

CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF UP-MARKET FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN NAIROBI

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A Management Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Business
Administration (MBA)

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October, 2006

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this Management Research Project is my own original work and has not been submitted for a degree at the University of Nairobi or any other university.

Signed..... *Christina*

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This Management Research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the Supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

I am greatly indebted to my Supervisor, Prof. F.N. Kibera, for his relentless encouragement. To my parents, Francis and Milcah Mutua all the phases of the project.

The solid foundation you built in me has brought me this far. Thank you for believing in me and for your encouragement throughout the MBA programme. This work is also dedicated to my beautiful daughter, Elsie, for bringing more meaning into my life.

I also wish to register my appreciation to all my MBA classmates for the good teamwork exhibited during the programme. Special thanks to Patrick Wandera for his exemplary assistance during the data analysis phase of the research project.

Finally, I wish to thank all my friends and especially Rose Mutuku, for their endless moral and material support.

May God richly bless you all in a special way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly indebted to my Supervisor, Prof. F.N. Kibera, for his relentless encouragement, suggestions and constructive criticisms in all the phases of the project.

I also acknowledge the great input of all the lecturers who selflessly shared their knowledge. Without them I wouldn't have gone this far.

I also wish to register my appreciation to all my MBA classmates for the good teamwork exhibited during the grueling, though rewarding programme. Special thanks to Patrick Wandetto for his exemplary assistance during the data analysis phase of the research project.

Finally, I wish to thank all my friends and especially Rose Mutuku, for their endless moral and material support.

May God richly bless you all in a special way.

ABSTRACT

In recent times many organizations have formulated innovative strategies so as to win customers. This has been driven by various factors, among them the ever increasing alternatives for consumers to choose from, competition within the industry, increased consumer awareness and rapid change of technology in service delivery.

This study examined Customer Patronage of up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi with a view to determining the factors which influence customers in their choice of outlets. The objectives of the study were, therefore, to identify the profile of customers who patronize the up-market fast food outlets, and to determine the relative importance of the factors that make them patronize these outlets.

A sample of 105 respondents completed the questionnaire. The data was analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics. The study revealed that factors such as the cleanliness and location of the outlets, variety of food, courtesy and competence of staff, prompt and reliable services are the principal attributes which influence outlet patronage.

In view of the results of the current study, firms in the sector need to ensure that the cues they use in their marketing strategies are unique, customer friendly and are superior to those of competitors if they are to attract and retain customers.

It is further suggested that similar research studies be conducted with other populations in different urban settings.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Concept of customer patronage

A patron, according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English, is a regular customer at a shop. The reasons that a consumer chooses to shop at a certain store are called patronage buying motives. Patronage is the financial support given by customers in making use of anything established, opened or offered for the use of the public, as a line of conveyances or steamers, a hotel, store, and shop (Simpson and Weiner, 1989). People want to feel comfortable when they shop and they want to be around people like themselves and in an environment that reflects their values.

Customer patronage is important in any outlet whose aim of operation is to make profits while at the same time offering customer satisfaction. Retailers and consumer service institutions are continually compelled to make decisions directed towards meeting the demands of prospective customers. The more an outlet's product and service offerings meet customer expectations, the more likely the store will induce customers to become patrons. Outlets that are unable to differentiate themselves from their competitors on any basis other than a particular set of weekly price-off deals provide very little basis for patronage (Kelly and Stephenson, 1967).

Patronage motives include location convenience, service speed, merchandise accessibility, crowding, prices, merchandise assortment, service offered, outlets appearance, sales personnel and mix of other shoppers. Successful retailers evaluate their target customers carefully and design their outlets accordingly (Stanton et al, 1991).

The presence, behaviour, and similarity of other customers receiving services have a strong impact on satisfaction and dissatisfaction of any given customer. Repeated patronage may be for cultivating a satisfying relationship with the seller (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2002).

1.1.2 Up-market fast food outlets

Fast food outlets offer services to a large general market. From this general market, there are different social-economic classes or groupings. According to the classification used by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) system, the population can be divided into six groups, A, B, C1, C2, D and E, and this is depicted in Table 1. The requirements and expectations of people within each of these groups differ significantly as does the amount of money they have available and are prepared to spend (Davis and Stone, 1990).

