



## **Investigating the Factors Affecting Malaysian's Consuming Fast Food Frequently and It's Impacts**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Fast food industry is a high growing sector of Malaysians. It is concerned with the tasted and habit of the people. The food-taking habit especially in fast food segment has been changing very fast over last decade among the people. The reason could be attributed by increase of awareness, growth of education, development of information technology and expansion of television channels and print media in Malaysia. Hence, this paper aims at identifying the factors of fast food consumers living in Malaysia. This study was conducted among the Malaysian consumers who usually eat fast food at their leisure time. To conduct the study, a total of 93 respondents were interviewed with a structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing the data. Multivariate analysis technique like factors analysis was performed to identify the factors of affecting the fast food consumers of Malaysia. Multiple regressions were run to identify the relationship between the factors identified and the overall of the consumers. (Dr.Nazrul.G.M and Shafayet Ullah. July 2010). Result show that the consumers give most importance brand reputation of the food items followed by nearness to receive and accessibility, similarity of taste with previous experience, cost and quality of the food, discount and taste, cleanliness and hygiene, salesmanship and decoration, fat and cholesterol level and self-service. This study suggests that the brand reputation, nearness and accessibility, similarity of the taste, and cost and quality relationship should be emphasized to improve the attraction of the Malaysian consumers towards the fast food items in Malaysia.

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to statistics, approximately at least once a week 87% of Malaysians eats fast food as their meal. As the world is moving fast, people are expecting everything to be efficient and effective. When fast foods were launched in Malaysia, there were not many but now, as per Statista's record at 2019 there's almost 4000 fast food outlets in Malaysia. And the report predicted in upcoming years there will be more due to the changes in consumer preferences. There are certain fast foods are popular in Malaysia, that includes McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, Subway, and Domino's Pizza. But most of them fail to understand the disadvantages of fast food because of the fun and exciting menus they have. In fast food franchises, they would like to do some changes in the menu time-to-time to attract more customers. Fast food has the menu that attracts kids to adults, such as McDonald's has kids' menu which includes toys and for adults 'Mix and Match' for the cheapest price. Before we step into the factors affecting Malaysians consuming fast food frequently, there are few facts why they are being pushed to have it. Human's behaviour tends to change as according to the changes that happens to the world. Humans now are upgrading their lifestyle as the technology improves. Nowadays generation thinks that fast food holds the latest trend and it makes them look cool when they have it, and it also becomes an addiction. Fast foods attract their customers in many ways, one of it is through advertising. "Fast food advertisements do have an impact at least in short terms, whether its kids or adults (Tatiana, 2011). It would be a question for the readers, how could an advertisement give an impact on certain individual. The advertisements that are being telecast will be seen through our eyes and the brain would process it. By that, humans would feel like eating the food that is being advertised due to the colours and expressions of the actors in the advertisements. Advertisements can be anywhere, not only in televisions. It can be on social media, like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Each and every stalls or brands has a page in social media. It helps them to boost their business easily and also have the capacity to reach every customer in any corner of the world. Fast food customers are not only adults, as mentioned above kids are also, their targeted customers. Not forgetting kids nowadays are being exposed to gadgets as phones, iPad or tabs. They are being more advanced and able to operate it without an adult's guidance. Most of the children love to watch videos on YouTube, and it has so many advertisements from all the brands in the world; Fast food is one of the leading for advertisement in food industry. In this article I would like to pin out few factors that is affecting Malaysians consuming fast food frequently and its impacts, they are changes in life style, health issues and taste of the fast food. I would like to go deeper in this article and make sure it's useful for the readers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### CHANGES IN LIFESTYLE

