

# Trend of Fast Food Consumption Among College Girls

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**ABSTRACT** \_\_\_\_ **Background:** This study aims to contribute the revealing factors that are related to fast food preference, consumption pattern and expenditure among college girl.

**Objectives:** To study fast food preference, consumption, expenditure, and perceptions among college girls and to find out the association between the perception of fast food with the frequency of fast food consumption among college girls.

**Methodology:** A sample of 50 respondents was to be selected from 5 different colleges of Karachi based on purposive sampling. A questionnaire method is used as a tool for data collection in which subjects were asked about their preferences, consumption pattern, expenditure and perception on eating fast food. Associations were analyzed by conducting correlation between perceptions of fast food with the frequency of consuming fast food among college girls.

**Result:** We observed that majority of college girls often consume fast food 2-3 times a month (28%), and highest percent of students preferred French fries(80%) as a fast food for the reason of social and environmental factor(64%) and they mostly consume fast food at their college cafeterias(34%) with the expenditure of Rs.1000-2000 on fast food(38%). In addition, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers from which about 74% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food is not good for health. Similarly, According to statistical analysis through correlation, we observed no association between perception of fast food being unhealthy and frequency of fast food consumption among college girls ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The results of the study concluded that there was no association seen between their frequent and infrequent consumption of fast food regarding with the perception of fast food among college girls.

**Keywords:** Consumption, Consumers, Expenditure, Fast Food, Frequent and Infrequent. Preference and Perception

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanization coupled with busy lifestyle and advancement in technology has greatly changed the way of life of many people including people in the developing countries. The effects of these changes have altered their eating habits. (1)

Eating habits vary widely between individual adolescents, and also display some general trends over time, reflecting socio cultural trends in food availability and nutritional goals. (2)

Fast food is one of the world's fastest growing foods in food industry. It typically refers to food that is quickly prepared, purchased in self-service from restaurants with precooked ingredients, and served in a packaged form to the customer to take-away. (3) Moreover as (Labensky et al.) define fast food as "Food dispensed quickly at an inexpensive restaurant generally offering a limited menu of inexpensive items, many of which may not be particularly nutritious; the food can be eaten on premises, taken out or sometimes delivered." Typical fast foods include burgers, French fries, pizza, fried chicken, and doughnuts. (4)

Fast food consumption has increased drastically in Pakistan. Pakistani fast-food industry has much potential growth and thus having great significance for international fast food chains. Basically Pakistani people love to eat fried and roasted food. But due to globalization fast food become a part of Pakistani economy by targeting primarily on the

youth of Pakistan. (5)

Fast food restaurants frequently aim younger generation with television and internet advertising. The majority of nutritionists and numerous authors sensed that the youth was eating more fast-foods outside the home than their elders.

The college environment presents a unique blend of environmental factors which influence students in a variety of ways. (6) College life is an important stage for individuals as at this time their behaviors are conducive to change. (7) Especially among girls, the most obvious advantage of fast food consumption are, convenience, quick to serve, readily available alternative to home food and quite affordable. Consumers patronize fast food to save time, satisfy their hunger, for pleasure and for social interactions. While convenient and economical for modern day lifestyle, fast foods have some disturbing disadvantages. They are typically high in calories, fat, saturated fat and salt which have been pointed out as the major cause of heart disease in human, diabetes and obesity. (1)

As we know that younger generation are the most targeted consumers for the fast food marketers. So, it is important to recognize that how and why the youth make their consumption choices of fast food. In this way marketers would predict and plan their promotional strategies. Moreover, other researchers will also use the results of this study for any further health related studies conducted in future. Also, few researches have been conducted in Pakistan related to the fast food preference, consumption and expenditure of the population but there was no specific

research conducted among college girls related to these three components among them. Therefore, the aim of my research paper is to study the trend of fast food preference, consumption pattern and expenditure among college girls in Karachi.

## 2- METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 TARGETED POPULATION:

The targeted population of this study was female students of colleges in Karachi.

### 2.2 SUBJECT & SAMPLING:

#### 2.2.1 SUBJECT:

50 female college students from 3 different universities were selected as subjects of this study through convenient sampling.

#### 2.2.2 CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:

- Subjects should be of college level.
- Samples were to be selected from different colleges of Karachi based on convenience.