Table 1. The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising socio-economic classification.

Social grade	Social status	Occupation of head of household
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Supervising or clerical and junior
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at lowest level of subsistence	State pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers

Source: Davis and Stone, (1990)

From Table 1 it can be seen that the classes are in accordance with the level of income, standards of living, and the average spending power. Most of those in the social grade of A and B live in the up market areas. Fast food outlets located in these areas offer very high standards in all aspects of their operation- an extensive a'la carte menu, good quality décor, service accompaniments, relatively high prices, good atmosphere and quality service. These outlets often gain reputation for themselves and their menus are centered on specific food products such as pizzas, burgers, beef steaks, chicken, fish and french fries (Davis and Stone, 1990).

Nairobi being a capital city is a busy town and home of a good number of fast food outlets. These outlets are located in up-market areas such as Westlands, the Village Market, Lavington, Adams Arcade, YaYa Centre and parts of the City Centre west of Tom Mboya Street.

In these up market areas, there is a percentage of the eating-out market that demands the highest standards in all aspects of a restaurant operation, and can afford to pay the high fees charged. A customer profile for up market fast food outlets may be those coming from the upper middle class and middle class, young to middle- age group, both sexes, willing to experiment with a wide range of dishes, and expecting to select from a 'house specialities.'

Consumption of burgers in the country is taking on a new trend and some consumers are even willing to make them at home while others still prefer the ones at their favourite fast-food outlets in town. According to the regional marketing manager for Farmer's Choice, Mr Mark Anderson, Kenyans consume up to half a tonne of burgers daily and about three tonnes weekly. Consumption, he explains, has doubled, over the past two years. The growth of chicken burgers has also seen major processing plants introduce it in their production, offering the consumer different tastes. For instance, early this year, Kenchic launched Kenchic burgers. It is currently selling over 10,000 burgers per week and that is only 15% of the market. The younger people, who are the majority of the customers, are more open minded and are moving towards eating trendier foods which have variety. Burgers are taking over the home cooking tradition because more and more Kenyans are eating out and they seem to be the next healthy foods after fruit salads (Randa, 2006). This is, therefore, an important area of study given the increasing economic and business value of the service sector in the country.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The different components of the meal experience that may be identified and which should be considered by any catering facility include food and drink, variety in menu choice, level of service, value for money, interior design, atmosphere and mood, expectation and identification, location and accessibility and staff (Davis and Stone, 1990). Fast food outlets endeavour to meet these components while carrying out their operations. However, not all outlets succeed in meeting these expectations. An outlet loyalty plays a strategic role in management and is a key managerial concept. Choice of outlets by customers is one of the most traditional research areas in marketing (Charlton, 1973).

In the process of evaluating which outlets to patronize, customers consider a variety of factors. An identification of these factors will help managers improve on their management and therefore win loyal consumers (Okoth, 2003).

Factors that influence customer patronage have been found to be critical in enabling established service companies to identify and implement strategies to meet customer expectations (Mukiri, 2001). For instance, Wambugu (2002) conducted a study on factors that determine outlets loyalty. He found that factors such as prices of products, availability of all types of merchandise, employees' knowledge of products and employees being warm and courteous emerged as the important factors. Location and outlets operational hours were ranked second and third respectively. Prompt service was also rated high. However, little research on customer loyalty has been done in the sub sector.

The study therefore seeks to investigate the relative importance of factors that influence customer patronage of fast food outlets in Nairobi, the capital of the Republic of Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. to identify and profile characteristics of customers who patronize the up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi.
2. to determine the relative importance of the factors that make customers patronize the up-market fast food outlets.

1.4 Importance of the study

The study is expected to: -

1. provide more insights into what marketing scholars already know about consumer patronage, especially in a developing metropolitan area.
2. enable service providers in the sector to better understand the factors that customers consider important and what keeps them loyal to an outlet. This understanding will, hopefully, lead to improved service delivery and profitability.
3. lead to customer satisfaction which in turn ensures business growth of the outlet.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The concept and practice of fast foods originated in the United States of America, in high street locations with heavy pedestrian flows. Main trends that developed in this sector during the mid-1980s were new concepts, extension of product range as competition heats up, diversity of locations in which outlets are now found, and office or home delivery of fast food products (Jones, 1988).