The main factors of affecting Malaysian consuming fast food is changes in lifestyle. Most Malaysian people are living in a busy and fast-paced lifestyle. The primary reason that influences the customers to choose a quick meal over a home-cooked meal is due to their busy lifestyle, especially the dual-working families with kids. (Aiyuan . X , Shaohua . Y and Qaisar.(2018).For example, Malaysian has experienced significant changes in lifestyle due to limited time of the customers has caused them to resort to fast food as a result of long working hours, busy lifestyle, career, and family. (Aiyuan . X , Shaohua . Y and Qaisar.(2018). Hence, the fast food industry in Malaysia has been the most preferred choice for majority of the customers due to the instant preparation of the meal which allows them to eat within a short period of time. Therefore, the changing lifestyle of customers has provided the food industry in Malaysia with an opportunity to further expand their businesses. Prioritizing healthier eating habits, planning meals in advance, and seeking out alternative options can help mitigate the negative impact of frequent fast food consumption.

### Taste of the food

Second factor which affects Malaysians consuming fast food frequently is the taste of the food. Most of the restaurants out there including fast food, process of restaurants uses Monosodium Glutamate MSG) in their making food to increase the seasoning flavour in the dish. According to Linh. Et (2020, May) stated that in 2018 Asia was the highest in consuming MSG for processing instant and fast foods. Past studies by (Bera,2017) (Linh,2020) state that glutamate might trigger asthma and migraine. Food that is being prepared at home is well prepared without any MSG and does not have the flavouring as restaurants out there, that is the reason for most of people to have their meal at restaurants especially the fast food. Fast food contains abounding amount of sugar, fats, carbs and it contains less minerals and vitamins, stated by Nasirullah (2019). For example, by increasing the intake of MSG it could lead to many complications in future, such as hypertension, headaches and also diabetes. A simple step could change our lives, bearing in mind try to avoid fast food and start to eat healthier from today. Just by cooking our own meal and having it could save us by encountering these complications in future.

### HEALTH ISSUES

The impact I would like to highlight is health issues, which is obesity. Obesity is calculated with BMI by using our weight in kilograms (KG) divide by height in meters(M). If the calculation is within 18.5-24.9 the BMI is normal but if it exceeds 25.0is considered as overweight and more than 30.0 is considered as obesity. In New Straits Times (2023) Dr Ch'ng stated that 30% of children aged between 5 and 13 years old are obese and it can affect their self-esteem which could lead to psychological issues, such as anxiety and depression. Obesity in adults can lead to stroke, premature death, cancer and mental health as depression and anxiety. For example, my far relative nephew was given fast food more in his childhood, now he is 11 years old and being diagnosed as obesity with child diabetes. As to avoid this similar situation, parents should teach their children to eat healthy and avoid sugary food in order to live a healthy life.

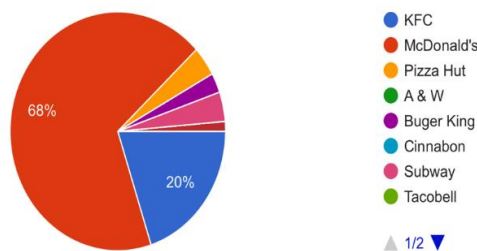
## RESEACH METHOLOGY

This study used a quantitative research containing 20 questions. This survey questionnaires and the samples were chosen in random with 5 likert scale. In total we received 93 responders and the total score with percentage was presented in the findings of study.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

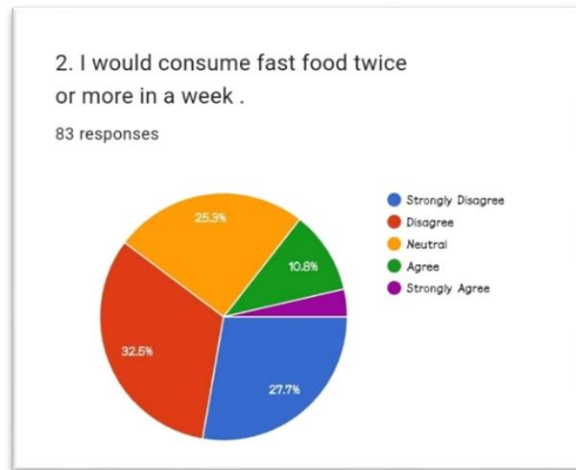
Figure 1: Fast food restaurant visited frequently

