuneration which makes them well disposed to the income required to patronise foodservice outlets comfortable and conveniently. More so, a customer can have multiple reasons for patronising and eating at a particular place or places as the case may be. For instance, "a person may be a business customer during the week, but a member of a family at the weekend; they may want a quick lunch on one occasion, a snack while travelling on another and a meal with the family on another occasion...the same person may wish to book a wedding or organise some other special occasion" (Cousins et. al., 2014). The above explains why there is a need for flexibility in foodservice establishments' understanding of consumers'

behaviour in terms of preference for and perception of service quality amongst other consumer-related issues. It also explains the challenges that foodservice establishments are most likely facing in order to satisfy customers.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The foodservice business has welcomed a number of new investors/practitioners into this business in the last couple of years. Likewise, the number of people eating out continues to increase, consumers' are more enlightened and demand more from the service providers. Delivering quality service is one of the major challenges facing the hospitality sector. It is an essential condition for success in the emerging keenly competitive and global hospitality markets. To be specific, a number of foodservice outlets have shut down (out of business) in the study area due to inability to stand the intense business competition and unstable external environment amidst other reasons as stated by Adediran and Sule and Bashiru (2020). The intrinsic nature of service especially its being heterogeneity, intangibility, inseparability and variance in consumers' expectation on service quality alongside other factors as explained by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), the ability to consistently deliver quality service that meets consumers' expectation is a herculean task for the service industry. One then imagines what becomes of foodservice outlets that ignore the knowledge of factors influencing consumers' patronage; particularly in the study area where a cluster of foodservice operators is located. The abovementioned affirmed the need for a periodic engagement in consumer studies, especially in view of the changing nature of consumer demographic attributes.

More so, inadequate or outright lack of knowledge about consumers of food items and the prevailing factors influencing patronage could make business owners (old, new and aspiring), consultants and key stakeholders in the foodservice business prone to making a poor decision on operational issues. However, given the increasingly competitive and sensitive nature of the foodservice businesses, a number of business organisations as observed still clinched to traditional ways of providing service to customers. On the contrary, most successful foodservice establishments with the most knowledge of their clients seem to be the ones afloat. Therefore, rather than local foodservice organisations' planning and implementing a business decision on findings and assumptions from foreign studies, a home-based study of this kind that is prepared for local occurrences and executed around local consumers' perception is simply the way to strategically minimise business threats and optimise opportunities abound in the foodservice business sector at the home front.

While acknowledging the availability of foreign studies on this issue, there is scarcity of academic studies at the domestic level. Notwithstanding the birth of this current study, there is also a need to keep updating the factors influencing consumers' preference of foodservice outlets given that there is a possibility that consumers in two regions, in the same country, could differ in their preference and perceptions on similar issues. And specifically, there is a need to conduct a study like this in the wake of an increasing number of foodservice outlets springing-up in the study area and the ever-increasing culture of people eating outside to enable stakeholders (the government, owners, employees, consultants and so on) remain in business. On a notable study in Nigeria, Olise, Okoli and Ekeke (2015) examined factors influencing customers' patronage of fast-food restaurants in Anambra state and found out that that service quality, atmospheric quality, perceived value, environment, consumer demographics and modernity are significant factors influencing the behaviour of customers towards patronising fast-food outlets. However, their study doesn't examine and it failed to establish if consumers' socio-demographic characteristics influences consumers' preference. And considering the significance of consumer profiling which could be useful for many purposes such as market segmentation and service improvement to mention a few, this study is necessarily required. More so, studies on the efficacy of consumers' demographic features have been widely conducted, accepted and useful in providing tailor-made service that has exploded and increase patronages in virtually all works of life.

Apart from filling the research gap on our knowledge on consumers' decisions on selection of foodservice outlets in Ilorin, this study will be a source of secondary data and the outcome will be a tailor-made of sought for future research studies seeking to address prevailing consumers' preference not outdated factors on the issue raised. More so, completion of this study will mean that investors, consultants and academics could stop relying on foreign studies in addressing local situations. This study will be actualised through the following objectives (i) to compile consumers' demographic attribute of consumers at selected foodservice outlets (ii) to appraise consumers' perception of factors influential to the selection of foodservice outlets, and (iii) to determine if consumers' preferences for foodservice outlets are influenced by demographic attribute.