Fast food establishments serve food with little or no waiting. Many of those in the industry are beginning to identify them as fast service or quick service restaurants, in recognition of the fact that the service is fast, not the food (Diffner and Griffin, 1993). The sector offers food to the customer either on or off the premises. The products offered by these establishments are highly standardized, as are most of their operations in terms of service, sales control, product packaging and so on.

The outlets offer a limited basic menu to the customer but within this menu there may be a number of variations. They have become a popular segment of the catering market because they fill a need for a quick snack or meal (David and Stone, 1990). Prerequisites for successful operation of a fast food outlet typically include an almost inflexible menu, specialized equipment for preparing the menu items, and a staff properly trained to use the equipment efficiently and serve a large number of customers in a short time (Diffner and Griffin, 1993). The disposable containers used to serve the food as well as drinks carry the outlets theme or logo thereby promoting the company's brand image.

Food service may be in the form of self-service (cafeteria) where a customer collects his own food from a counter or machine, or waiter service where the customer is served at a table.

In many fast food outlets, the ratio of service staff to customers is very low but there are also less rigid meal times. Since their only activity is the provision of food and beverage, the size of sitting space in these operations is important (Davis and Stone, 1990).

It is possible to make a number of distinctions between the many different types of food and beverage outlets, and this is depicted in figure 1. There is for instance a distinction made according to the type of market served. In some cases the market is confined to restricted groups such as a hospital and prison, while in other cases, the outlet is open to the public at large. Another distinction is between outlets where catering is the main activity and where it is a secondary activity such as transport or school meal catering. A final distinction may be made between outlets which are publicly owned and those which are privately owned (Davis and Stone, 1990).

Based on the above distinctions, a basic distinction is made between purely commercial operations and those which are subsidized. Commercial food and beverage outlets may be defined as those operations in which profitability is the primary concern. Commercial catering can be for a general or restricted market.

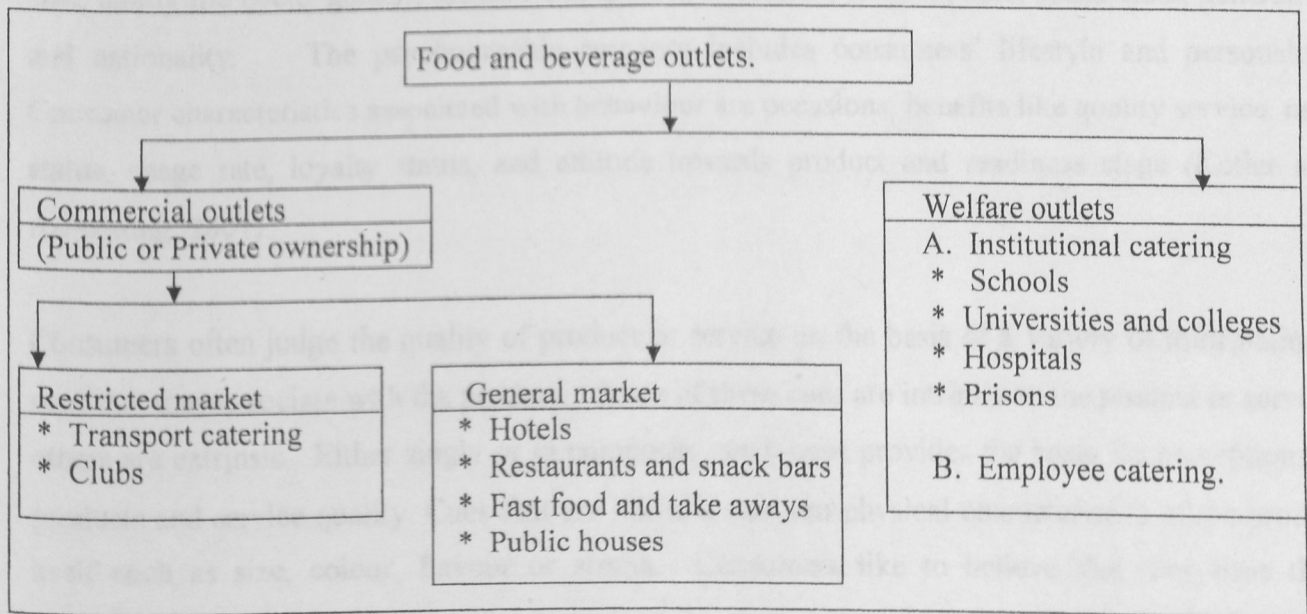
Outlets that cater for a general market include hotels, restaurants, snack bars, fast foods, take away s and public houses. Fast foods and take aways are concerned with the preparation and service of foods and beverages quickly for immediate sale to the customer for consumption either on or off the premises. Examples of fast food outlets include the many themed hamburger units found in the high streets of most towns today as well as operations such as fish-and-chips shops (Davis and Stone, 1990).

