

COMPARATIVE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOR TOWARDS FAST FOOD BUSINESSES. A CASE OF LUSAKA AND KITWE DISTRICTS OF ZAMBIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to conduct a comparative descriptive analysis of Zambian consumers' perceptions and behavior toward fast food in Lusaka and Kitwe districts. Using a cross-sectional survey research design, data were collected online via Google Forms and a total of 430 questionnaires were analyzed using Excel and SPSS. Factor analysis was performed on Likert scale variables and similar results on all variables were obtained between the two districts. It was found that children at home influenced the purchase of fast foods in the 2 districts and therefore, the study recommended that fast food operators in both Lusaka and Kitwe districts ought to make their food premises child friendly because they should expect consumers visiting their businesses with children. It is also highly recommended that fast food businesses in Zambia should increase the supply of fruits and vegetables, and local foods. It is further recommended that fast food businesses should consider increasing home deliveries and provide spacious seating space for consumers.

Keywords: *descriptive analysis, consumer perception, consumer behavior, fast food business, cross-sectional.*

JEL Codes: *D80, D41, D03, D12, M20, M30.*

Introduction

The fast food industry has undergone a profound transformation over the past few decades, evolving into a global phenomenon that has deeply entrenched itself within modern consumer culture across the world (Wales, 2009). This industry's growth has also been pronounced in developing nations, where rapid urbanization, rising incomes, and shifting consumer preferences have contributed to significant changes in the fast food landscape (Makaiko & Matin, 2019). Zambia, as a representative example of a developing country in Southern Africa, has experienced a notable surge in the establishment and proliferation of fast food outlets, especially in urban centers like Lusaka and Kitwe districts (Kapasa, 2012; Makaiko & Matin, 2019) although profits are said to be seemingly dwindling. This surge has not only reshaped culinary norms but has also exerted a profound influence on consumer behaviors and dietary habits in these regions.

Fast food, characterised by its ability to be prepared and served swiftly, typically encompasses a range of dishes available in eateries that require minimal preparation time, often aimed at immediate consumption or takeout. Common examples include burgers, pizzas, fried chicken, and sandwiches, all known for their convenience and accessibility (Jahan et al., 2020).

Quality of service, variety of options, and pricing are pivotal factors that shape consumer choices in the fast food industry. Health and safety considerations also play a significant role, with research indicating a positive correlation between health-related motives and consumer attitudes towards food choices (Untaru & Ispas, 2014). Consumers who prioritize health and safety often seek continuous information, particularly concerning nutritional content, wellness attributes, and the presence of contaminants in food products (Felicetti et al., 2023).

Convenience emerges as another crucial determinant of consumer choices, with pragmatic individuals prioritizing ease and efficiency in their food-related activities (Wales, 2009). Moreover, cultural and emotional factors, such as religious commitments and cultural traditions, significantly influence purchasing decisions (He & Tian, 2023; D'Haene et al., 2019). Additionally, ethical considerations, including social and environmental concerns, increasingly influence consumer attitudes towards food consumption, reflecting a growing emphasis on ethical consumerism and sustainable practices (Nemeth et al., 2019). The main aim of this study is to provide a descriptive analysis of the consumer perceptions, behavior and purchase intentions towards fast food businesses. This was done with the aim of providing more updated information and managerial implications to the fast food operators in Zambia. The dataset answers the following primary questions: what behavior do fast food consumers portray towards fast food businesses in Zambia? what perceptions influence consumers' purchasing decisions of fast foods in Zambia? The study uses a cross sectional by survey research method that involved the collection of online data using a closed ended questionnaire from Lusaka and Kitwe residents.

Understanding consumer perceptions and behaviors towards fast food businesses in locals like Lusaka and Kitwe districts holds paramount importance for several reasons. Firstly, it offers invaluable insights into the drivers of consumer preferences and decision-making processes within the fast food industry. By delving into the complexities of consumer behavior, businesses can develop strategies to adapt to evolving demands, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster sustainable growth (Reshi et al.). Furthermore, comprehending these perceptions is crucial for addressing pressing public health concerns and socio-economic implications (Jahan et al., 2020). Kapasa (2012) uncovers the significance of various factors such as packaging, dietary restrictions, cleanliness, customer service, nutritional information, and pricing, all of which significantly influence consumer perceptions and behaviors towards fast food restaurants in Zambia.

The fast food business in Zambia is so competitive and therefore, requires that the fast food business operators be up to date with consumer perceptions and behaviours of many aspects of their business. This study aims to conduct a comparative descriptive analysis of consumer perceptions and behavior towards fast food businesses in the Lusaka and Kitwe districts of Zambia. It is in this regard that we investigated socio-economic and demographic factors that affect decisions to purchase fast foods by consumers in Kitwe and Lusaka districts of Zambia. We developed a theoretical model of consumers' perceptions and behaviours towards the fast food business brand. The study answered a primary question of what influences the purchasing decision of the consumers.