II. Factors Influencing Consumers' Choices Of Foodservice Outlets

Consumers are the ultimate receivers or users of the collective services including food and beverages and the physical conditions/attributes of the entire services area as well as the staff that are part of the service experience as provided by the foodservice outlets. However, consumers are characteristically diverse demographically, and this ultimately influences their preference and expectation of products and services alike. Kotler and Keller (2009) stated that consumers' buying behaviour, in general terms, depending on perception,

self-concept, social and cultural background and their age and family cycle, their attitudes, beliefs values, motivation, personality, social class and many other demographic factors that are both internal and external. Furthermore, Shahzad (2012) that attitude is the conduct, thought and way of behaving which could be positive or negative and perform a very essential function in purchasing a product. For this reason and more, consumer-based organisations hoping to succeed must know the demographic attribute that describe customers and what trends or changes are happening in the same.

A demographic profile is generally defined by the following categories: age, gender, income, education, marital status, employment, homeownership, geographical location, race or ethnicity (Woodruff, 2019). And aside consumers' demographic attribute which is influential in consumers' choice and decision making, business owners must be mindful as well that consumers' patronage is also influenced by the quality and availability of some features that organisational- related.

One of the most important issues in consumer research is the determinants of consumers' preferences or factors influencing consumers' choice and the changes therein. As a result, marketers can adapt or generate new products/services that suit consumers' need accordingly. This is because studies on factors determining or influencing customers' choice of selecting or patronising foodservice outlets may differ from country to country and from region to region as a result of cultural, environmental and socioeconomic characteristics of customers. Ahmad, Ghazali and Othman (2013) reported that the physical surrounding, service quality and food quality are important factors on consumers' preference for foodservice outlets. Tabassum and Rahman (2012) in their study found that consumers' choice of a particular restaurant depends on the quality of food, variation (having assorted food items), location, price and environment. However, on consumer re-patronage intention, Sefian, Jaini, Sharudin and Abdullah (2013) stated that food quality, service quality, atmospheric quality and perceived value as factors influencing. And when consumers had re-patronised and are still happy with services received, there is a reward in terms of loyalty which in turns translates to future patronage and possible recommendations to potential consumers. In this instance, Nezakati, Kuan and Asgari (2011) found out in their study that the product quality, customer satisfaction and brand trust are the dominant variable that drives the customer loyalty to preferred fast-food outlets.

In another study on factors influencing young consumers' preferences of domestic and international fast-food brands in Turkey, Ergin and Akbay (2012) reported that brand name reputation, price, convenience, consistency and quality were dominant factors that influenced young consumers' preferences of different brands of fast-food outlets. It was also observed that these five factors are significantly related to several demographic variables such as age, gender and income level. In predicting customers patronage behaviour, Ibrahim and Vignali (2005) proposed image factors, consumers' values of eating-out, customers' opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast-food chains and customers' demographics as determinant factors. Quality, price, quick service and environment were factors noted as determinants of consumer attitude towards selective fast food restaurants (Tabassum and Rahman, 2012). One interesting thing about Islam and Ullah (2010) study is that 'food cost' and the 'quality' relationship was examined and found to be an important factor that influences consumers' preference of foodservice outlet in Bangladesh. That is, consumers do compare and evaluate the cost of food items in relation to the overall quality of food. This implies that aside approaching cost and quality separately, food cost relationship which implies the feelings that a consumer get when the quality of food served matches the cost paid for the same is considered as an additional variable aside cost and food quality as it is in modern pricing theory. Kotler (1998) stated that products/services pricing is directly proportional to customers' perceived quality of either a product or service and buyers are likely to use price as a gauge for service costs and service quality. Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2008) shared the same, the author associate customers' expectation of the quality of services to cost/price.

