

# AN EVALUATION OF THE DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN OWERRI

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## Abstract

*This paper is on "An Evaluation of the Determinants of Consumer Patronage of Fast-Food Outlets". Food is a basic necessity of life and how it is processed and marketed have implications for health and economics. This study is necessitated by the observed instability in the patronage of fast-food outlets. Respondents for this study were drawn from 5 eateries in Owerri. The findings show that of 10 attributes investigated, only 3 were significant in determining patronage. It is recommended that proprietors of fast-food establishments should ensure an appropriate mix of these attributes in their offers, in order to ensure consistent patronage.*

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Food is one of the most fundamental and important needs of life. No organism can thrive without food. How it is produced, processed and marketed can have a big effect on health and economics too. With the increase in work hours, fewer hours for leisure, increased education, enlightenment and social awareness, as well as an improvement in the pay packages of workers, food is being prepared and sold at specialized outlets (called eateries), in order to serve the needs of the increasing market of busy, elitist people.

However, in some parts of the world (US for example), unhealthy eating is cited as the second biggest killer (causes of avoidable deaths) after smoking. About 60% of the population is considered obese, and this can be traceable to the high levels of fat and sugar typical in fast foods.

People who are fastidious about their health have condemned the offerings of these fast food establishments, labeling them as "junk food". The issues raised include calories, trans fat and portion sizes. This research focuses on discovering the most important patronage attributes and the importance attached to each attribute, by the target market. This is deemed necessary in order to achieve the ultimate aim of marketing i.e. customer satisfaction, (including good health) at a profit to the organization.

### Statement of Problem

As earlier noted, there is an explosion in the number of fast foods outlets in the cities. Today's companies face their toughest competition ever (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004). The emergence of each new eatery is heralded by customers who throng the outlet in order to assess their offers. Most often, this shift is not sustained for long, suggesting that the clients are not satisfied with the products/service offered.

In view of this, the research problem of this study is the observed instability in the patronage of eateries.

- Why is this so?
- What product features or characteristics do consumers desire from an eatery?
- How then can the management of an eatery ensure regular patronage from its clients?

### Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to find out the major determinants of customers' patronage of fast food outlets in Owerri Municipal. The specific objectives include:

- (1) To determine which aspects or features of the offerings that actually influence patronage significantly.
- (2) To assess the relative importance or contributions of each of these features.
- (3) To determine the best practices expected of the management of eateries, in order to ensure consistency in patronage and achieve customer satisfaction.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Overview**

In a study by Shriber et al (1995), it was found that in rapidly growing metropolitan areas, there is a decline in the restaurant activity index, which measures preference for dining out. This means that a 10 percent growth in population may translate to a less than 10 percent growth in restaurant activity.

In a study by Bowen and Shiang-Li (2001), it was found that customers who were "merely satisfied" would probably not bother with a second outing, unlike the customers who were "highly satisfied" or "delighted". Delighted customers not only come for a repeat treat, but also tell others about their discovery. Customer satisfaction depends on the products' perceived performance in delivering value relative to a buyer's expectations. The expectations of guests are formed by company image, word of mouth, price and quality of products.

Quality has a direct impact on product or service performance. This is closely linked to customer value and satisfaction. In the narrowest sense, quality means "freedom from defects". However, customer-focused definitions suggest that quality begins with customer needs and ends with customer satisfaction. In a broader sense, quality also includes product features. These two aspects together improve customer satisfaction (Juvan, 1992). Product features add to the cost of the product provided. Customers must therefore be willing to pay for the extra costs if they are to enjoy the additional features. Freedom from deficiencies can only be achieved when the staff are properly trained, motivated and adequately supervised to ensure quality control. A mistake (which we may refer to as "a deficiency" in the food service delivery) may prove quite expensive, when viewed from the point of lost market worth.

### **Characteristics of Service Marketing as it Applies to the Food Service Industry**

One of the most important tasks of a hospitality business is to develop the service side of the business, specifically, a strong service culture. The service culture focuses on serving and satisfying the customer. This can only be achieved when the characteristics of service marketing are understood and correctly applied as it affects the food service industry.