1. Please select the fast food restaurant you visit frequently.  
75 responses



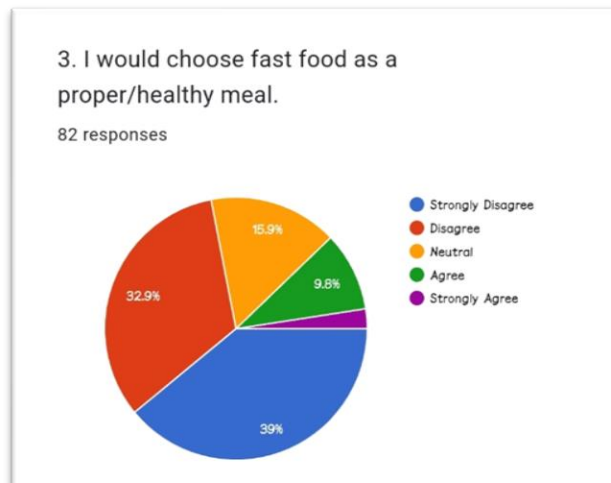
According to the pie chart McDonalds is the most visited fast food restaurant compared to the other nine restaurants. There were major difference between the most and least visited. Almost 70% of the respondents choose McDonald's as their most visited fast food restaurants, and the least is subway which is only 4%

Figure 2: Consuming fast food twice or more in a week



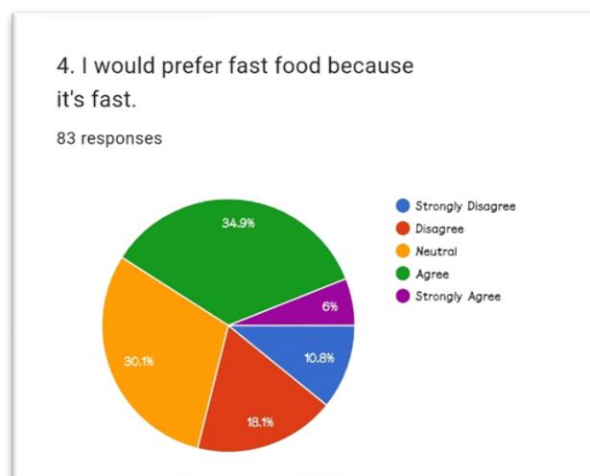
Based on figure 2, a total 60.2% disagree that consuming fast food twice or more in a week , both are 25.3% neutral and in disagreement respectively.

Figure 3: Choose fast food as a proper/healthy meal



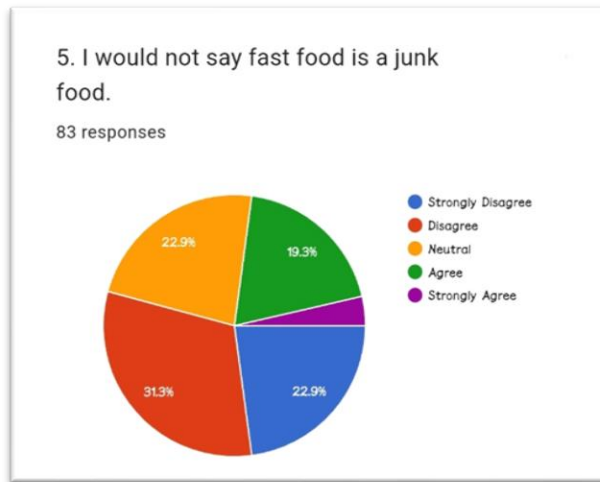
Based on figure 3, a total of 71.9% disagree that choose fast food as a proper/healthy meal, both are 15.9% neutral and agreement respectively.