III. Methodology

This study used structured questionnaire to gather data on consumers' demographic information and factors influencing their preference of foodservice outlets in Ilorin, Kwara State. This study also acknowledges the increase in the number Kwara State populace especially the entire Ilorin metropolis thus one of the reasons for the boom in foodservice business and related tourism and hospitality businesses. The three Ilorin local governments are the most resided and most visited by the three million Kwara State residents and thousands of interstate travellers as well as students of tertiary institutions with figures above one hundred thousand. Similarly, Ilorin boasts of many hotels for visitors' lodging and entertainment joints, food-service outlets and many more corporate offices. On the selection of the study area –Fate, Tanke and Government Reserved Area of Ilorin for this study, the entire study area boasts of many hotels for visitors lodging and entertainment, food-service outlets ranging from classy restaurants, bar, eatery and fast food outlets among others. A number of foodservice businesses are domiciled here and the whole study area is well developed and highly populated by people of different demographic characteristics. Also, this study area was chosen purposively because of the cluster of foodservice business operators.

At the questionnaire design phase, a total of 24 items were adopted from relevant studies - Ibrahim and Vignali (2005); Oni and Matiza (2014); Singh (2015); Islam and Ullah (2010); Islam et. al., (2018) and were modified to suit the present study. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree) to obtain data. The Likert-scale type question was deployed due to its effectiveness in gathering respondent perceptions on service quality related matters and measurement of satisfaction levels in tourism-related studies as stated Hassan and Shahnewaz (2014). Explanation on the research population for this study is of two folds; on the one hand, there are 23 foodservice outlets in the study area. Purposive sampling was used to select only 7 out of 23 foodservice outlets in the study area based on the availability of common service-attributes/amenities. On the other hand, the consumers' population size, comprising the entire customers patronising the selected foodservice outlets in the study area are infinite. Given that the number of consumers' on daily patronage in all the selected outlets cannot be predicted, the Freneund and William's suggestions on how to determine the sample size from an infinite population is highlighted and employed by Bello and Omoh (2018) was adopted for this study as follows:

$$n = \frac{(Z_{\alpha/2})^2 PQ}{e^2}$$

Where

P = Probability for positive response.

Q = Probability for negative response.

e = Tolerable error (0.05)

$Z_{\alpha/2}$ = 1.96 from the critical table Z of 0.05 under infinity

α = 0.05, the significant level

n = Sample size

Applying this formula to the present study, the sample size (n) of 323 was obtained as follows.

$$n = \frac{(Z_{\alpha/2})^2 PQ}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.7)(0.3)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)(0.7)(0.3)}{(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{0.806746}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 322.69 \approx 323.$$

The above means that due to the infinite nature of the population of this study, a minimum of 373 respondents is methodically adequate as the sample size. However, for two reasons this study sampled 700 (100 per each of the seven selected outlets) consumers instead of 323 that are expected of a study with an infinite population. First, there was an opportunity to attract more respondents because of the support received from the management of the selected foodservice outlets who welcomed and created an enabling environment for data collection. Second is the impressive willingness to participate that the consumers demonstrated during questionnaires administration exercise.

Prior to the actual data collection exercise; at two purposively selected out of seven outlets, a pilot test was conducted via purposive sampling on 60 respondents. This took place two weeks before the actual study. From the pilot study, 57 responses that came back and were analysed for a reliability test. This yielded a reliability value of 0.869 thus signifying that the questionnaire is reliable. The outcome of the pilot study also resulted in a reduction from 24 variables/queries earlier prepared/used for the pilot exercise to 18 variables based on respondents' observation and remark. The likes of food taste, appearance, texture and aroma were thought, discussed and agreed with experts during questionnaire validation to be suitable and can be compressed under the "quality of food served". This aligns with Singh (2015) who simply generalised food quality in one variable. After completing the pilot study, the researchers together with four research assistants collected data on

Friday, 26th to Sunday 28th of July 2019 from 700 non-randomly selected consumers at the selected foodservice outlets. Of this, 685 feedbacks were received and only 654 responses were valid as error of omission, inaccurate completion amongst other major errors were observed during the data capturing and cleaning exercise. Data were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings are presented with descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean distribution. Multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were also used to test relationship between dependable and undependable variables as shown in results discussion below.