### **Intangibility of Services**

According to Lewis and Chambers (1989), someone who purchases a service may go away empty-handed, but he does not go away empty-headed. He has memories that could be shared with others.

This statement underscores the service characteristic of intangibility. Services, unlike physical products, cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelt before they are purchased and consumed. In order to reduce the uncertainty caused by service intangibility, customers look for tangible evidence that will provide information and confidence about the service. Tangibles provide signals as to the quality of the intangible service (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2006). An example of a tangible in the fast food business is the exterior of the restaurant.

### **Inseparability of Services**

In most fast food businesses, both the service provider and the customer must be present for the transaction to occur (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2006). The food served at an eatery may be outstanding, but if the service person has a poor attitude or provides inattentive service, customers will down-rate the overall restaurant experience.

### **Variability of Services**

The quality of a service varies and depends on who provides it, when and where it is provided. Since services are produced and consumed simultaneously, quality control is limited. The high degree of contact between the service provider and the guest means that product (service) consistency depends on the service provider's skill and performance at the time of the exchange. Variability or lack of consistency in the product (service) offered is a major cause of customer dissonance in the fast food line of business. Managers can solve this problem by giving definitions of their offerings to their

customers, either verbally or by printing same on the menu.

#### Perishability of Services

Most of the offerings of the fast food business have a limited span of "life". The edibles if not consumed within a couple of hours tend to lose freshness, overheat or degenerate, even with the use of refrigerators and micro-wave ovens. The **non-edible facilities such as seats, cannot be inventoried** when not in use and so the proceeds accruable therefrom are permanently lost over the given time period.

#### Factors Affecting the Performance of Fast Food Outlets

Several factors may determine how well an eatery thrives, but in this paper, we shall highlight three important ones, viz the attitude of the customer, the restaurant environment and controlling customer defection.

**The Customer's Attitude:** Attitudes put people in the frame of mind of either liking or disliking a product (service). It is critical to the survival of an eatery to impress a customer on his first time visit. This is because it elicits a positive or favourable attitude towards the restaurant and would encourage a repeat visit. Attitudes once formed are difficult to change. A saying among restaurateurs goes thus: "A restaurant is only as good as the last meal served".

**Restaurant Environment:** Dining is about the senses. The kitchen and food preparation areas are right in front of the customers, and so are supposed to be designed to appeal to the senses. Customers observe freshness, cleanliness and variety at the same time they smell spices and hear the sizzle of meat on the grill. These stimulate the appetite and blend the ambience of food preparation with its consumption.

**Controlling Customer Defection:** Managers must pay attention to their customer defection rates and undertake steps to reduce it. Causes of customer defection must be identified in order to determine how each can be reduced or eliminated. A high percentage of customers leave because of poor services, poor quality food, wrong billing, lack of novelty or too-high prices. Given the increasing competition in the fast food business and the costs of attracting new and loyal customers, it is imperative that customer defection is minimized.

#### Methodology

##### Sample Size:

The sample size for this study is 100 customers of fast food houses. An average of about 20 respondents were sampled from each of 5 different eateries in Owerri Municipal.

##### Sampling Unit:

The population for this study comprises of all customers of eateries in Owerri Municipal. The sampling unit however constitutes of literate (a minimum of secondary school certificate holders) shoppers at each of the selected outlets.

##### Sampling Technique:

The structured questionnaires were personally administered and retrieved from the customers who patronized the eateries during the sampling period. A convenience sampling procedure was used. This involved reaching those respondents who were qualified to fill the questionnaires and who were accessible to the researchers at the time of their visit to the eateries.

##### Statistical Instrument

The data generated from the questionnaires are of two types viz - qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data was grouped and analysed using percentages. The quantitative data which were gathered were tested with both the rank correlation and multiple regression analysis. In the multiple regression analysis, the Y value (dependent variable) is given by the responses of all the 100 respondents' expenditure figures gathered from question 5; while the X values (independent variables) are gathered from the individual values of all the 100 respondents for each of the 10 attributes rated in question 11.