This study has social significance in that it provides insights into consumer behaviour and preferences regarding fast food businesses in Kitwe and Lusaka districts of Zambia. The study helps businesses tailor their offerings, marketing strategies and service quality to better meet the needs of fast-food consumers. The study, therefore, has a unique contribution to the existing body of knowledge especially that few studies in fast food businesses have been done in Africa.

Literature Review

Fast foods refer to food that can be prepared and served quickly. It can be defined as; quickly prepared, reasonably priced, and readily available alternatives to home cooked meals. The free dictionary has defined fast foods as inexpensive food, such as hamburgers and fried chicken, prepared and served quickly. Fast food is the world's fastest growing food type and it is quick, reasonably and readily available alternative to home cooked food. (Goyal & Singh, 2007) . (Data, 2005) While noting that fast food is convenient and economical for a busy lifestyle, they defined fast food as food and drinks for immediate consumption either on the premises or for consumption elsewhere. For the purpose of this study, we define fast-food as specialized food that can be prepared in a short time for immediate consumption either on the premises or elsewhere and relatively inexpensive.

A vital point to be noted in the industry of fast foods is the importance of the brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. Several studies have been undertaken in a bid to explain the relationship between the success of a fast food business and its brand loyalty and customer satisfaction.

(Aaker, 1991) Pointed out that, with the construction of good brand image, customers were likely to increase the satisfaction of usage, and would like to recommend to others. (Gensch, 1978) considered brand image as having influence on the purchase intention and the satisfaction of customers while the product attribute was not easily defined. (Graeff, 1996) noted that, when the consumer's self-image was more similar to the brand image, customer satisfaction would be affected. (Romanuik & Sharp, 2003) found a positive relation between brand image and customer satisfaction.

(Arnold, 2002) Conducted a study in India to assess what consumers thought would be done to increase the consumption of fast foods. The results showed that 40% of the respondents said they would want fast foods to contain moderate fat that promoted lowering of cholesterol; proper meals, containing protein and providing relief from menopause symptoms and preventing obesity.

Over the years, studies have been conducted to identify some of the factors that have an impact on consumption of fast foods, among these studies done is the one by (Sean, 2003) in the Malaysia, one of the factors observed as significant was income, the results of the study showed that 65% of consumers with income RM 2000 per month were able to purchase fast foods daily and only 15% of consumers with income of less than RM 1000 were able to purchase fast foods daily. Sex of the respondent was another factor that was to be significant. The study showed that females in Malaysia consume and purchase fast foods more than the males.

The major shortcomings of this study were that it did not include impact of important variables such as distance of the respondent from the fast-food facility. It did not go further to

assess if the time the consumer takes to reach a particular fast food facility has an impact on fast food consumption.

A study to assess the consumption of fast foods was conducted by (Schroeder & McEachern, 2005) in the United Kingdom in which they looked at consumption of fast foods by two groups of students. One was for students coming from the United Kingdom and the other was for students coming from Malaysia but studying in the United Kingdom. Results of the study showed that 82% of the students were consuming fast foods. It was also shown that among Malaysian students 70% of respondents' consume fast foods daily and 30% only consume 2-3 times per week while among students from the United Kingdom, only 35% of the students were able to consume fast foods daily and the rest did not consume fast foods daily. Furthermore, the results for this study showed that the consumption of fast foods among Malaysian students in the same age group is higher than the United Kingdom. The reason for this difference in the consumption of fast foods among the United Kingdom and Malaysia students was that students from Malaysia found it cheap to consume fast foods than prepare their own meals as compared to the students from the United Kingdom whose homes were nearby. In terms of consumption spending, the study showed that on average students from Malaysia spent (allowance) RM356.00 per month while those from the United Kingdom spent RM90 on fast foods. This study further revealed that 67% of the respondents purchase chicken-based food at least twice a week, and the reason that was given by many students opting for chicken based foods was that chicken was relatively cheaper and delicious compared to other foods.

A study conducted by (John, 2012) to assess consumer perception and consumer patterns of fast foods in Zambia's Lusaka district revealed that most fast food consumers are of medium age, educated highly paid and had dietary restrictions. The findings showed that lack of proper nutrition information so that people are able to know the nutritional content of the products they are consuming is the major

reason why many people do not consume fast foods. This is because many consumers felt that fast foods are contributing to many of the diseases that people are suffering from. This study used a Probit Model and primary data collected using a questionnaire to come up with the above conclusions.

Method and materials

Research design

The study used cross-sectional data with a survey research approach as the study dealt with a very large population of people. Primary data was collected using a closed ended online questionnaire for consumers in fast food businesses. The research problem was analysed by using the theory of consumer behavior which places into thought a scope of elements that impact the decisions of the consumers. (Samuelson's, 1938) study was to look at utility as a mental construct. Which can along these lines be drawn closer in three different ways, firstly, goods don't give direct utility to the consumers. It is the trademark that the good possesses that gives direct utility to the consumers. Secondly, one good has numerous attributes and various goods may have comparative qualities. Thirdly, composite goods may have different attributes in comparison to singular goods.