### 2.3 DATA COLLECTION:

The data collection was started from June till August 2015. Data was collected from seven different colleges of Karachi:

- RLAK Government College Of Home Economics
- Khatoon-E-Pakistan Girls College
- P.E.C.H.S Girls College
- AI – Noor Girls College
- Government Degree Science And Commerce College
- Shaheed-E-Millat Government College
- Jan Mohammad Brohi Government Degree Girls College

### 2.4 METHODS AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION:

A questionnaire method was used as a tool for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of:

#### 2.4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION:

This part of questionnaire includes questions related to general information of a subject which comprise of institution's name, gender, age and educational status.

#### 2.4.2 FAST FOOD PREFERENCE:

The questionnaire included a likert scale in which respondents ranked only three out of 8 fast food items on the basis of their preference.

#### 2.4.3 FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERN:

The questionnaire included some questions regarding the fast food consumption pattern of students. These questions were used to inquire the respondent's frequency, time, reasons, and expenditure on eating fast food.

#### 2.4.4 PERCEPTIONS REGARDING FAST FOOD:

It also contains few statements of perceptions regarding fast food that the respondents either agreed or disagreed to.

#### 2.4.5 FAST FOOD EXPENDITURE:

A question was included regarding the average monthly fast food expenditure.

### 2.5 DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS:

#### 2.5.1 DATA ENTRY

Collected data was entered in statistics software named SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20.

#### 2.5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Correlation was conducted to investigate a possible relationship between:

- Perceptions of fast food and frequency of consuming fast food

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive analysis was used to investigate frequency of fast food preferences, expenditure, consumption pattern, perceptions and general information of subjects.

## 3- RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

### (3.1) General Characteristics of the sample:

The targeted population of my research was college girls of Karachi. 50 female college students were selected from 3 different colleges through convenient sampling.

Most of the respondents were of intermediate level and belong to the age range of 15 -18 years. The pocket money of majority of respondents was between Rs.1000-2000.

Table 3.1, shows the characteristics of the 50 female college students who participated in the study. As depicted in the table, more than half of the sample (80%) falls under the age group of 15-18. Majority of the students used to get monthly pocket money between Rs. 1000-2000 (38%).

Table 3.1 General Characteristics of sample

Age Groups	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage	Mean
15-18	40	80	17.3
19-22	10	20	
Total	50	100	
Educational Status			
Intermediate	50	100	
Total	50	100	
Monthly Pocket Money			

Less than Rs. 1000	17	34
Rs. 1000-2000	19	38
More than Rs. 2000	9	18
other	5	10
No response	0	0
Total	50	100

The data was collected through questionnaire method to assess the fast food preference, consumption and expenditure among college girl, and also to enlighten the association between the perceptions of fast food being unhealthy with the frequency of consuming fast food among college girls.

### (3.2) Fast Food Consumption

Table 3.2 shows the responses of whether the sample consumes fast food or not. In this study all respondents (100%) used to consume fast food.

Table 3.2 Fast Food Consumption

Do you consume fast food?	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Yes	50	100
No	0	0
Total	50	100

### (3.3) Reasons for Fast Food Consumption

Table 3.3 shows the responses of respondents' about their reasons for consuming fast food. Majority of the respondents consume fast food for social and environmental factor (64%). The least percent of respondents (8%) consume fast food due to its economical factor.

Table 3.3 Reasons for Fast Food Consumption

Reasons	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Convenience	6	12
Economical factor (price)	4	8
Hunger & satiety	8	16
Social, environmental & enjoyment	32	64

No response (do not consume fast food)	0	0
Total	50	100

### (3.4) Usual location of fast food consumption

Table 3.4.1 shows the responses about the location of fast food consumption. As depicted in the table majority of the respondents consume fast food at college cafeterias (34%). Whereas, the least percent consume fast food from street vendors (8%)

Table 3.4.1 Usual location of fast food consumption

Locations	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
College cafeteria	17	34
Food courts	8	16
Home	13	26
Restaurants	8	16
Street vendors	4	8
No response (do not consume fast food)	0	0
Total	50	100

### (3.5) Frequency of Fast Food Consumption

Table 3.5.1 shows the responses of the frequency of fast food consumption. As depicted in the table majority of the respondents consume fast food 2-3 times a month (28%). Only 2 percent of the students in the study mentioned that they consume fast food even less than once a month.