##### The model therefore is of the form

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + b_8X_8 + b_9X_9 + b_{10}X_{10} + U$$

Where

- Y = Expenditure level
- a = The intercept
- X<sub>1</sub> = speed of service (SOS)
- X<sub>2</sub> = variety/assortment of products (VAP)
- X<sub>3</sub> = atmosphere (ATM)
- X<sub>4</sub> = economy/fair pricing (EFP)
- X<sub>5</sub> = sense of order(SOO)
- X<sub>6</sub> = handling of customer's complaints(HCC)
- X<sub>7</sub> = quality of products/services (QPS)
- X<sub>8</sub> = parking space (PKS)
- X<sub>9</sub> = children's section (CDS)
- X<sub>10</sub> = courtesy of staff(COS)
- U = the stochastic or random variable (which represents all other factors not captured in the model).

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Responses to the Questionnaires are presented in tables below:

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 represent the level of patronage and loyalty to the eatery.

Table 1: Frequency of Patronage

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Regularly	46	46
2.	Occasionally	28	28
3.	Rarely	14	14
4.	Others (when the need arises)	12	12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 2: Customers' reaction when preferred product is unavailable

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Buy another available product	35	35
2.	Forgo purchase	8	8
3.	Go elsewhere	54	54
4.	No response	3	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 3 – Preferred outlet, when there is a choice

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	No other outlet	26	26
2.	Other similar outlets (combinations)	41	41
3.	No response	33	33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 4 – Customers' reaction when a new outlet is opened closer to home or office

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Continue shopping here	22	22
2.	Experiment on the new outlet	41	41
3.	Switch over completely to the new outlet	24	24
4.	No response	5	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Tables 5, 6 and 7 represent the customers' preferences (in terms of products and outlet attributes).

Table 5 – Most Preferred Product

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Snacks, ice cream and drinks	24	24
2.	Rice, salad and continental cuisine	34	34
3.	Africana cuisine	27	27
4.	Various combinations of the above	15	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 6 – Reasons for preferring another outlet.

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Proximity to home or office	25	25
2.	Better tasting food	14	14
3.	Variety of products	16	16
4.	Cheaper products	8	8
5.	Children's section	2	2
6.	Various combinations of the above	21	21
7.	No response	14	14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 7 – Attractions to an eatery

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Tasty food	17	17
2.	Neat environment	4	4
3.	Courtesy of staff	6	6
4.	Interior atmosphere and comfort	8	8
5.	Children's playhouse	6	6
6.	Convenient parking space	10	10
7.	Proximity to home/office	14	14
8.	Assortment and variety of products	35	35
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

In order to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between customer loyalty and patronage determinants, some cross-tabulations to tables 1, 6 and 7 are presented below; in tables 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Table 8 Reasons why the "regular" patrons are attracted to an eatery.

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Variety	22	47.82
2.	Tasty food	11	23.91
3.	Neatness	3	6.52
4.	Parking space	8	17.39
5.	Children's house	2	4.34
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 – Reasons why the "occasional" patrons prefer other outlets and are attracted to an eatery.

Reasons for Preferred Outlet			Attractions to an Eatery		
Responses	No.	Percentage (%)	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
Proximity	14	50	Tasty food	4	14.28
Better taste	6	21.42	Parking space	2	7.14
Variety	6	21.42	Variety	8	28.57
No response	2	7.14	Interior atmosphere	5	17.85
			Courtesy of staff	4	14.28
			Children's house	4	14.28
			Neatness	1	3.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10 – Reasons why "rare" patrons prefer other outlets and their attractions to an eatery.

Reasons for Preferred Outlet			Attractions to an Eatery		
Responses	No.	Percentage (%)	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
Better taste	5	35.71	Variety	4	28.57
Proximity	8	57.14	Tasty food	2	14.27
Variety	1	7.14	Courtesy of staff	1	7.14
			Proximity to home/office	7	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11 – Reasons why “the others” (i.e. those who patronize an eatery when the need arises) prefer other outlets and their attractions to an eatery.

Reasons for Preferred Outlet			Attractions to an Eatery		
Responses	No.	Percentage (%)	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
Better taste	1	8.33	Better taste	1	8.33
Proximity to home/ office	2	16.66	Variety	1	8.33
Variety	3	25	Parking space	7	58.33
Cheaper products	5	41.66	Interior atmosphere	3	25
Children's section	1	8.33			
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 12 represents the level of price sensitivity of the respondents.