Figure 4: Prefer fast food because it's fast



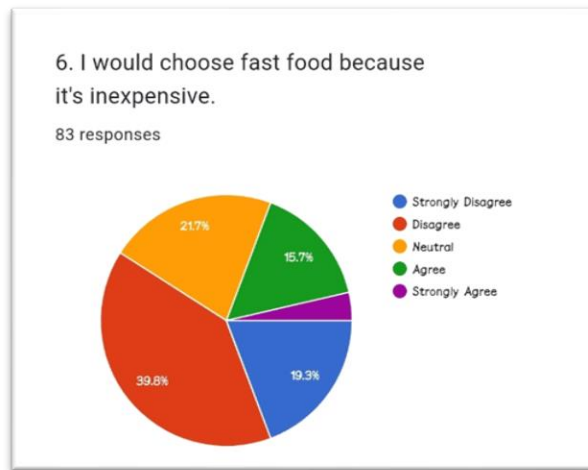
Based on figure 4, a total 34.9% agree that prefer fast food because it's fast, both are 30.1% neutral and 28.9% disagree respectively.

Figure 5: Not say fast food is a junk food



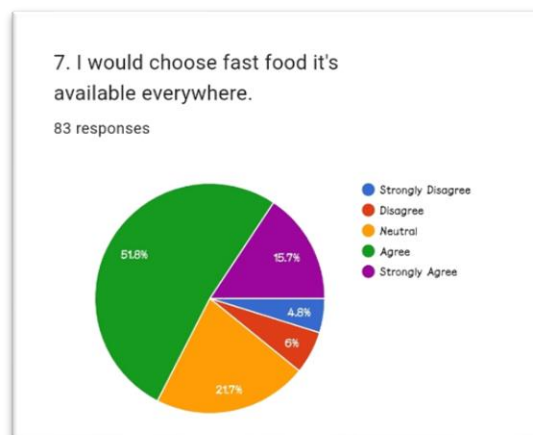
Based on figure 5, a total 54.2% disagree that not say fast food is a junk food, both are 22.9% neutral and agreement respectively.

Figure 6: Choose fast food because it's inexpensive



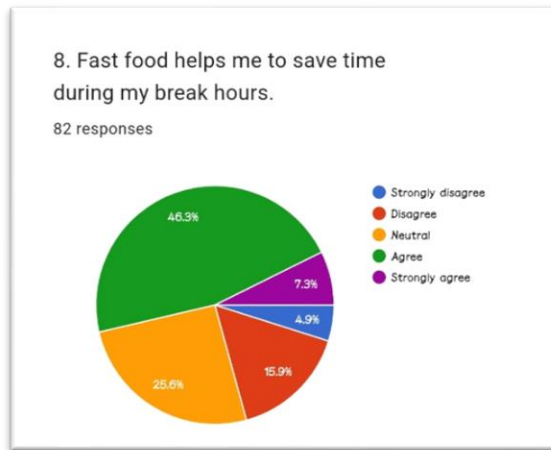
Based on figure 6, a total 59.1% disagree that choose fast food because it's inexpensive, both are 21.7% neutral and agreement respectively

Figure 7: Choose fast food it's available everywhere



Based on figure 7, a total 67.5% agree that choose fast food it's available everywhere, both are 21.7% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 8: Fast food helps to save time during break hours



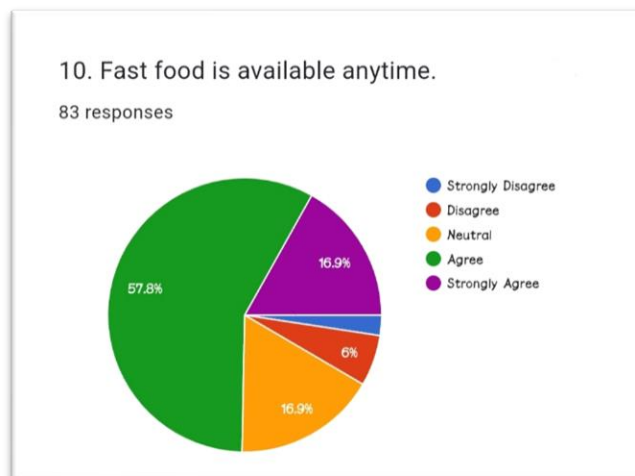
Based on figure 8, a total 53.6% agree that fast food helps to save time during break hours, both are 25.6% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 9: Fast food helps me to satisfy cravings