Table 3.5.1 Frequency of Fast Food Consumption

Monthly average of fast food consumption	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Everyday	4	8
2-3 times a week	10	20
Once a week	13	26
2-3 times a month	11	22
Once a month	11	22
Less than once a month	1	2
No response	0	0
Total	50	100

**(3.1) Consumer’s frequency of fast food consumption**

Based on the results in Table 3.5 we have categorized our respondents into frequent and infrequent consumers on the basis of their fast food consumption. The respondents are considered frequent if they consume fast food from every day to once a week whereas if the respondents consume fast food from two to three times a month to less than once a month, they are considered as infrequent consumers. The result shown in figure 4.1 is that, about (54%) of college students consume fast food on frequent basis and (46%) students consume fast food infrequently.

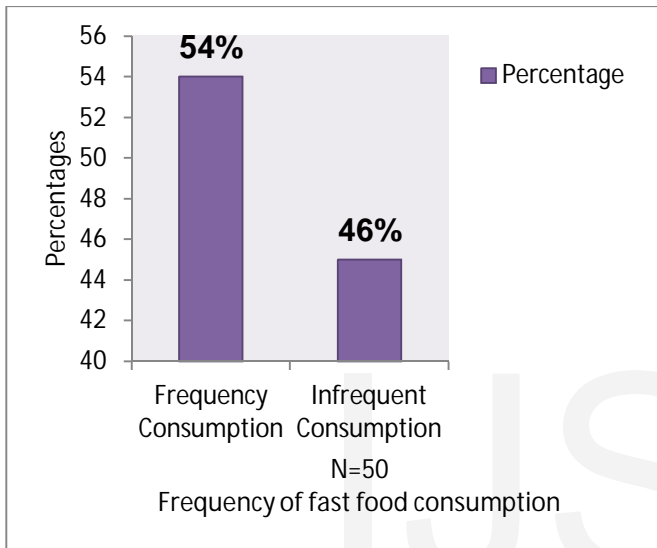


Fig3.1: Frequency of Fast Food Consumption

**(3.6) Accompaniment with fast food:**

Table 3.6 shows the responses of students on accompaniment choice with fast food. The table below depicted that (72%) students choose cold drink with their fast food whereas, only (1%) consumed tea.

Table 3.6 Accompaniment with fast food:

Accompaniment	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Soft drinks	36	72
Shakes & juices	7	14
Salad	2	4
Dessert	4	8
Tea	1	2
Total	50	100

**(3.7) Categorization of Fast Food Consumption:**

Table 3.7 shows the responses about the consumption of fast food as a main meal or a snack. According to the results, majority of the students consume fast food as a main meal (70%) whereas, only (30%) consume it as a snack.

Table 3.7Categorization of Fast Food Consumption

Mostly consumed fast food as	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Main meal	35	70
Snack	15	30
Total	50	100

**(3.8) Usual time of fast food consumption:**

Table 3.8 shows the responses of the students about their usual time of fast food consumption. Results revealed that majority of the students consume fast food in Dinner (52%). Whereas, least percent of students consume fast food in Midmorning (10%)

Table 3.8 Usual time of fast food consumption:

I usually consume fast food in	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Breakfast	0	0
Mid-morning	5	10
Lunch	12	24
Tea-time	7	14
Dinner	26	52
Total	50	100

**(3.2) Fast food preference**

Figure 3.2 shows the preferred fast food items among college girls. According to the results, the highest percent of student prefer French fries as a fast food (80%) whereas the least percent of students prefer sandwich, rolls, pizza (2%) and not any of the student prefer doughnuts as their fast food choice.