Table 12 – Reaction to a slight increase in the price of product choice.

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	Forgo buying	19	19
2.	Look for alternative cheaper outlet	63	63
3.	Continue buying	18	18
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

Table 13 represents the various aspects of the eateries' offer, which the respondents would wish to be improved upon.

Table 13 – Desired areas for improvement.

S/N	Responses	No.	Percentage (%)
1.	More variety of products and services	22	22
2.	Ensuring safety of products	19	19
3.	Better prices	16	16
4.	More parking space	21	21
5.	More serving points	18	18
6.	Miscellaneous (better spicing, more personalized services, promos, etc.)	4	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2010

## DATA ON THE VARIABLES OF INTEREST

### Rank Correlation

The raw scores extracted from the questionnaires were ranked since they were abstract attributes that are qualitative in nature.

The results obtained are as follows:

$r_s$	EFP	SOS	VAP	QPS	SOO	PKS	CDS	COS	ATM	HCC
EXP	0.9996	0.9996	0.9996	0.9997	0.9996	0.9996	0.9994	0.9995	0.9995	0.9995

which shows a very strong relationship between EXP and the rest of the 10 variables tested as  $-1 \leq r_s \leq 1$  theoretically.

Given the results of the Rank Correlation, it became necessary to understand the strength of the relationships which was established with the correlation technique. Therefore in agreement with Ochieng and Zumbo (2002), the regression analysis was carried out on the relationship between Expenditure and the 10 attributes studied.

### Regression Analysis

The Y-variable is the dependent variable and is given by the customers' responses on the average amount they spend on each visit to the eatery. The X variables are the independent variables given by the customers' responses on their rating of several attributes about the eatery.

	Y	-	Expenditure Level
	X values		
1.	EFP	-	Economy and Fair Pricing
2.	SOS	-	Speed of Service
3.	VAP	-	Variety and Assortment of Products
4.	QPS	-	Quality of Product/Service
5.	SOO	-	Sense of Order
6.	PKS	-	Parking Space
7.	CDS	-	Children's Section
8.	COS	-	Courtesy of Staff
9.	ATM	-	Atmosphere
10.	HCC	-	Handling of Customer Complaints

Table 14: Multiple Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	
	B	t
Constant	2.895	0.526
EFP	-0.166	-0.557
SOS	0.035	0.320
VAP	0.201	2.217
QPS	0.460	1.513
SOO	0.150	1.651
PKS	0.092	0.959
CDS	0.067	0.848
ATM	0.117	1.244
HCC	-0.094	-1.037

Table 15: Simple Regression Results

S/N	Independent Variables	Constant	F	t	R-Squared	Beta coefficient
1.	EFP	16.304	7.313	2.704	0.69	0.254
2.	SOS	21.274	0.083	0.289	0.001	0.032
3.	VAP	16.744	7.463	2.732	0.71	0.244
4.	QPS	15.291	9.789	3.129	0.91	0.298
5.	SOO	19.00	2.156	1.468	0.022	0.136
6.	PKS	19.091	1.634	1.278	0.016	0.130
7.	CDS	21.251	0.182	0.427	0.002	0.035
8.	COS	22.00	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
9.	ATM	18.281	3.00	1.732	0.030	0.166
10.	HCC	22.00	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

In table 14, we have the summary of the multiple regression and in table 15, the summary results of the simple regression. From the above results, the multiple regression model result was unimpressive. Only VAP (Variety and Assortment of Products) is significant in the model. This means that when all the 10 variables of interest (all taken together) were regressed against expenditure, only VAP was significant in explaining the expenditure pattern of the customers. The co-efficient of VAP is equally positive (0.201). All the other variables are insignificant. Apart from EFP (Economy and Fair Pricing) and HCC (Handling of Customer's Complaints), which have negative coefficients of 0.166 and 0.094 respectively, all the other variables under investigation have positive coefficients.