There are several identifiable characteristics common to this economic sector.

These include:-

- (a) the outlets usually have a theme based on a product such as hamburgers, pizzas and fish;
- (b) the outlets are often owned by large chains or are franchised;
- (c) the product is well marketed from a themed product to décor and atmosphere, the high and consistent standard of the product, advertising, the container and boxes for take away items;
- (d) the method of food production is often partially or fully automated, thereby de-skilling the job; and
- (e) the method of food service is simplified and basic (Davis and Stone, 1990).

Fig 1: The main sectors of food and beverage outlets



Source: Davis and Stone, (1990)

Figure 1 shows that food and beverage outlets are classified into two broad categories: the purely commercial and those that are subsidized. The purely commercial outlets may be in public or private ownership. In some cases, the market is confined to restricted groups such as transport catering and members' clubs, while in other cases the general public is served.

The subsidized sector is not normally available to the public at large, and it is only involved in catering as an activity that is secondary to the main business. The proposed study will confine itself to the fast foods take aways which is a segment of general market of commercial division of food and beverage outlets.

2.2 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behavior has been defined as the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products that they expect will satisfy their needs (Cravens, 1996). Consumers vary tremendously in terms of age, income, education and tastes among other factors. Marketers must therefore understand how consumers transform marketing and other inputs into buying responses (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001). Consumer characteristics may be grouped into four broad categories namely geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural.

In the case of geographic category, consumer characteristics vary with different territories such as nations, states, regions, counties, cities or neighbourhoods. Demographic variables are often associated with consumer wants, preferences and usage rates. These characteristics are age, family size, family life cycle, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, social class, generation and nationality. The psychographic category includes consumers' lifestyle and personality. Consumer characteristics associated with behaviour are occasions, benefits like quality service, user status, usage rate, loyalty status, and attitude towards product and readiness stage (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001).

Consumers often judge the quality of product or service on the basis of a variety of informational cues that they associate with the product. Some of these cues are intrinsic to the product or service; others are extrinsic. Either singly or in composite, such cues provides the basis for perceptions of products and service quality. Cues that are intrinsic concern physical characteristics of the product itself such as size, colour, flavour or aroma. Consumers like to believe that they base their evaluations of product quality on intrinsic cues, because that enables them to justify their product decisions as being rational or objective product choices. Preferences based on extrinsic cues such as pricing, brand image, packaging, advertising, and peer pressure are also made. In the absence of actual experience with a product, consumers often evaluate quality on basis of cues that are external.

Consumers rely on extrinsic cues to evaluate service quality since the actual quality of services can vary from day to day, from service provider to service provider and from customer to customer. Marketers try to standardize their services in order to provide consistency of quality (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1996). The prospective consumer oriented marketing championed in the early 1960s' by academics such as Mc Carthy (1960) and Kotler (1967) is based on determining what a target group of customers want, and then maximizing the satisfaction with the product or service.

In this sense, consumer satisfaction is at the very heart of the practice of marketing. In addition focusing on satisfaction helps to eliminate the negative word of mouth advertising potential of dissatisfied customers (Vavra, 1998).

With increased competition and more sophisticated and quality conscious consumers, business success requires that a firm becomes market oriented; and that it evaluates the markets in which it operates with a view to developing and producing products, which will fulfill the needs of consumers in those markets.