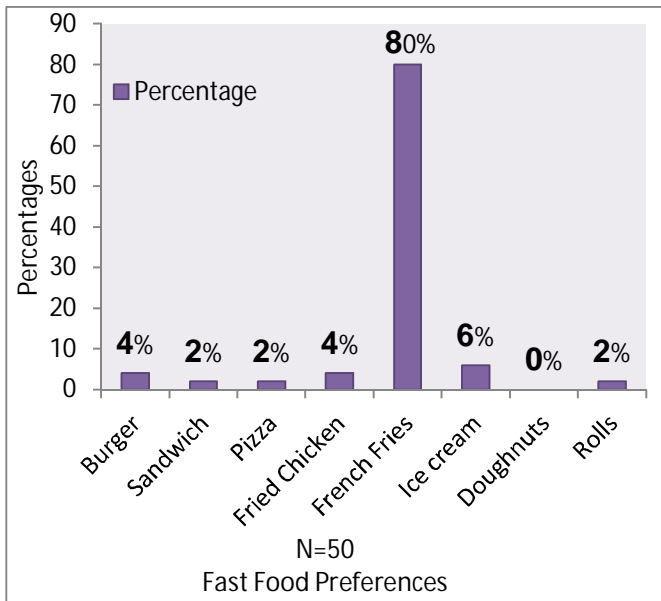


Fig3.2: Fast Food Preference

**(3.9) Monthly fast food expenditure:**

Table 3.9, shows the responses of students about their monthly expenditure on fast food consumption. According to the results, majority of the college girls spend Rs.1000-2000 on fast food (38%).

Table 3.9: Monthly fast food expenditure:

I monthly spend this amount of money on fast food	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Less than Rs. 1000	17	34
Rs. 1000-2000	19	38
More than Rs. 2000	9	18
other	5	10
No response	0	0
Total	50	100

**(3.10) Association between perception that fast food is not good for health and frequency of eating fast food among college girls**

According to statistical analysis in table 3.10, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers and 23 of them were infrequent consumers. The results depicted that about 74% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food is not good for health and the remaining 25.9% disagreed with this statement. Whereas, about 82% of the infrequent consumers agreed with this perception and the

rest of 17.3% disagreed that fast food is not good for health. After applying correlation, we observed that there is no association between their perception and frequency of fast food consumption. (P >0.05)

Table 3.10: Association between perception that fast food is not good for health and frequency of eating fast food among college girls

PERCEPTION:1 Fast food is not good for health	FREQUENCY OF FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION		Total	P value
	FREQUENT CONSUMPTION	INFREQUENT CONSUMPTION		
Agree	N= 20 (74%)	N= 19 (82%)	N= 50	0.478
Disagree	N= 07 (25.9%)	N= 04 (17.3%)		
Total	N= 27	N= 23		

**(4.11) Association between perception that fast food can provide all necessary nutrients and frequency of eating fast food among college girls**

According to statistical analysis in table 3.11, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers and 23 of them were infrequent consumers. The results depicted that about 11% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food can provide all necessary nutrients and the remaining 88% disagreed with this statement. Whereas, about 13% of the infrequent consumers agreed with this perception and the rest of 86.9% disagree that fast food can provide all necessary nutrients. After applying correlation, we observed that there is no association between their perception and frequency of fast food consumption. (P>0.05)

Table 3.11: Association between perceptions that fast food can provide all necessary nutrients and frequency of eating fast food among college girls

PERCEPTION:2 Fast food can provide all necessary nutrients	FREQUENCY OF FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION		Total	P value
	FREQUENT CONSUMPTION	INFREQUENT CONSUMPTION		
Agree	N= 03 (11%)	N= 03 (13%)	N=50	.838
Disagree	N= 24 (88%)	N= 20 (86.9%)		
Total	N= 27	N= 23	N= 50	

**(3.12) Association between perception that fast food outlets provide all good quality foods and frequency of eating fast food among college girls**

According to statistical analysis in table 3.12, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers and 23 of them were infrequent consumers. The results depicted

that about 55% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food outlets can provide good quality foods and the remaining 44.9% disagreed with this statement. Whereas, about 43.4% of the infrequent consumers agreed with this perception and the rest of 56.5% disagree that fast food outlets can provide good quality foods. After applying correlation, we observed that there is no association between their perception and frequency of fast food consumption. ( $P>0.05$ )

Table 3.12: Association between perception that fast food outlets can provide good quality foods and frequency of eating fast food among college girls

PERCEPTION:3 Fast food outlets can provide good quality foods	FREQUENCY OF FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION		Total	P value
	FREQUENT CONSUMPTION	INFREQUENT CONSUMPTION		
Agree	N= 15 (55%)	N= 10 (43.4%)	N= 50	.405
Disagree	N= 12 (44.9%)	N= 13 (56.5%)		
Total	N= 27	N= 23		

**(3.13) Association between perception that fast food provides a lot of calories and frequency of eating fast food among college girls**

According to statistical analysis in table 3.13, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers and 23 of them were infrequent consumers. The results depicted that about 85.1% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food provides a lot of calories and the remaining 14.8% disagreed with this statement. Whereas, about 91.3% of the infrequent consumers agreed with this perception and the rest of 8.6% disagree that fast food provides a lot of calories. After applying correlation, we observed that there is no association between their perception and frequency of fast food consumption. ( $P>0.05$ )