Study area

The research study area was Lusaka which is the capital city of Zambia and Kitwe on the Copperbelt province of Zambia. Lusaka has a population of 3.3 million people with an urban population of 2.5 million people. Kitwe is the third-largest city in terms of infrastructure development and the second-largest city in terms of size and population in Zambia. With a population of 517,543, Kitwe is one of the most developed commercial and industrial areas in the nation, alongside Ndola and Lusaka.

Target population

The target population was Lusaka and Kitwe residents who are at one instance, or another have bought food from the fast-food restaurants that are open in Kitwe and Lusaka. Specifically, the study targeted Lusaka and Kitwe's urban residents with estimated

population of 2, 500, 000 and 501,360 respectively.

Sampling frame

To determine the sample size the Yamane (1967) sample size formula will be employed with a margin of error of 0.05:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{2,500,000}{1 + 2,500,000 (0.05)^2} = 400 \text{ consumers in Lusaka}$$

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{501,360}{1 + 501,360 (0.05)^2} = 400 \text{ consumers in Kitwe}$$

Where:

n = the sample size for the study

N = size of the population

e = the margin of error

Thus, the total sample size that was calculated for the study was 800 respondents for both Lusaka and Kitwe districts. The study targeted respondents who had full knowledge and were well knowledgeable about brands and fast foods. Additionally, all employees of the fast food businesses identified in were sampled and requested to participate in the study. However, only a total of 445 responses were obtained in the first quarter of 2024, representing a percentage response rate of 56. Data was then analysed using SPSS due to it being user friendly and easier to capture factor analysis for such a dataset.

Design of the questionnaire

In order to capture all the research questions, the questionnaire was categorised into 3 sections. The first section of the questionnaire captured the demographics of the participants in order to understand their socio-economic and demographic profiles.

The second section understood the consumer behaviour by using a table of structured likert scale variables ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The third section looked at what influenced the purchasing decisions of consumers of fast foods. Likert scales were also the most appropriate variables to consider the better understanding of purchasing decisions for consumers of fast foods.

Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic information at any level of micro or macro is very imperative for every business to thrive. The dataset used in this study was obtained in the first quarter and part of the second quarter of 2024. From a total sample of 400 consumers in each district of Lusaka and Kitwe, only a total of 250 responses were obtained from Kitwe district and 215 responses were collected from Lusaka. In order to balance up the analysis, only a total of 215 responses from each district were analysed. The fact that the response rate was above 50% makes the dataset acceptable. This is in line with the American Association for Public Research that suggests that response rates below 50% may be a cause for concern but does not provide a specific cut off point for acceptability.

Table 1 below displays the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table vividly shows that a total of 215 respondents in both Kitwe and Lusaka participated in this study and that it was skewed towards male participants in both districts. Lusaka, had a count of 126, representing a percentage of 60% whereas Kitwe

had 111 male participants with a percentage of 51.6. Out of the 215 respondents in Lusaka, 86 of them were females with a percentage of 40 while Kitwe had a total of 104 female participants that corresponded to a percentage of 48.4.

We can clearly see that the majority of the respondents in the two districts were aged between 21 and 25 years. Lusaka had a total of 72 participants that were in the age range of 21 to 25 years representing 33.5% of the respondents while a total of 86 respondents in Kitwe were in the same age range with a percentage of 40%. Table 1 also shows us that the majority of the respondents were students followed by salaried respondents. This pattern was observed in both Kitwe and Lusaka. We can see from table 1 that most of the respondents attained their o-level certificates followed by bachelor's degree representing 41.3%, of which 24.6% were male and 16.7% were female. Table 1 further shows that majority of the respondents had an individual net monthly income in ZMW of less than 1,000.00 followed by a class of those that earned above 7000 representing in both Kitwe and Lusaka.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Lusaka		Kitwe	
	Male (N/%)	Female (N/%)	Male (N/%)	Female (N/%)
Age				
16-20 years	6(2.8)	2(1)	17(7.9)	54(25.1)
21-25 years	44(20.5)	28(13)	73(34)	13(6)
26-30 years	21(9.8)	27(12.6)	15(7)	19(8.8)
31-35 years	19(8.8)	12(5.6)	1(0.5)	3(1.4)
36-40 years	15(7)	5(2.3)	4(1.9)	5(2.3)
41-45 years	10(4.7)	8(3.7)	0(0)	2(1)
46-50 years	11(5.1)	3(1.4)	0(0)	1(0.5)
Above 50 years	3(1.4)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)
Total	129 (60)	86 (40)	111(51.6)	104(48.4)
Occupation				
Student	80(37.2)	47(21.9)	90(49.5)	92(50.5)
Home maker	1(0.5)	3(1.4)	0(0)	0(0)
Self employed	20(9.3)	6(2.8)	7(3.3)	1(0.5)
Salaried	30(14)	30(14)	14(6.5)	11(5.1)