An organization with a marketing orientation is one that places the consumer at the centre of its business and attempts to develop products and services that meet the requirements of those consumers both now and in the future. To do this effectively an organization must focus its attention on the nature of consumer needs and wants and not just on the range of products which meet those needs (Muriithi, 1996). It is important for the management to know why customers like or dislike an outlet or any of its products so that whenever possible problems affecting the business may be corrected. The outlets vary from those catering for the lower markets to those serving the middle and upper class markets.

2.3 Factors which influence customer patronage

Gaining a customer has never been an easy task for marketers. Fierce competition compels marketers to intensely compete with other nonspecific marketers. Customers have endless choices and they may switch to other products or services every time need arises, or as they desire. It is therefore very natural for marketers to be interested in customer loyalty, which is defined as “ a deeply held commitment to rebuy and repatronize a preferred product/ service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand – set purchasing, despite situational influences, and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour (Wambugu, 2002).

According to Okoth (2003) the factors that influence customer patronage are popularity of an outlet, flexibility of service and comfort, safety and convenience, customer care and a wide range of services, professionalism of staff, convenience of location, affordability and courtesy. These patronage factors are functions of both service outlets and service personnel.

Customer needs and expectations are based on the purpose or reason for eating out. Perceptions are influenced by the realization that a meal experience is, in most cases, more than just an opportunity to eat and drink. The factors that influence the meal experience are social, business, convenience, atmosphere and service, price, menu, accessibility, interior design and décor. Attributes of food and drink add up to meeting customer expectations (Waller, 1996).

Personality, motives, attitudes, perception, learning and social influences are some of the forces that affect decisions regarding outlet patronage. There are many ways to classify such decisions. Four major motives affecting patronage are economic, personalizing, ethical and apathetic.

Economic shoppers attempt to maximize the benefits derived from retail purchase. For consumers who patronize an outlet because of economic motives, the lowest price, with adequate service, is the main consideration.

Personalizing patronage motives influence those consumers who shop to experience friendship and to interact with other people. Such consumers want to find friendly personnel and are motivated to go shopping when they are lonely or bored.

Ethical patronage motives cause shoppers to feel an obligation to support a specific outlet. Apathetic patronage motives lead consumers to be uninterested in the shopping process. Minimum shopping effort is their main goal. They pay little attention to the outlet they patronize and convenience is most important to them. Prices and types of outlets are non-motivating factors (Pride and Ferrell, 1984).

Whether the buyer is satisfied after purchase depends on the offer's performance in relation to the buyer's expectations. In general, satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product with perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations (Kotler, 2001). As this definition makes clear, satisfaction is a function of perceived performance and expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted (Kotler, 2001).

In Kenya, like in other economies of the world, the customer has become more informed, more discerning and more concerned about quality. The result has been that customers now more than ever before are consistently insisting on getting their moneys' worth from the products and services they purchase. Service organizations that wish to achieve customer satisfaction must therefore understand the meaning of service quality and its indicators and determinants. The greater the fit between customer expectations (prior to) and the actual service provided by the service given, the higher the level of satisfaction to the customer (Kimonye, 1998).

Customers simply want products or services which satisfy them and have no time for the ones which do not. More and more customers have a need to distinguish themselves from one another to express their individualism.

For this reason, they demand quality that is sustained (Baker, 1992). Today's customers are tougher, more informed and so sensitive to poor service that they often walk away and never come back (Bearden, 1995). Unfortunately, for the business an average dissatisfied customer will actually tell nine or ten other people (Albrecht, 1985).

The service providers' task is to make the service more tangible. Marketers try to add tangibles to their intangible offers (Kotler and Armstrong, 1989). Thus a fast food that wants to convey the idea that it's "service is quick and efficient" must "tangibilize" this positioning strategy in every aspect of customer contact. The growth and development of popular fast food catering during the past fifteen years has brought an increasing awareness of the importance of marketing to this sector (Davis and Stone, 1990). The marketing policy for the modern popular fast-food organization is the key to success in this sector. The policy embraces the product, place, price and promotion decision areas. These are the traditional 4P's which constitute the marketing mix elements (Kotler, 1997).

