

Research proposal on fast food and children reasons why adults forcibly feed chil...

[Nutrition](#), [Fast Food](#)



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Introduction

Having children is one of this life's greatest blessings especially if a couple decides on creating a family of their own. Most parents absolutely adore their children more than they adore themselves, and they would do anything to keep their health safe and fit. Parents would then do their very best to provide them with the best education, home, food, and a life filled with love and care. Some would even go great lengths to try providing their children with the best food to eat as this is connected to one's health. If the food given to children is good, then it can be assured that the child would grow big, strong, and develop a bright future. However, if the food and foundation is not adequate, one can be assured that it would be a rough and uncertain future.

This problem on food is mostly seen nowadays as a common occurrence especially now that fast food has replaced good old-fashioned healthy food and meals. Personally, I have been in a dilemma because of this fact. My daughter eats fast food two or three times per week. At that point, I started thinking and asked myself this question "What are the factors that force me to feed her fast food?" Due to the work and other activities I do, I realize that time forces me to feed her fast food. However, is this same case for other people? What drives them to feed children fast food? It is common knowledge that fast food is very unhealthy especially when eaten regularly, but considering the trends of high fast food consumerism, it is an alarming rate that must be addressed.

Children are the next generation and as their light and guide, saving them

and teaching them important aspects in life such as building healthy habits when it comes to food would help them survive the adversities the future can give them. It is important to help them become healthy people as nowadays, the temptations of being unhealthy makes it hard to people to lose weight. As parents, we aim to give them the best for them to grow up to the people they wish to become. However, with the tedious stress and lack of time, we sacrifice their health in giving them fast foods. This research will discuss the factors which forces people to feed their children fast food, and explain the numerous risks fast food can entail to children.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem for this study is the factors that forces parents to feed their children fast food despite the risks and disclaimers that fast food can be very unhealthy if eaten regularly. Nowadays, many adults prefer to purchase fast food for their families due to the various factors that make it convenient for them. Although they know the risks involve due to the advisories and studies shown on television, they see fast food as a way to save them from stressful attributes attached to food, such as time, money, and learning how to cook. Fast foods are also starting to become a trend for most teenagers given the popularity they have over their peers and society, which is also influencing their food choices. The sub-questions this research would also try to answer are the following:

1. What influences children to keep on eating fast food even if their parents stop feeding them fast food?
2. What are the health risks in eating fast food regularly?

3. What are the current government proposals in reintroducing healthy options in food and regulation in fast food?
4. What can parents do to regulate their children's fast food habits and introduce them again to eating home-cooked meals and healthy food?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the factors that ultimately lead adults to feed their children fast foods and the implication of this action to the growing trends in fast food complications and risks in the country. It is an unmistakable trend that fast food chains are slowly invading almost every block of every community, and the advertisements are slowly concentrating themselves into the mind-set of both adults and children. Although parents would like to stray away from these fast foods, there are several factors that prevent them from straying away in buying these foods and eventually give them to their children on a regular basis. This trend varies per family class, and reasons do not apply to a particular situation. With the risks involving fast food eating and the increasing numbers of health complications, this research aims to educate its readers why parents try to strive hard in changing food habits and what causes them not to change this habit. It is also the purpose of this study to illustrate the various programs and proposals set by the government and various health organizations to regulate the number of fast food related cases in children such as obesity, and heart complications.

Definition of Terms:

The definitions stated below appeared on the sources the researcher has reviewed for the study and is also noted in this study to fully explain the concepts.

1. Fast Food – any food that is prepared and served to customers faster than home cooked meals. This also includes junk food as it is immediately packaged for consumption.
2. Consumerism – intentional and sometimes, influenced purchase of products and services that is seen as an ethical decision for the customer.
3. Slow food – this is the term used by various groups that refers to more healthier and home-cooked meals and cuisines. Movements supporting Slow food have slowly started gaining support from some parents and experts in relation to the increasing demand for fast food.
4. Insulin resistance – this is one method to know if a person eating fast food or junk food is prone in getting diabetes. Insulin levels become weaker in lowering the body's blood sugar, causing diabetes to occur and other health risks related to the hormones.
5. Convenience food or tertiary processed food – food prepared for easy consumption that can be served either hot or cold or even for storage. Most of these foods are designed for easy heating and eating, regulated through the use of special chemicals to preserve the flavour of the food.

Literature Review

The growing trend of childhood fast food consumption is alarming due to the increasing numbers of health risks and increased demand for these foods by

the younger generation. Many factors lead to children getting hooked to these fast foods and parents are indirectly involved for teaching them these unhealthy eating habits. Parents normally have hectic schedules due to their 12 hour work schedules, and the stress they have from work causes them to easily tire even to do their regular home activities. This also affects their parenting styles in making sure their children develop regular patterns especially for eating to keep them healthy . Since they no longer have the strength to buy food and make them personally, adults usually use fast food so that they reduce the time to cook and use the saved time to rest or do another activity.

For other families belonging to middle and higher-class groups, Coon and Mitterer (2006) and Romero (2007) pointed out that some parents tend to overfeed their children since they feel that a fat baby is healthier and cute due to their chubby cheeks. This builds the children's habit of looking for more food since they would have to satiate the food intake their parents give them. There are also others that uses food to show how their love their children, even if it means they would request for junk or fast food.