Highest level of education				
O-level Certificate	64(29.8)	42(19.5)	59(27.4)	63(29.3)
Diploma	14(6.5)	11(5.1)	2(1)	7(3.3)
Bachelor's Degree	31(14.4)	21(9.8)	47(21.9)	32(14.9)
Master's Degree	15(7)	11(5.1)	2(1)	2(1)
PhD	2(1)	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	0(0)
Individual net monthly income in ZMW				
Less than 1,000	53(24.7)	40(18.7)	60(27.9)	69(32.1)
1001-3000	33(15.3)	20(9.3)	27(12.6)	21(9.8)
3001-5000	8(3.7)	8(3.7)	10(4.7)	4(1.9)
5001-7000	4(1.9)	2(1)	5(2.3)	6(2.8)
Above 7,000	28(13)	16(7.4)	9(4.2)	4(1.9)

Results and discussion

Consumer perceptions towards fast foods

According to (Kotler, et al., 2011) consumer perception is one of the main psychological factors that influences individuals' purchasing choices. He stresses the fact that each individual receives and interprets the environmental stimulus in different ways due to high subjectivity that is inherent to each one's perception. This study attempted to use various statements to extrapolate perceptions that consumers had towards fast foods and table 2 shows a table entitled gender preferences. Respondents in both Lusaka and Kitwe were asked whom they preferred to serve them at a fast food business in Zambia.

As generally observed and expected, the females would want to be served by males

whereas males would want to be served by females. Statistically, table 2 vividly shows that 40.5% of the female respondents in Lusaka preferred to be served by males and 36.3% of them in Kitwe chose to be served by males.

The table also shows that from a total of 99 males (46.1%) in Lusaka, 61% of them prefer to be served by females and only 17.7% of the males chose to be served by fellow males. A similar outcome was observed in Kitwe where 28.9% of the males preferred to be served by females and 19.5% of females preferred to be served by their fellow females. It is, however, worth noting that both males and females are significant in business due to difference in preferences as extrapolated by the TCV theory in which consumer choice is seen as a function of multiple consumption values.

Table 2. Gender preferences

		Which gender would you prefer to serve you at a fast-food business?				Total	
		Lusaka		Kitwe			
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
What is your Gender?	Lusaka	Male	38 (17.7)	61(28.4)		99(46.1)	
		Female	87(40.5)	29(13.5)		116(54)	
	Kitwe	Male			33(15.3)	62(28.9)	111(51.6)
		Female			78(36.3)	42(19.5)	104(48.4)
Total			125(58.2)	90(41.9)	95(51.6)	120(48.4)	215(100)

Factor Analysis and Internal Consistency

Factor analysis aims to identify the relative roles of underlying factors in determining the variables in data sets (Das, 2019). After the number of factors is set, the findings are interpreted based on the specific items. Every item that has a factor loading more than 0.5 is assigned to a factor. One other important issue concerns the scale's internal

consistency which refers to the degree to which the scale items 'hang together'. To make sure that all the scale items are measuring the same underlying construct, the mostly used indicators of internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The ideal value should be 0.7. We can see in Table 3 that the Cronbach's alpha is 0.817 for Lusaka and 0.810 for Kitwe, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale from a sample of 22.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

District	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Lusaka	.817	22
Kitwe	.810	22

Table 4 below clearly shows the initial eigenvalues and extracted sums of squared loadings. We can see that from the 22 components only 6 have been selected in Lusaka district and 5 for Kitwe district because of the eigenvalues being greater than one. The table clearly shows that for the 1st component the value is 5.082>1, 2nd component is 2.608>1, 3rd component is 1.647>1 up to the 6th component whose value is 1.054 which is also greater than 1. The 7th has a value of 0.982 which is less than

1 and hence being excluded up to the 22nd component. Further, the extracted sum of squared holding % of variance depicts that the factor accounts 22.099% of the variance features from the stated observations, the second 11.857% up to the sixth account of 4.790%. Therefore, only 6 components are effective enough in representing all the characteristics or components highlighted by the variables in question.

Table 4. Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings

Component		Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1.	Lusaka	5.082	23.099	23.099	5.082	23.099	23.099
	Kitwe	5.761	26.185	26.185	5.761	26.185	26.185
2.	Lusaka	2.608	11.857	34.956	2.608	11.857	34.956
	Kitwe	2.381	10.825	37.010	2.381	10.825	37.010
3.	Lusaka	1.647	7.485	42.441	1.647	7.485	42.441
	Kitwe	1.266	5.756	42.766	1.266	5.756	42.766
4.	Lusaka	1.562	7.099	49.540	1.562	7.099	49.540
	Kitwe	1.217	5.533	48.299	1.217	5.533	48.299
5.	Lusaka	1.309	5.950	55.490	1.309	5.950	55.490
	Kitwe	1.172	5.329	53.627	1.172	5.329	53.627
6.	Lusaka	1.054	4.790	60.280	1.054	4.790	60.280
	Kitwe	.946	4.299	57.927			
7.	Lusaka	.982	4.464	64.744			
	Kitwe	.917	4.167	62.093			
8.	Lusaka	.911	4.140	68.884			
	Kitwe	.904	4.107	66.200			
9.	Lusaka	.804	3.654	72.538			
	Kitwe	.843	3.834	70.034			