IV. Results Presentation And Discussions

Objective one: consumers' demographic attribute

Table 2: Percentage Distributions of Respondents Demographic Attributes

s/n	Variab les	Interpretatio n	Frequency	Percenta ge %	s/n	Variables	Interpretatio n	Frequency	Percenta ge %
1	Age (in years)	Less than 18	114	17.4	5	Marital Status	Single	432	66.1
		19-23	255	39.0			Engaged	96	14.7
		24-28	150	22.9			Married	111	17.0
		29-33	60	9.2			Living together	3	0.5
		34-38	30	4.6			Separated	12	1.8
		39-43	18	2.8			Total	654	100.0
		44-48	15	2.3	6		Frequency of patronage per week	0-1	177
	49 & above	12	1.8		2-3	300		45.9	
	Total	654	100.0		4-5	105		16.1	
2	Gender	Male	384	58.7		6-7		42	6.4
		Female	270	41.3		8-9		12	1.8
		Total	654	100.0		9 & above		18	2.8
3	Religion	Christianity	408	62.4		Total		654	100.0
		Islam	237	36.2	8	Amount spent averagely on food (weekly)	Less than or = 500	78	11.9
		Others	9	1.4			501-1,000	165	25.2
	Total	654	100.0		1,001-1,500		138	21.1	
4	Employ ment	Self-employed	207	31.7			1,501-2,000	84	12.8
		Unemployed	96	14.7			2,001-2,500	42	6.4
		Employed	84	12.8			2,501-3,000	42	6.4
		Retired/pensio ners	18	2.8			3,001-3,500	27	4.1
		Students	246	37.6		3,501-4,000	27	4.1	
		Others	3	0.5		4,001 & above	51	7.8	
		Total	654	100.0		Total	654	100.0	

Source: field survey (2019)

From Table 1, the age of the respondents, 114 (17.4%) were less than or equal to 18 years, 255 (39.0%) were between 19-23 years, 150 (22.9%) were between 24-28 years, 60 (9.2%) were between 29-33 years, 30 (4.6%) were between 34-38 years, 18 (2.8%) were between 39-43 years, 15 (2.3%) were between 44-48 years; while 12 (1.8%) of the respondents were 49 years and above. The majority 384 (58.7%) of respondents were male; while 270 (41.3%) were female. The respondents were affiliates to varying religions, majority 408 (62.4%) of them were practising Christianity, 237 (36.2%) were Islamic religion adherents; while 9 (1.4%) were from other forms of religious practices. On the basis of employment, 207 (31.7%) of the respondents were self-employed, 96 (14.7%) were unemployed, 84 (12.8%) were employed, 18 (2.8%) were retired/pensioners, 246 (37.6%) which forms the majority were students; while 3 (0.5%) was in other forms of employment status.

With respect to marital status, 432 (66.1%) of the respondents were singles, 96 (14.7%) were engaged, 111 (17.0%) were married, 3 (0.5%) were living together; while 12 (1.8%) were in a separated relationship. In terms of the number of times the customers patronize their preferred foodservice outlet(s) on a weekly basis, 177 (27.1%) indicated between 0-1 time, 300 (45.9%) indicated between 2-3 times, 105 (16.1%) stated between 4-5 times, 42 (6.4%) have patronized between 6-7 times, 12 (1.8%) indicated that it was their 8-9 times of patronage; while 18 (2.8%) do patronize for 9 times and above. As regards the amount spent buying food in the

outlet(s) averagely, 78 (11.9%) of the respondents indicated that they spent 500 naira and below, 165 (25.2%) spent between 501-1,000, 138 (21.1%) spent between 1,001-1,500, 84 (12.8%) spent between 1,501-2,000, 42 (6.4%) spent between 2,001-2,500, also 42 (6.4%) spent between 2,501-3,000 on food, 27 (4.1%) spent between 3,001-3,500, also 27 (4.1%) of the respondents spent between 3,501-4,000; while 51 (7.8%) of spent within 4,001 naira and above per week to buy food in the selected food outlets.