Based on figure 9, a total 44.6% agree that fast food helps me to satisfy cravings, both are 34.9% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 10: Fast food is available anytime



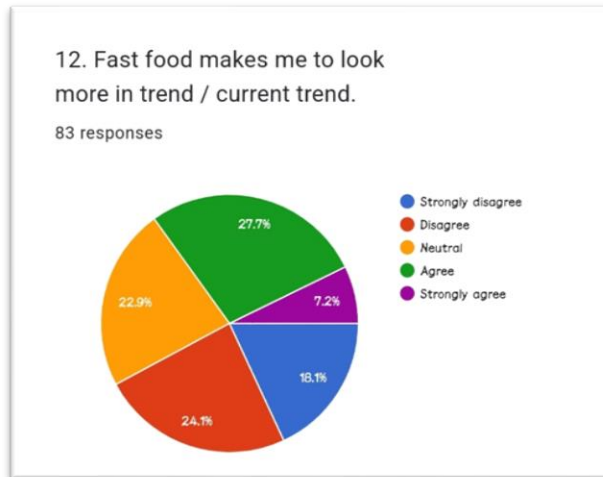
Based on figure 10, a total 74.7% agree that fast food is available anytime, both are 16.9% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 11: Fast food restaurant can be a place to hang out with friends.



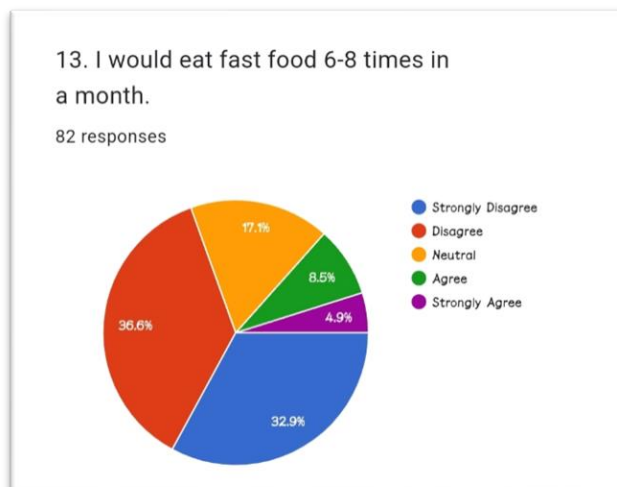
Based on figure 11, a total 75.9% agree that fast food restaurant can be a place to hang out with friends, both are 14.5% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 12: Fast food makes more in trend / current trend



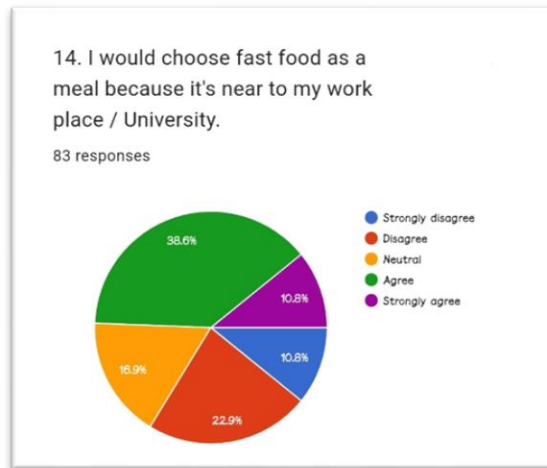
Based on figure 12, a total 34.9% agree that fast food makes more in trend / current trend, both are 22.9% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 13: Eat fast food 6-8 times in a month