10.	Lusaka	.745	3.386	75.925			
	Kitwe	.820	3.727	73.762			
11.	Lusaka	.677	3.079	79.003			
	Kitwe	.732	3.328	77.090			
12.	Lusaka	.647	2.942	81.945			
	Kitwe	.644	2.927	80.017			
13.	Lusaka	.543	2.469	84.414			
	Kitwe	.611	2.777	82.793			
14.	Lusaka	.533	2.423	86.837			
	Kitwe	.566	2.574	85.367			
15.	Lusaka	.513	2.333	89.170			
	Kitwe	.509	2.315	87.682			
16.	Lusaka	.479	2.179	91.349			
	Kitwe	.479	2.177	89.859			
17.	Lusaka	.390	1.772	93.121			
	Kitwe	.459	2.088	91.947			
18.	Lusaka	.372	1.690	94.812			
	Kitwe	.395	1.795	93.743			
19.	Lusaka	.318	1.446	96.258			
	Kitwe	.380	1.729	95.471			
20.	Lusaka	.310	1.410	97.668			
	Kitwe	.349	1.587	97.058			
21.	Lusaka	.285	1.294	98.962			
	Kitwe	.339	1.539	98.597			
22.	Lusaka	.228	1.038	100.000			
	Kitwe	.309	1.403	100.000			

Table 5 below shows the rotated component matrix of all the statements describing consumer perceptions, behaviour and intentions to purchase fast foods. The whole idea of rotation is to reduce the number of factors on which the variables of interest have high loadings. It is, however, important to note that rotation does not necessarily change anything but makes the interpretation of the analysis easier. The table of rotation clearly displays a total of six (6) factor components. From the rotation table, we can deduce that the components in both Lusaka and Kitwe with valid items are 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Some of the items have however, been regrouped and therefore, the assessment is in line with the groupings observed. We can see in the table of rotation that *preference of fast foods over other meals, I enjoy consuming only meat preparation in a fast-food restaurant, children at home influence the purchase of fast foods* and so on are loaded on factor component 1. Component 1 is considered the component of consumers' intention to purchase fast foods. It can be seen that the popularity of fast food has an impact on consumption and branded fast food products are

popular because they are convenient, tasty, and economical have been reclassified in components 2 and 4 respectively and have been analysed as such.

Other statements such as *festivals and special seasons influence fast food consumption, advertisements have a great influence on consumer behavior towards consuming fast foods* and so on are loaded on component 3. Component 3 ideally measures consumer behavior towards fast foods.

We can further see in the table that component 4 only has 2 items as follows; *brand loyalty have an effect on consumer perspective of fast food* and *brand name has an effect on consumer perspective of fast food*. This component critically measures consumer perceptions. Therefore, using the requirement of checking the factor loading value of 0.5, all items with a loading value of more than 0.5 are considered significant for further analysis. Additionally, the fact that any item or statement belong to 2 or more components makes them conceptually undesirable but for this research, we have considered the component with the highest factor loading comparatively. It is in this

regard that the statements highlighted in the table of rotation have been excluded from being considered for further analysis. For instance, the statement; *my disposable income has a great influence on my ability to consume fast food* belongs to 2 component factors 1 and 4 with 0.560 and 0.348 loading factors respectively. Therefore, the statement will belong to component 1 which has a higher loading factor.

Statements such as *the last fast-food meal*

I had was worth the price and I am aware of health issues due to frequent consumption of fast food have been excluded for further analysis. It is, however, worth noting that lone statements per component such as *home delivery services has an impact on consumer perspective of certain fast food* have also been considered conceptually unideal for analysis. This implies that further analysis only includes items that are not highlighted in the table of rotation below.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component						
		1	2	3	4	5	6
I prefer fast food over any other meal.	Lusaka	.788					
	Kitwe			.687			
I enjoy consuming only meat preparation in a fast-food restaurant.	Lusaka	.764					
	Kitwe			.675			
Children at home influence consumption of fast foods.	Lusaka	.667					
	Kitwe		.422				
My disposable income has a great influence on my ability to consume fast food.	Lusaka	.560			.348		
	Kitwe	.556					
I feel fast is cheaper than regular food items.	Lusaka	.552					
	Kitwe			.463			
The last fast-food meal I had was worth the price.	Lusaka	.495					
	Kitwe				.649		
I save time when I would waste cooking healthy food	Lusaka	.477		.329		.330	
	Kitwe					.782	
Consumption of fast food is influenced by creativity and social messages.	Lusaka			.802			
	Kitwe		.512				
Media influences fast food consumption.	Lusaka			.712			
	Kitwe	.666					
The popularity of fast food has an impact on consumption.	Lusaka		.687				
	Kitwe	.768					
Discount on bulk purchases attracts consumers.	Lusaka		.502	.346			
	Kitwe	.593					
Location of various fast foods has an effect on consumer behavior.	Lusaka			.768			
	Kitwe	.472					
Advertisements have a great influence on consumer behavior towards consuming fast foods.	Lusaka		.437	.600			
	Kitwe	.661					
Festival and special occasions influence fast food consumption.	Lusaka		.364	.592	.300		
	Kitwe	.707					
Fast food advertisements encourage consumers to consume more.	Lusaka			.587		.461	
	Kitwe	.477			.573		
I am aware of health issues due to frequent consumption of fast food.	Lusaka			.497			.389
	Kitwe	.369					
Brand loyalty have an effect on consumer perspective of fast food.	Lusaka				.816		
	Kitwe		.743				
Brand name has an effect on consumer perspective of fast food.	Lusaka				.772		
	Kitwe		.666				