Due to the unimpressive nature of the multiple regression results, the researchers were led into constructing the simple regression model. Here, each of the 10 independent variables was regressed against the dependent variable i.e. the level of expenditure of the respondents. The results are as summarized in table 15. It is observed that 3 variables viz QPS (Quality of Product/Service), VAP (Variety and Assortment of Products) and EFP (Economy and Fair Pricing) have positive relationships with the expenditure level. Their coefficients of 0.298, 0.244 and 0.254 respectively are all positive. All these 3 variables are also significant in explaining the expenditure dynamics of the customer. In this model, it is also observed that all other variables are positive but insignificant in explaining the expenditure level of the customers. This result is an improvement on

the earlier multiple regression results.

The simple regression result is of the form  $EXP = a + b(x)$ . Therefore, fitting the regression line for each of the independent variables and the dependent variable, we have:

- (1)  $EXP = 16.304 + 0.254 EFP$   
(2.704) ..... eqn 1
- (2)  $EXP = 21.274 + 0.032 SOS$   
(0.289) ..... eqn 2
- (3)  $EXP = 16.744 + 0.244 VAP$   
(2.734) ..... eqn 3
- (4)  $EXP = 15.291 + 0.298 QPS$   
(3.129) ..... eqn 4
- (5)  $EXP = 19.091 + 0.136 SOO$   
(1.468) ..... eqn 5
- (6)  $EXP = 19.091 + 0.130 PKS$   
(1.278) ..... eqn 6
- (7)  $EXP = 21.251 + 0.035 CDS$   
(0.427) ..... eqn 7
- (8)  $EXP = 22.00 + 0.00 COS$   
(0.00) ..... eqn 8
- (9)  $EXP = 18.281 + 0.166 ATM$   
(1.732) ..... eqn 9
- (10)  $EXP = 22.00 + 0.00 HCC$   
(0.00) ..... eqn 10

Note that the figures in parentheses are the t-values.

Since only 3 variables QPS, VAP and EFP are significant in explaining changes in expenditure level, let us consider their R-squared values.

R-squared value for QPS	=	0.91
R-squared value for VAP	=	0.71
R-squared value for EFP	=	0.69

#### Interpretation of the R-Squared Results

QPS with R-squared value of 0.91 means that of all the total variations in the dependent variable (expenditure level), QPS explains or accounts for 91 percent of such changes. This confirms the literature earlier reviewed which asserts that the quality of product (service) would significantly impact on patronage, here explained by the expenditure level.

Next, is the R-squared value of VAP, which is 0.71. This means that about 71 percent of the total variations in expenditure level is accounted for by variety/assortment of products. The reason is that every consumer has a right to and prefers to exercise a freedom of choice, and so would prefer outlets where he can choose freely from among various alternatives.

Finally, EFP, which is also significant and positive

has an R-square value of 0.69. This means that of all the total variations in expenditure levels, economy and fair pricing accounted for about 69 percent of such variations. This is in line with the rationality principle of consumer behaviour, which states that the average consumer would want to part with less resources for more units of a product (service).

From equation 4, for a unit increase in QPS, expenditure level will increase by 0.298 units, all other variables being held constant. From equation 3, for a unit increase in VAP, expenditure level will increase by 0.244 units, all other variables being held constant. From equation 1, for a unit increase in EFP, expenditure level will increase by 0.254 units, all other variables being held constant.

#### Discussion of Findings

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 indicate that the patronage of most customers is "regular" but in the event of a product being unavailable, more than half of the respondents (54%) would switch or "go elsewhere". It was also found that product or shop loyalty is low since most respondents would exercise the preference to shop elsewhere (41%) and would experiment on a new outlet (41%) or even switch completely (24%) on the introduction of an outlet closer to their home or office.

Table 5 indicates that rice, continental dishes and African cuisine are most preferred offers, followed by snacks and ice-cream.

From tables 6 and 7, variety and assortment of products is the most important attraction which customers have to an eatery. Other important attractions include quality of the product, affordability, tasty food, proximity to home or office and convenient parking space. Some other features such as neat environment, children's playhouse, courtesy of staff and personalized services were not considered very important by the respondents. The researchers are of the opinion that these features are already in-built in the packages offered by the class of eateries studied, and so, the respondents took them for granted.

Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 give an idea of the relationship which exists between the level of customer loyalty (as indicated by frequency of patronage) and patronage determinants. These tables indicate that the most regular patrons i.e. the core loyalists are attracted to an eatery principally

because of the variety of products, tasty food and availability of parking spaces. This group is of utmost importance to the survival of the organisations. We also observe that those who patronize the eateries less regularly (i.e. occasionally) are attracted principally because of the variety of products and prefer other outlets principally due to proximity, better tasting food and variety of products. The rare patrons prefer other outlets and are attracted to an eatery mainly due to proximity. Other patrons are attracted by the availability of parking spaces and prefer other outlets mainly because their products are cheaper.

Table 12 indicates that many of the respondents are price-sensitive (63%), and so would switch outlets in the event of a minor price increase.

Table 13 indicates that the customers of the eateries desire some improvements in certain aspects of the services they receive. The most desired changes are in the areas of product variety, more service points (to ease time-wastes) and reduced prices.

#### Summary of Major Findings, Recommendations and conclusion

##### Major Findings

1. Many respondents prefer continental dishes and Africana cuisine to snacks, ice cream and other offers in the eateries.
2. The most important patronage attributes to the respondents are variety of the products, quality of the product and affordability. Other relevant attributes are the taste of the food, convenient parking spaces and proximity.
3. Respondents are concerned about the risks and hazards associated with the regular consumption of fast foods in eateries.
4. Most of the respondents are not strong loyalists. They go where they can get what they want; and would not continue patronage if there is a better alternative outlet.
5. Many of the respondents are price sensitive and may switch, in the event of a slight price change.

##### Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the researcher recommends the following:

- (1) Continental dishes and africana cuisine should be encouraged and concentrated on by the management of eateries.
- (2) The best standards should be observed for

the procurement, preservation and processing of food by the management of eateries in order to ensure the good health of their customers.

- (3) Variety should be enhanced, so that customers can choose from many alternative dishes.
- (4) Competitive and customer-friendly prices should be charged, since it has been observed that some respondents are price-sensitive.
- (5) The management of these eateries should develop a good combination of the most important attributes which customers desire (variety, quality of products, fair prices, good parking spaces, etc.) so as to develop and sustain loyalty.

##### Conclusion

This study was able to establish that out of all the ten patronage determinants studied, only three of them viz Variety and Assortment of Products, Quality of Product/Service and Economy and Fair Pricing were significant and relevant in determining the patronage of fast food outlets in Owerri Municipal. The relative importance which customers attributed to each of these was also statistically determined. The aim of the research has therefore been achieved.

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**Questionnaire**

1. How frequently do you patronize fast-food establishments? Regularly(Daily/Weekly) ( )  
Occasionally (once in a long while ( ) Rarely ( )  
Others.....
2. What do you prefer to buy most? Snacks and ice cream ( ) Rice/continental dish ( )  
African cuisine( )  
Others.....
3. If your preferred product is unavailable now, what would you do? Buy another available

product( ) Forgo purchase until later( ) Go to another eatery( )  
Others.....

4. Suppose there is a slight increase in the price of your choice here (say, from N50 to N100), how would you react? Forgo buying ( ), Look for alternative cheaper outlet ( ) continue buying( )  
Others.....
5. On the average, about how much do you spend on each visit to an eatery?  
.....
6. If you were to exercise a choice, where would you prefer to go, instead of here?  
.....
7. Why?.....
8. What are your attractions to an eatery? Please tick only 3. Tasty food ( ), Neat environment ( ), Courtesy of staff( ) Interior atmosphere and comfort( ), Children's playhouse ( )  
Convenient parking space ( ), Proximity to home/office, Assortment and variety of products( ),  
Others.....
9. State any 2 areas you would want some improvement upon, in this establishment.  
a.....  
b.....
10. If you are quite satisfied with this outfit, and a new one is opened close to your home or office, what would you do? Continue shopping here( ), Experiment on the new one ( ) Switch over completely to the accessible outfit( )  
Others.....

**11. Rate this eatery on the following points**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
a Speed of service					
b Variety/assortment of products					
c Atmosphere					
d Economy/fair pricing					
e Sense of order (queuing and minor accidents)					
f Handling of customers' complaints					
g Quality of products/services					
h Parking space					
i Children's section					
j Courtesy of staff					