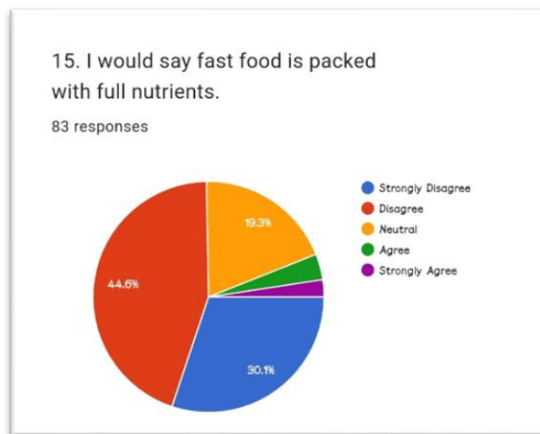
Based on figure 13, a total 69.5% disagree that eat fast food 6-8 times in a month, both are 17.1% neutral and agreement respectively.

Figure 14: Choose fast food as a meal because it's near to work place / university



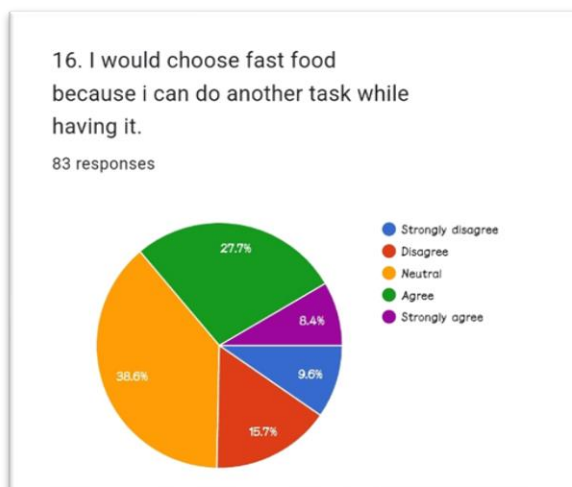
Based on figure 14, a total 49.4% agree that choose fast food as a meal because it's near to workplace / university, both are 16.9% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 15: Fast food is packed with full nutrition



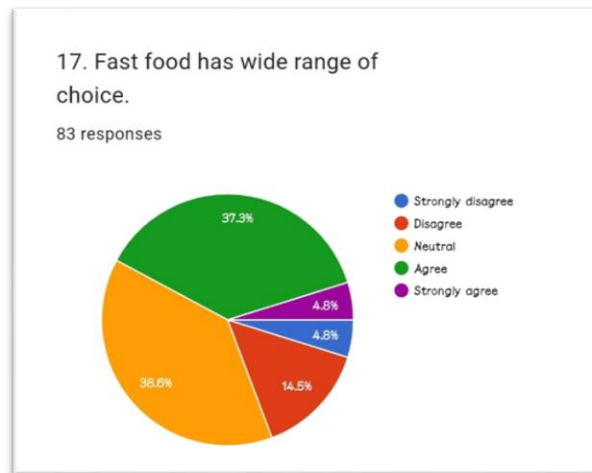
Based on figure 15, a total 74.7% disagree that fast food is packed with full nutrition, both are 19.3% neutral and agreement respectively.

Figure 16: Choose fast food because I can do another task while having it



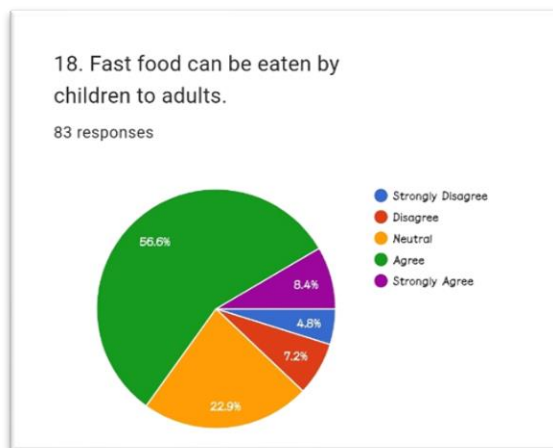
Based on figure 16, a total 36.1% agree that choose fast food because I can do another task while having it, both are 38.6% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 17: Fast food has wide range of choice