Objective two: Factors influential to consumers' selection of foodservice outlets

Table 2 Mean and Rank Order on Factors Influencing Consumers' Selection of Food Service Outlets

N	Items	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Food quality variation (taste, appearance, aroma and presentation)	4.30	1.14	1 st
9	Staff approach in term of having courteousness, competence and professional in doing their job	4.26	0.94	2 nd
6	The location of the food outlet	4.25	1.02	3 rd
15	Affordability (inexpensiveness) of food items	4.24	1.03	4 th
2	Cost-and-quality of food relationship	4.24	1.02	4 th
12	General hygienic condition/cleanliness of the foodservice outlet in and out	4.23	1.00	6 th
7	Accessibility of the outlet in terms of comfort to drive in and out	4.19	1.03	7 th
14	Attractiveness of the food outlet (the quality of interior and exterior designs)	4.18	1.07	8 th
10	Price comparison to other foodservice outlets	4.12	1.04	9 th
11	Staff appearance in terms of having attractive looks and being approachable	4.10	0.97	10 th
5	Availability of healthy food (the safety food served based on my knowledge of the quality of cooking/food items)	4.06	1.13	11 th
3	Safety of property inside and outside the foodservice outlet	4.00	1.10	12 th
13	The food service outlet's brand name	3.99	1.23	13 th
8	Speed of service of the outlet (time required/taken to serve consumers' order)	3.98	1.12	14 th
16	Personal loyalty to the outlet	3.87	1.16	15 th
4	Variety (availability of various food items)	3.81	1.21	16 th
18	Proximity of the food outlet to your residence/place of work	3.75	1.18	17 th
17	Privacy (having spaces to yourself, being alone)	3.67	1.22	18 th

Source: field survey (2019)

Table 2 shows that all the items examined on factors influencing consumers' preference of foodservice outlets have mean scores that are above the average (benchmark) mean value of 3.00 for determining the main influential factors. However, items 1 ($\bar{x} = 4.30$ & $\sigma = 1.14$), 9 ($\bar{x} = 4.26$ & $\sigma = 0.94$), 6 ($\bar{x} = 4.25$ & $\sigma = 1.02$), 15 ($\bar{x} = 4.24$ & $\sigma = 1.03$) and 2 ($\bar{x} = 4.24$ & $\sigma = 1.02$) took precedence over others and were ranked between 1st and 5th respectively. This means that the major factors influencing consumer's patronage of selected foodservice outlets in Fate and Tanke area and GRA, Ilorin is the quality of food served, staff approach in term of courteousness/friendliness, location of the foodservice outlet, affordability in terms of cost/price of food items, and cost-and-quality of served.

Using the first to fifth factors on the ranking list to discuss the relationship between findings in this study and previous studies, the above result aligns with findings from most previous studies from other climes. In particular and due to similarity in the use of variables/items in the questionnaire designed, findings herein aligns with Tabassum and Rahman, (2012); Ahmed et al., (2013); Sefian et al., (2013) and Singh, (2015), one or two of the topmost factors found in this study equal what is found among first to third in the referenced studies. Consumers' preference for food quality has been ongoing for decades. In research by Dube, Reneghan and Miller (1994), food quality is most important for repeat purchase intentions for consumers at classy restaurants. According to Dutta et. al (2014), food quality is a key predictor of customer loyalty in casual-dining restaurants as considered by Mattila (2001). Further, Dutta et. al., mentioned that food quality positively affects dining experience and it is crucial for restaurant operations (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). At a Quick Service Restaurant, Qin and Prybutok (2008) found that it is the service quality and food quality that drive consumers to repurchase.

Hypothesis Testing

In meeting objective three (to determine if consumers' preferences for foodservice outlets are influenced by demographic characteristics), a null hypothesis was formulated and tested using a Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented as follows:

Objective three: consumers' preferences for foodservice outlets are influenced by demography.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles and factors influencing their selection of foodservice outlets in the study area.