Table 3.13: Association between perception that fast food provides a lot of calories and frequency of eating fast food among college girls

PERCEPTION:3 Fast food provides a lot of calories	FREQUENCY OF FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION		Total	P value
	FREQUENT CONSUMPTION	INFREQUENT CONSUMPTION		
Agree	N= 23 (85.1%)	N= 21 (91.3%)	N= 50	.517
Disagree	N= 04 (14.8%)	N= 02 (8.6%)		
Total	N= 27	N= 23		

**(3.3) Perception regarding frequent consumption of fast food:**

Figure 3.3 shows that out 50 respondents in a study, from which 27 of them were consumed fast food frequently so, 74% agreed that fast food is not good for health and majority of 85.1% are also agreed upon that fast food contains a lot of calories. Whereas most of the students 88% disagreed that fast food provides all necessary nutrients.

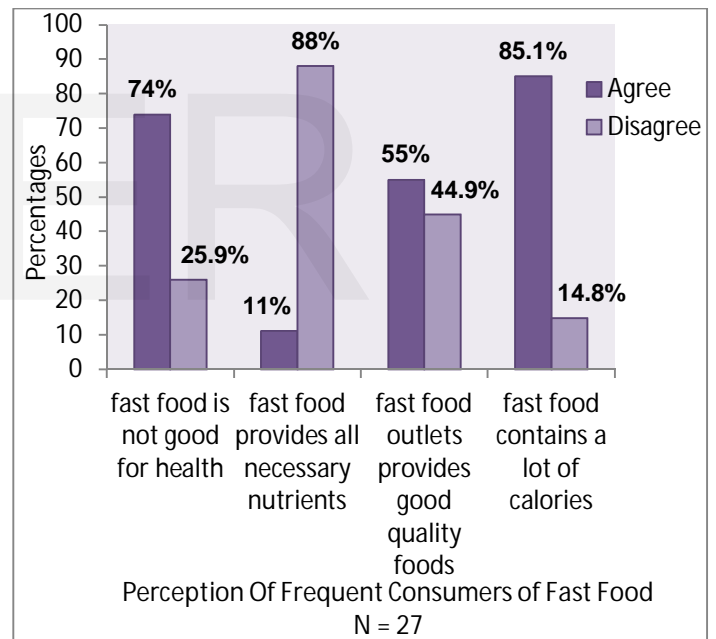


Fig 3.3: Perceptions Regarding Frequent Consumption of fast food

**(3.4) Perception regarding infrequent consumption of fast food:**

Figure 3.4 shows that out 50 respondents in a study, from which 23 of them were consumed fast food frequently so, 82% agreed that fast food is not good for health and majority of 91.3% are also agreed upon that fast food contains a lot of calories. Whereas most of the students 86.9% disagreed that fast food provides all necessary nutrients.

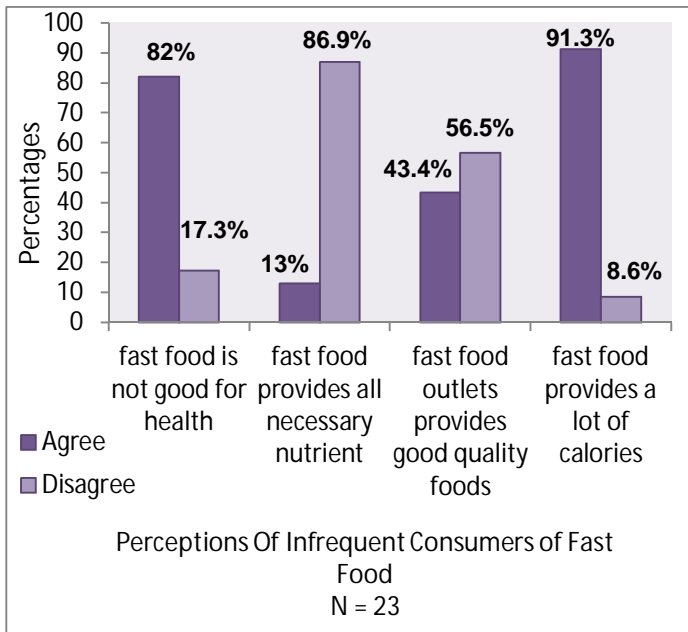


Fig 3.4: Perceptions Regarding Infrequent Consumption of fast food

#### 4- DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to understand the trends of fast food among college girls in Karachi, it showed the characteristics of the 50 female college students of intermediate level from which more than half of the sample falls under the age group of 15-18 and they used to get monthly pocket money between Rs. 1000-2000. The selected topic deals with the growing perception, preference, consumption and expenditure of fast food in college girls and also enlightened the relationship between their unhealthy perception towards fast food and frequency of consuming fast food.