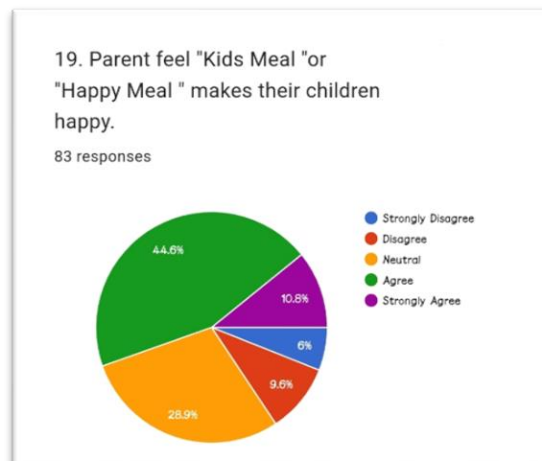
Based on figure 19, a total 42.1% agree that fast food has wide range of choice, both are 38.6% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 18: Fast food can be eaten by children to adults



Based on figure 18, a total 65.0% agree that fast food can be eaten by children to adults, both are 22.9% neutral and disagreement respectively

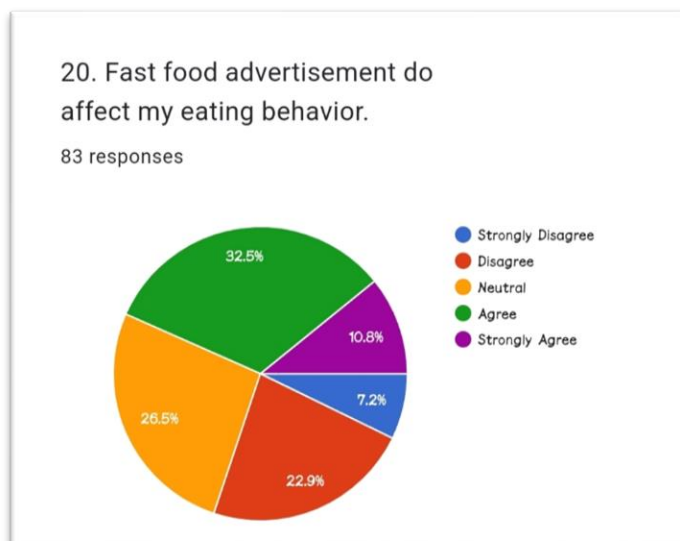
Figure 19: Parent feel "Kids Meal" or "Happy Meal" makes their children happy





Based on figure 19, a total 55.4% agree that Parent feel “Kids Meal” or “Happy Meal” makes their children happy, both are 28.9% neutral and disagreement respectively.

Figure 20: Fast food advertisement do affect my eating behaviour



Based on figure 20, a total 43.3% agree that fast food advertisement do affect my eating behaviour, both are 26.5% neutral and disagreement respectively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the factors affecting Malaysians consuming fast good frequently and its impact can be changed and reduced if we limit the intake of fast food which is changes in lifestyle, types of health issues and the preference of food choice. By that we can improve our health and expand the life span by eating healthy. We each individual have different way of consuming the meal but it's important to eat healthier and change the way of our lifestyle. In future, we can teach our kids to have more vegetable and fruits, not by giving them fries, by doing that we will be able educate them about healthy eating. Adding on, teaching them to enjoy our own traditional food we can keep up with our traditional recipes and not forgetting the nutrients they contain compared to fast food. Implementing this could bring a major change in future where younger generations would not be obese and encounter some other health issues too. Healthy eating and healthy lifestyle make greater life.

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