Table 3i: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.151 ^a	.023	-.010	14.232

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Marital Status, Gender, Employment, Freq. of patronage, Age

Table 3ii: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	995.855	7	142.265	.702	.670 ^b
	Residual	42537.746	210	202.561		
	Total	43533.601	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Selection of food service outlet

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Marital Status, Gender, Employment, Freq. of patronage, Age

Table 3iii: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	81.126	2.831		28.654	.000
	Age	-.765	.792	-.083	-.965	.336
	Gender	1.689	2.027	.059	.833	.406
	Religion	-.659	1.887	-.024	-.349	.727
	Employment	-.592	.617	-.072	-.958	.339
	Marital status	1.424	1.146	.099	1.242	.216
	Freq. of patronage	.925	.975	.074	.950	.343
	Income	.154	.470	.026	.328	.743

a. Dependent Variable: Selection of food service outlet

The model summary table 3i provides the *R* values of 0.151, which indicates a lower degree of correlation. The *R*² value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (factors influencing the selection of foodservice outlets), is explained by the independent variable (demographic profiles of the respondents). In this case, 2.3% can be explained, which is very small. The table 3ii is the ANOVA table, which presents how well the regression equation fits the data (that is, predicts the dependent variable). The table indicates that the regression model does not significantly predict the dependent variable ($F \{7, 210\} = .702, p > 0.05$). That is, the regression model is not a good fit for the data. The coefficients table 3iii indicates that the respondents' demographic profiles did not contribute significantly to the model, $B = -.765, 1.689, -.659, -.592, 1.424, .925$ and $.154$; $p > 0.05$ for age, gender, religion, employment, marital status, frequency of patronage and income respectively. Hence, the hypothesis is retained. Therefore, no significant relationship exists between the respondents' demographic profiles (age, gender, religion, employment, marital status, frequency of patronage and income) and selection of foodservice outlets. The outcome herein indicates that consumers' demographic characteristics do not influence patronage. They simply would in their majority prefer and patronise foodservice outlets in the study area for reasons outlined in Table 2 but for which the first five are quality of food served, overall staff attitude, location of the foodservice outlet, affordability in terms of cost/price of food items, and cost-and-quality of served.

On the one hand, the finding above is contrary to findings by Sriwongrat (2008), the author in a study conducted in New Zealand found that, consumers' gender, age, ethnicity, educational status, occupation, income had significant influence on consumers' choice of a classy ethnic restaurant. On the other hand, Islam et. al. (2018) reported in their study that age, gender difference and income of the customers are influential to consumers' selection of restaurant in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

V. Conclusions And Recommendations

This study was conceptualised on the insight that consumers' preference of foodservice establishments must be an outcome of empirical studies rather than assumptions. It hypothesised that the factors influencing consumers' preference will be significantly influenced by their demographic characteristics as reviewed in some studies. This study achieved all it sets out to and results from the empirical data resulted in the under listed major conclusions that:

- All the factors examined are influential to consumers' preference. However, the most important factors are quality of food served overall staff attitude (e.g. being courteous/friendly, being ready/willing to respond to customers' request etc.), location of the foodservice outlet, affordability in terms of cost/price of food items, and cost-and-quality of served.
- Consumers' demographic characteristics do not influence their perception. Therefore, operators should simply focus on providing consistent and improved service quality in all the areas examined to be able to attract consumers in the study area.

In view of the above conclusions, this study hereby recommends that

- Both the old and new owners of foodservice outlets' in the study area should acknowledge and consider consumers' view herein and continue to provide quality services in all areas found to be influential to consumers' preference for foodservice outlets.
- Continuous studies to update consumers' preference on a periodic basis should be practised. This will provide up-to-date knowledge and information of prevailing factors that are in tune with changes in consumers' demographic characteristics which may influence their future decision. Doing so will guarantee steady consumers' patronage, revenue generation that will translate to profit and opportunity to remain in business amongst other benefits.
- Foodservice personnel should be trained to understand the sensitive nature of service delivery to be able to adequately deliver quality service in terms of food taste, aroma, appearance and texture as found out in this study.
- Further studies should be conducted on consumers' selection of foodservice outlets in other as this study is only limited to the study area and might not be applicable to other regions.

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