Branded fast food products are popular because they are convenient, tasty, and economical.	Lusaka		.377			.683	
	Kitwe	.459					
Fast food restaurants provide more convenience to consumers.	Lusaka	.650					
	Kitwe	.466	.086				
Consumers are ready to travel and pay more to dine in fast food favorite restaurant.	Lusaka			.341		.632	
	Kitwe				.602		
Home delivery services has an impact on consumer perspective of certain fast food.	Lusaka				.381		.698
	Kitwe		.635				
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.							
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.							
a. Rotation converged in 16 iterations for Lusaka and 8 for Kitwe.							

Purchase decision towards fast foods

The study of behavioral economics is thus well suited to the topic of consumer purchasing behavior. This should not come as a surprise given how crucial consumer psychology and behavior are to the marketing industry. Many of the consistent behavioral patterns that have been found in the literature are described in this section. Due to their capacity to alter consumer demand and, possibly, quantities and prices through the accumulation of individual behavior, these patterns are crucial to understanding market economics. A policymaker might be interested in patterns of consumer behavior if they show cognitive biases that cause people to overpay for goods or buy things they don't need. In this scenario, increasing market transparency can be of importance to policymakers in order to enable consumers to make decisions that are more practical and accurate. The potential it can give them to boost the sale or the perceived value of their goods in consumers' eyes is the final reason why marketers are interested in consumer behavioral patterns in purchasing.

Table 6 shows that disposable income significantly influences the ability to consume fast foods in both Kitwe and Lusaka. The researcher also observed that there is consistency in the responses provided by respondents in that they disagree with having more meat in fast food diets and offering an appropriate dietary need for more fruits and vegetables. We can see also in the same table that children at home influence the consumption of fast foods, as the respondents agreed with that statement.

On the other hand, respondents disagreed that fast food is cheaper than regular food items. Respondents further disagreed that they did not prefer fast food over any other meal. The researcher notes that preference comes with many other factors, such as income level and how convenient and economical fast foods can be. This is reflecting an important indication of the types of consumers in Lusaka and Kitwe which every food operator should consider before setting up a fast food business.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for purchase decisions-Component 1

		Min	Max	Mean	SD	QD
My disposable income has a great influence on my ability to consume fast food.	Lusaka	1	5	3.84	1.359	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.83	1.219	A
I feel fast is cheaper than regular food items.	Lusaka	1	5	2.40	1.381	D
	Kitwe	1	5	2.73	1.368	N
I prefer fast food over any other meal.	Lusaka	1	5	2.05	1.137	D
	Kitwe	1	5	2.36	1.363	D
I enjoy consuming only meat preparation in a fast-food restaurant.	Lusaka	1	5	2.31	1.383	D
	Kitwe	1	5	2.48	1.245	D
Children at home influence consumption of fast foods.	Lusaka	1	5	3.41	1.316	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.20	1.271	N

Legend: 1.81-2.60 Disagree (D), 2.61-3.40 Neutral (N), 3.41-4.20 Agree (A)

Aggregated consumer perceptions

Many businesses always try to impact consumer’s perceptions towards their offerings, for instance, strengthening their image and establishing lasting relationships with consumers (Armstrong, 2011). Due to the fact that perception is highly subjective among people, consumers perception criteria, such as reputation and quality, depends on different factors such as age, income, level of education, lifestyle, personality characteristics and the knowledge concerning to the product or service, and the organization itself.