The **product** for the fast food outlet has two easily identifiable characteristics: a high degree of standardization and theme. The product is the all-embracing total meal experience. It includes not only the menu, but also the quality of the food, its methods of production, portion sizes, method of service and presentation as well as the general design of the unit, décor and ambience.

The concept of **place** refers to the way through which products and premises are made available to the customers at the appropriate time and location. Location is of prime importance because customers are unlikely to be prepared to travel far for this kind of meal experience.

Price is also important since customers tend to be cost conscious and aware of prices charged by competitors for similar items. The price must be seen as giving good value for money together with a consistent and standard product of good quality (Davis and Stone, 1990).

Promotional techniques used by fast food outlets are very direct and explicit. Many operations use specifically designed logos and colours, which become representative of that level of operation in term of standard of food and service.

The concepts, principles, and variable relationships discussed in current and previous chapters act as the guideposts for the subsequent sections of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A descriptive survey was used in the study. This type of design aimed at finding out who, what, when, where and how of customer patronage. It has been used successfully in previous similar studies by Wambugu (2002), Okoth (2003), Maina (2003), Njenga (2003) among others.

3.2 Population and sampling frame

The population of the study comprised all customers who patronize up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi. The total number of these customers was not known. Therefore, the sampling frame used was a list of the fast foods in the yellow pages of the classified directory. The directory provided a reasonable list of sampling frame with the location and address of the relevant outlets (appendix 1).

3.3 Sample selection

Purposive sampling was used to come up with a sample of the outlets. Thirty five up-market fast food outlets were sampled. These thirty five outlets were selected on basis of the nature of food items offered, the prices at which they are offered, as well as their up-market location and nature. From these outlets, a total of 105 customers were selected for the study. Convenience sampling was used to select the 105 respondents. This is a non-probability sampling method whereby the researcher chose the sampling units on the basis of convenience or accessibility (Luck and Rubin, 1992).

3.4 Data collection

Primary data was generated through field work by interviewing customers in the selected outlets. The data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire containing open-ended, dichotomous and likert-type questions/statements. The questionnaire was structured in such a way that the first set of questions were open-ended and dichotomous while the second set consisted of likert-type rating scales. These scales measured perceptions, attitudes, customer characteristics, and relevant behaviours.

3.5 Data analysis

Data was collected using descriptive statistics. This form of data analysis has been used successfully in similar previous studies by Muriithi (1996), Wambugu (2002), Okoth (2003), and Maina (2003), among others. The data analysis was carried out through computation of mean scores and percentages according to the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The service industry plays an important role in Kenya because it provides employment opportunities to many people and at the same time contribute to the country's economic growth.

The study, therefore, covered various service cues which influence customers' patronage of fast food outlets in Nairobi. The respondents were customers who patronize these fast food outlets. Of the total one hundred and five respondents initially targeted, only eighty responded. This shows a 76% response rate. In comparison with other researches done, this is an appropriate figure to work with.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents findings on the bio-data of the respondents. It, therefore, summarizes customer profile of the respondents.

The second section identifies other food outlets frequented by respondents, the amount they spend per meals and their overall level of satisfaction. The third section determines the relative importance of the factors that influence customer patronage of the outlets.

In all the three sections percentages, frequencies and bar graphs are used to analyze the data. This mode of data analysis was chosen because of the nature of data collected.

4.2. Demographic characteristics of the sample

The sample response rate was 80 (76%) out of the target 105. All the respondents were customers who patronize various up-market fast food outlets either regularly or those who happened to be there at the particular time of the interview.

The demographic characteristics were analyzed in terms of gender, age, marital status, education level, type of employment, and monthly incomes.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents

The respondents were first asked to indicate their gender. The relevant results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	53
Female	38	47
Total	80	100

The data in Table 4.1 show that male constituted 53% of the sample while females constituted 47% of the sample. The results suggest that more males visit the up-market fast food outlets than females.