Majority of the college girls preferred French fries as a fast food in our study. This correlates well with the results of the study conducted on Pakistani population in which majority of the female respondents, between 18-40 years consumed French fries at a trendy level. (9)

Secondly, when we asked college girls about their reasons of fast food consumption, we observed that most of them consumed fast food for social and environmental factor. This is somewhat similar to the finding of a study conducted on tertiary level students in Ghana in which it was observed that the consumers patronizing reasons for consuming fast food are mostly fun, change in taste and convenience. (1)

The result for the frequency of fast food consumption among college girls in Karachi revealed that they often consume fast food 2-3 times a month, while by comparing the results of our study with another study on the students of Ankara showed, nearly 40 percent of the subjects

indicated that they go out to eat at fast food restaurants at an average of 5-10 times a month and only 14.8 percent of the students prefer to eat fast food once a month. (12)

About the expenditure on fast food, our study showed that, most of college girls spend about Rs. 1000-2000 on fast food. Similarly one study conducted in India observed that 49 per cent of the respondents spent on fast food ranges from Rs.1000-1500 per month whereas, 21 per cent of the respondents spent on fast food ranges between Rs.1500-2000 per month. (24)

In this present study, out of 50 respondents, 27 of them were the frequent consumers from which about 74% of the frequent consumers agreed that fast food is not good for health. Similarly, a study on urban adolescent students showed that majority of their respondents agreed that most popular fast food items are unhealthy. Thus the study was assessed with the remark that adolescents in the urban areas consume more fast foods and junk foods than caloric and protein rich foods. (20)

After understanding the intensity of trend of fast food consumption among college girls in Karachi, we suggested that nutrition education is important and it should be given to our younger generation especially in colleges. The nutrition interventions should incorporate specific components that address trends of fast food consumption of these age groups. Also, it is advised to make adolescents and young adults especially girls, to be aware of the importance of making healthier food choices composed of nutrient-dense foods such as fruit and vegetables. Finally, it is a responsibility of government to regulate the marketing of fast food and to eliminate or at least limit fast food from schools and colleges.

It is not impossible to win war against fast foods. However, one must beware; entice is so strong that you will be addicted. It must be remembered that the addiction to junk food destroys consumer's health and increases profits for businesses and marketers. It is all in our hands to choose fast food or health.

So,

Avoid fast food, Accept Health!  
 No fast food, Know Health!

#### 5- CONCLUSION

Fast food is convenient and tasty though prepared with low nourishing or unhealthy ingredients. Fast food companies are targeting youngsters through great promotion strategies, delicious recipes and attractive advertisement. There are much greater side effects of fast food and people are unaware of its ill consequences which can tend to many detrimental diseases. The present study contributes to the understanding of trends of fast food consumption among college girls in Karachi. The objective of this study is to

enlighten the growing perception, preference, consumption and expenditure as well as to find out the association between unhealthy perceptions with the frequency of fast food consumption among college girls. In this current study, a sample of 50 respondents was to be selected from 5 different colleges of Karachi based on convenient sampling. A questionnaire method is used as a tool for data collection. Subjects were asked about their preferences, consumption pattern, expenditure and perceptions on eating fast food. Associations were analyzed by conducting correlation between consumers perception of fast food being unhealthy with the frequency of consuming fast food among college girls.

The results of this study revealed that majority of the college girls are consuming fast food 2-3 times a month and they use to prefer French fries as their fast food choice for which they spend about Rs 1000- 2000 of their pocket money on fast food. The results also indicate that most of them were aware that fast food is Unhealthy but still they were consuming it frequently.

So, after knowing the growing widespread use of fast food among adolescents and young adults is of concern that Community-based nutrition education interventions targeting the eating behaviors of adolescent and young adult girls are urgently needed. These interventions should incorporate specific components that address the trends of fast food consumption of these age groups. Therefore the youngsters especially college girls will be aware of the importance of making healthier food choices composed of nutrient-dense foods.

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