Table 7 shows different levels of endorsements of the four attributes of consumer perceptions captured in component 2. Unlike any statement in Kitwe, we can see in the table that statement number 2 in Lusaka did not have any response of strongly disagree because its minimum is 2. This strictly shows how strongly agreeable the respondents in Lusaka were to this statement of fast food consumption impact due

to popularity of fast foods. The table also shows that discounts on bulk purchases attracts both Kitwe and Lusaka consumers equally. The fact that discounts make consumers to save money would definitely attract more purchases within a short space of time. Fast food operators in Kitwe and Lusaka should, therefore, consider offering rebates severally in order to attract more purchases from consumers thereby increasing their profits and sales. We can also see in the table that the media influences the consumption of fast foods in the two districts which is also related to creativity and social media messages. This simply means that handling of social media can either break or build a fast food business. We can conclude that consumers will end up demanding more of fast foods if the social messages they receive are very appealing. Thus, constant communication via any social platform with consumers is key for boosting of the fast food business.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for consumer perceptions-Component 2

		Min	Max	Mean	SD	QD
Media influences fast food consumption.	Lusaka	1	5	4.19	.944	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.89	1.049	A
The popularity of fast food has an impact on consumption.	Lusaka	2	5	4.28	.776	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4.07	1.002	A
Consumption of fast food is influenced by creativity and social messages.	Lusaka	1	5	4.03	.979	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.73	1.094	A
Discount on bulk purchases attracts consumers.	Lusaka	1	5	4.43	.880	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4.34	1.000	SA

Legend: 3.41-4.20 Agree (A), 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)

Consumer behavior towards fast foods

This set of questions were asked in order to identify the consumer behavior. Knowing how consumers behave is crucial for businesses for developing successful marketing strategies to meet organizational objectives and gain competitive advantage (Hawkins, 2012). According to (Samli, 2013), in order to sustain competitive advantage and influence consumer decision, studying consumer behavior is extremely important.

Table 8 shows the outcome of the descriptive statistics for consumer behavior

under the third factor component. It clearly shows similar outcomes in both Lusaka and Kitwe even though the strength of agreement for consumers in Lusaka on average is higher. All the consumers in Lusaka strongly agreed to all the statements captured in component 3 through the QD column. The consumers in Kitwe also behave in a similar manner by agreeing to all the statements even though it was with less intensity. We can conclude based on the responses that the location of the various fast foods has an effect on consumer behavior. This clearly indicates how pertinent location is in the fast food businesses. Secondly, consumers are highly motivated to

consume more of fast foods when they see adverts of fast foods. Thirdly, festivals such as Merry Christmas, Happy Easter and any special occasions such as birthday, marriage or wedding

celebrations have a strong influence on fast food consumption. Fourthly, advertisements also have a great influence on consumer behavior in general towards the consumption of fast foods.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for consumer behaviour-component 3

		Min	Max	Mean	SD	QD
Location of various fast foods has an effect on consumer behavior.	Lusaka	1	5	4.39	0.779	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4.22	1.025	SA
Fast food advertisements encourage consumers to consume more.	Lusaka	1	5	4.28	0.977	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	3.99	0.964	A
Festival and special occasions influence fast food consumption.	Lusaka	1	5	4.52	0.767	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4.22	1.130	SA
Advertisements have a great influence on consumer behavior towards consuming fast foods.	Lusaka	1	5	4.42	0.852	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4.12	1.050	A

Legend: 3.41-4.20 Agree (A), 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics for consumer behavior under component 4 which has two attributes. Consequentially, the 2 attributes have been strongly endorsed by all the respondents in Lusaka with the quartile deviation showing that all of them strongly agreed to both the statements. On the other hand, the consumers in Kitwe district just agreed to the two attributes of consumer behaviour. The table shows that both brand loyalty and brand name have an effect on consumer perspective of fast

foods. It is factual to note that since the consumers become loyal to the restaurant, they will stop paying attention to the pricing model which simply means that the consumers will have high likelihood of engaging in impulse buying. Lastly, after being loyal consumers, there is high likelihood that they will inform their families and friends about their favourite restaurant which increases the consumer base of such a restaurant. Ultimately, the profit margins will in the long run increase.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for consumer behaviour-component 4

		Min	Max	Mean	SD	QD
Brand loyalty have an effect on consumer perspective of fast food.	Lusaka	1	5	4.41	0.940	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4	1.194	A
Brand name has an effect on consumer perspective of fast food.	Lusaka	1	5	4.38	0.970	SA
	Kitwe	1	5	4	1.233	A

Legend: 3.41-4.20 Agree (A), 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)

Consumer behavior in fast food businesses is very important to pay attention to. We can see in table 10 that the respondents from both Lusaka and Kitwe agreed to all the factors that affected their behaviour towards fast foods. Fast foods restaurants are regarded to be so convenient to consumers and this simply means that consumers especially working class consumers will continue to demand more fast foods. Another key factor is the fact that branded fast foods are tastier and very economical. The taste has become a driving force to demand more of fast foods. Other than convenience, taste and

economical, the fast food consumers are prepared to travel and pay more to dine in fast food favourite restaurant. The fact that consumers in the two districts are willing to travel and pay more for fast foods should mean that there is more chance for fast food operators to maximise their profit. Once all the three attributes in component 5 are met to the satisfaction of the consumers, they will definitely take such a business operator as their favourite and will always purchase more regardless of the price.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for consumer behaviour-component 5