4.2.2 Age Distribution of the sample

The respondents were also asked to indicate their age brackets. Their responses are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Age Distribution of the sample

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage
< 18 Years	7	8.75
18-25 Years	10	12.50
26-35 Years	44	55.00
36-45 Years	14	17.50
Above 45 Years	5	6.25
TOTAL	80	100

Table 4.2 clearly shows that the majority (55%) of the customers who patronize the fast foods are aged between 26-35 years, followed by those in 36-45 years bracket (17.50%). These results suggest that the respondents who frequent the outlets need to spend a sizeable amount of money and those in these two age categories are the ones likely to have necessary purchasing power.

4.2.3 Marital status

The respondents were further asked to state their marital status. Their responses are contained in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Marital Status of the sample Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	52	65
Married with children	28	35
Single parent	0	0
Widow/ widower	0	0
Total	80	100

The data in Table 4.3 shows that a majority (65%) of those who patronize the up-market fast food outlets are single people.

4.2.4 Level of education

The respondents were asked to state the highest level of education that they have attained. The pertinent results are contained in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Level of education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	2	2.50
Secondary School	3	3.75
College certificate	26	32.50
University	38	47.50
Post Graduate	11	13.75
Total	80	100

The results of the study as depicted in Table 4.4 have revealed that university graduates (47.50%) most frequently visit the up-market fast food outlets. These are followed by college certificate holders (32.50%). The results of the study suggest that the higher the level of attained education, the higher the level of customer patronage of fast food outlets.

4.2.5 Monthly Income levels of the Respondents

The income distribution data for the sample is presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 Income Distribution of the sample Respondents

Monthly Income (KSH)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10,000	7	7.6
10,001-20,000	10	12.7
20,001-30,000	21	26.6
30,001-40,000	9	11.4
40,001-50,000	17	21.5
Above 50,000	16	20.2
Total	80	100

The results of the study as presented in Table 4.5 show the income levels of the respondents.

More than half of the respondents (53.1%) earn a monthly income of above Ksh 30,001, while another 26.6% of the respondents' incomes lie between Ksh 20,001 and Ksh 30,000. Therefore, a majority of those who patronize the fast food outlets belong to relatively high income brackets.

4.2.6 Type of Employment

The respondents stated their type of employment as presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Type of Employment

Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Salaried employee	45	56.3
Self employed	25	31.2
Unemployed	10	12.5
TOTAL	80	100

Table 4.6 clearly shows that salaried employees (56.3%) are the ones who most frequent the fast food outlets and these are followed by respondents who are self employed (31.2%). These results suggest that a majority of those who frequent the fast food outlets are salaried employees.

4.3 Customer Behaviour

The research also sought to learn about customer behaviour of those who patronize the up-market fast food outlets. This was accomplished by studying the average expenditure per meal, frequency of visits to the outlets, reasons for the visit, and level of patronage as measured by the number of respondents who visit each fast food outlet.

4.3.1 Average Expenditure per meal

The average expenditure per meal is presented by Figure 1.

Figure 1: Average Expenditure per meal

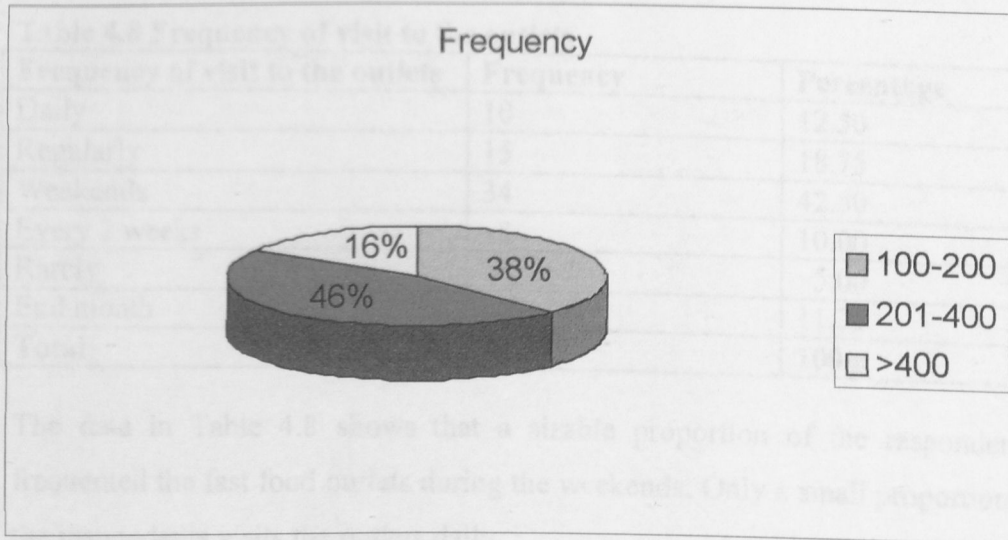


Figure 1 shows that 62% of the sample respondents spend at least Ksh 201 per meal.