Nevertheless, children would develop outrageous eating habits that may become a handicap for them to stay healthy . The parent who also feeds the child also influences their choices since each parent has a different outtake when it comes to food. Mothers tend to cause children to eat faster since they selected the food . Romano (2008) and Bagchi (2010) also listed down that the family's income level, employment status, education level and race as some of the reasons why adults are influenced in how they see fast food

and feed it to their children. Both authors have noted out that since prices for food like fruits and vegetables and spices, the family's income is important, as well as employment as this will determine the family's income. For those with low-income, they can only buy cheap foods such as fast food so that they will not die out of scarcity and hunger. For middle-income families and high-income families, they can alternate their choices from fresh food to fast food. Education is also important since some parents, especially from low income families; do not know the risks involving too much junk food in children. There is also the case of different races as each race may have a preference over food and may find fast food fit for their palette : .

Aside from the lack of time and the misconceptions over what it means to be healthy for children, other influential factors also forces parents and adults to let children eat fast food. Brown and Isaacs (2007), Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2011), Kirsh (2009), and Socha and Stamp (2009) have cited media influence which creates an idea to the minds of children when it comes to fast food. Children are seen by many marketers as great influencers for their parents and eventually ask their parents to buy things they will normally disapprove of in exchange for something. Parents usually give in as they would be either tired, or they wish to give their children a proof of their love even if it is junk or fast food. It also influences children to develop preferences to food especially if they taste something delicious and unhealthy such as fast food. Parents do not normally argue with their preferences due to the time they have to allot to arguments over their child's breakfast selection and other related instances. Marketing is also seen as the

main reason why adults are forced to buy fast food since they pull the heartstrings of their children, forcing them to buy it for them to make them happy : : . Peer influence, as noted by Kirsh (2009) is also seen as an influence to adults when it comes to fast food since some parents may notice the change in behaviour in their children especially if the child heard from his peers, about fast food . The literatures from various experts have noted that adults do not only get forced to feed fast food to their children simply because of lack of time, but also because of fundamental and social influences. Some families cannot easily provide healthy options and understand the risks, while some take it overboard. Social influences such as peer pressure and the media also influences adults to feed fast food to their children since they influence what their children prefer. Additional research will be done to answer the other questions raised for this study and to support these authors in their claims.

Anticipated ethical issues

For this study, it is anticipated that ethical issues such as the anonymity of survey participants, originality of the research, data collection through the internet, and the role of the researcher in the whole research may occur as noted by Creswell (2009). As this study deals with the topic of fast food purchasing of adults for their children, many studies from various sources will be used. Since this also deals with children, they are vulnerable if their identities are revealed within the study, especially for those who have special needs. Ethical procedures upon data collecting will also be anticipated for this study as the researcher would need to issue letters of

approval and agreement to several institutions and experts to build up the arguments for the study. Interviews for qualitative research will also be anticipated in terms of its ethical issue as the research would have to cater to the participant's statements and feelings in terms of the interview.

Significance of the Study

The topic of this research is significant in the modern world, not just for the United States, but also around the globe as more children are prone to eat fast foods often as compared to their consumption of slow and traditionally made food. The cases of childhood obesity and children having heart complications is rapidly increasing as more fast food chains and commercially prepared food is given to them and open for their purchase. Many parents would agree that fast food is unhealthy if eaten regularly, but with the fast pace of the world around them and the influential factors that influences their intentions, it is very hard to deny that they purchase fast food because of these influences.

This topic is significant now as many are slowly turning a deaf ear with the trends happening in society and it is this study's goal to re-educate parents, children, and other readers to the importance of this problem. This paper is also significant to open the eyes of government officials, health practitioners, and especially communities for them to act and aid parents into assuring that children would be able to develop good healthy eating habits despite the tempting presence of fast foods.

Procedures

In lieu of this study, this study will use a qualitative research method to answer the main and sub-questions regarding this topic. A qualitative research strategy fits this topic as it is also a case study as to why parents and adults in the United States forcibly feed their children fast food despite the health and development risks it entails. As it is a qualitative study, the data would be easily examined and explained due to the lack of quantitative variables that may confuse readers. This research strategy fits the topic since the questions revolve in undermining the factors that can influence adults in their perception of fast food, and the government's view in preventing the increasing risks and trends for children. Data collection will also not be numerical as it would be a narrative to answer all the questions raised for the study. This strategy will also incorporate a descriptive research to support the answers to the questions raised without needing numbers to explain how the outcome came to be.

Role of the Researcher

For this research, the researcher's role is to identify the following factors that influence adults to feed children fast food aside from the common reasons such as the lack of time and money. Creswell (2009) noted that it is also the researcher's role to classify the risks involving children when it comes to fast food consumption and what the government and each family can do to limit the risks in fast food for the younger generation. With fast food slowly gaining ground in many US states, it is an alarming fact that many children are exposed to fast food especially now that adults themselves have no

choice but to introduce this alternative food whenever they are on the rush. It is also the role of the researcher for this study to narrate, discuss, and also learn with the readers of this research the importance of developing good eating habits and helping children understand the importance of a good healthy meal as opposed to eating only processed and fast food. For the research to be a success, it is the researcher's role to identify significant facts, studies and data pertaining to the problem and answer each raised question to support the facts taken. This research also requires the researcher to outline all the facts and write the final paper in clarify, answering all the given questions for this topic .

Data Collection

This research will concentrate primarily to the factors that forces or influences an adult to forcibly feed their children fast food. Most of the books and articles used in this study came from secondary sources due to the subject's concentrated range which is in the United States. Journal and books discussing recommendations and studies by researchers and experts about the issue of childhood trends in fast food and adult influences on purchasing fast food, as well as issues that revolve around the reduction of the increasing health risks involving fast food belong under the set of the secondary sources used in this research. Digital copies from online journal archives pertaining to the factors and risks involving fast food and children are also included in the secondary sources. Data also used from news articles and official organization documents from various health

organizations in the United States, as well as the United States' Health Department is also included in the sources for this study.

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