		Min	Max	Mean	SD	QD
Branded fast food products are popular because they are convenient, tasty, and economical.	Lusaka	1	5	3.52	1.198	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.52	1.147	A
Fast food restaurants provide more convenience to consumers.	Lusaka	1	5	3.89	1.045	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.81	1.047	A
Consumers are ready to travel and pay more to dine in fast food favorite restaurant.	Lusaka	1	5	3.91	1.088	A
	Kitwe	1	5	3.76	1.170	A

Legend: 3.41-4.20 Agree (A)

Discussion

The study of behavioral economics is thus well suited to consumer purchasing behavior. This should not come as a surprise, given how crucial consumer psychology and behavior are to the marketing industry. Due to their capacity to alter consumer demand and, possibly, quantities and prices through the accumulation of individual behavior, these consumer patterns are crucial to understanding market economics. A policymaker might be interested in consumer behavior patterns if they show cognitive biases that cause people to overpay for goods or buy things they do not need.

The study found that disposable income significantly influences consumers' ability to consume fast food in both Kitwe and Lusaka. The significance of disposable income can be related to the findings by (Sean, 2003) of the study conducted in Malaysia, in which one of the factors observed as significant was income. The researcher also observed that there is consistency in the responses provided by respondents in that they disagree with having more meat in fast food diets and offering an appropriate dietary need for more fruits and vegetables. We can see also in the findings that children at home influence the consumption of fast foods, as the respondents agreed with that statement. This is in line with the study conducted by (Ali, 2010), which focused on Buying Behavior of Consumers in Emerging Economies, in which he discovered that consumer purchasing behavior has been dynamically shifting and has been greatly influenced by the places of purchase, variety, price, kid-friendly features and so on.

On the other hand, respondents oppose the idea that quick nourishment is cheaper than

customary nourishment things. This outcome is different from what (Schroeder & McEachern, 2005) found within the Joined Together Kingdom, where studies found quick nourishments cheaper than standard dinners. Respondents further oppose this idea that they did not lean toward quick nourishment over any other feast. The analyst notes that inclination comes with numerous other variables, such as pay level and how helpful and conservative quick nourishments can be. It is important for companies to know how their customers are behaving in order to develop effective demonstrations to achieve organizational goals and gain a competitive advantage (Hawkins, 2012). According to (Samli, 2013), customer behavior research is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage and influencing buyer choice.

The study revealed that the location of the various fast foods affects consumer behavior. This indicates how appropriate the location is for fast-food businesses. According to (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993), the nearer the consumers are to a store, the greater the possibility of purchasing from the store and vice versa. In this regard, the business operators should ensure that they establish their businesses closer to the consumers. Secondly, consumers are highly motivated to consume more fast foods when they see adverts for fast foods. Thirdly, festivals such as Merry Christmas and Happy Easter, and any special occasions such as birthdays and marriage celebrations strongly influence fast food consumption. Fourthly, advertisements also significantly influence consumer behavior in general toward the consumption of fast foods.

Some of these implications are related to the findings by (Arnold, 2002), in which he

established that about 40% of the consumers were conscious of their diet as they wanted fast foods with low fat and more proteins. The demand for more local foods and fruits means that fast food consumers are sensitive to dietary needs. Most local foods in Zambia do not have high fat levels and include more vegetables.

Conclusion

This study aimed at conducting a comparative descriptive analysis of the consumer perceptions and behavior towards fast-food businesses in Lusaka and Kitwe districts of Zambia. The study found similar behavior and perceptions by consumers in the two districts. Popularity of fast foods may be one of the most important attributes of consumer perception as it positively impacts the consumption of fast foods. It is however, in the long run that the fast food which of course is well branded improves its popularity. Once a certain fast food operator becomes popular, it is highly likely that it will advertise itself such that the fast food operator will reduce expenses on various adverts and branding. The study however, was only restricted to participants that had access to internet. All potential respondents who had no access to the online google questionnaire did not participate in the study.

The managerial implication should be well noted by fast food businesses in that they need to realign their business strategies to the updated demands of consumers. It should also be

emphasised that fast food business operators should consider modifying their business premises by including facilities that accommodate children. This will boost their sales and enhance consumer utility as far as fast foods are concerned. The fact that many consumers would want more fruits and vegetables in their diet means that fast food operators may consider cultivating their fruits and vegetables to have a consistent supply. The fast-food operators should also consider the availability of local fast foods such as African polony, roasted cassava, and so on.

In terms of future research, the study can be rolled out to other countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, to do a comprehensive comparative study on consumers' perceptions and behaviors towards fast food businesses. Another study can also be conducted to explore the contribution of agriculture to fast food businesses because most of the fast foods come from agricultural produce. Fast food businesses should always apply principle number 4 of the 10 principles of economics which stipulates that people respond to incentives. It is, therefore, important to offer discounts to bulk fast food purchasers.

As a way of increasing sales and frequency of consumers visiting the fast food business premises, they should consider employing more of females as salespersons in the ratio. This is so because many consumers of fast foods prefer to be served by females.

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