4.3.2 Where consumption takes place

When asked to indicate where the consumption of the food takes place, the respondents provided the information summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Where consumption takes place

Where consumption takes place	Frequency	Percentage
Eat in premises	23	28.75
Carry out at times	42	52.50
Both	15	18.75
Total	80	100

The data in Table 4.7 indicates that slightly more than half the respondents (52.50%) buy on take-away basis while about 30% eat within the premises.

4.3.3 Frequency of Visit to the outlets

The sample respondents were further asked to indicate how frequently they visited the fast food outlets. Their responses are summarized in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Frequency of visit to the outlets

Frequency of visit to the outlets	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	10	12.50
Regularly	15	18.75
Weekends	34	42.50
Every 2 weeks	8	10.00
Rarely	4	5.00
End month	9	11.25
Total	80	100

The data in Table 4.8 shows that a sizable proportion of the respondents (42.5%) frequented the fast food outlets during the weekends. Only a small proportion (12.5%) of the respondents visits the outlets daily.

4.3.4 Reasons for visiting the outlets

The sample respondents were in addition requested to mention the reasons for their visiting the fast food outlets. Their responses are contained in Table 4.9

Table 4.9 Reasons why outlets are visited

Reasons for visiting the outlets	Frequency	Percentage
Quick service	15	18.75
Quality food	25	31.25
Varieties of food	20	25.00
Convenience	10	12.50
Fair pricing	4	5.00
Ambience	3	3.75
Proximity	3	3.75
Total	80	100

From Table 4.9 it is observed that the principal reasons why most of the respondents visit the outlets are quality of food (31.25%), variety of foods offered (25 %), and quick service accorded (18.75%).

4.3.5 Other fast food outlets visited

Finally, the respondents had been asked to indicate which other outlets they patronize. The relevant responses are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Other visited fast food outlets

Food Outlets	Frequency	Percentage
Steers	9	11.25
Nandos	12	15.00
Kenchick	5	6.25
Wimpy	9	11.25
Walkers	4	5.00
Java	4	5.00
Dormans	4	5.00
Pizza gardens	5	6.25
Seasons	4	5.00
Others	24	30.00
TOTAL	80	100

According to the data in Table 4.10, other fast foods that are visited are Nandos (15%), Steers (11.25%), and Wimpy (11.25%).

4.4 Importance of factors that influence customer patronage

This section discusses results of the factors which influence customer patronage in various fast food outlets in Nairobi. Tables 4.11 and 4.12 show the relevant mean scores and percentages of the responses to the various attributes.

Table 4.11 Mean scores and Ranks of factors influencing customer patronage

Factors influencing customer patronage	Mean score	Rank
Facilities are clean	3.80	6
Employees neat in appearance	3.99	1
Employees are competent	3.70	10
Employees are courteous	3.84	4
Customers problems are well addressed	3.83	5
Employees respond in a timely manner	3.70	10
Bills are accurate	3.91	2
Answers to questions are accurate	3.73	9
Customers receive personalized attention	3.70	10
Service is prompt	3.75	8
Location is convenient	3.89	3
Location is secure	3.78	7
Hours of operation are secure	3.70	10

Source: Research data

Table 4.11 shows that when ranked in terms of mean scores (on a scale of 1=very poor, and 5= very good) the attribute of “Employees in neat appearance” (mean score=3.99) was ranked top followed by “Bills are accurate” (mean score=3.91). The lowest ranked attributes were “Employees are competent” and “Hours of operation are secure” both with a mean score of 3.70.

The responses were further analyzed in terms of cell entries for each rating. The relevant results are presented in Table 4.12.

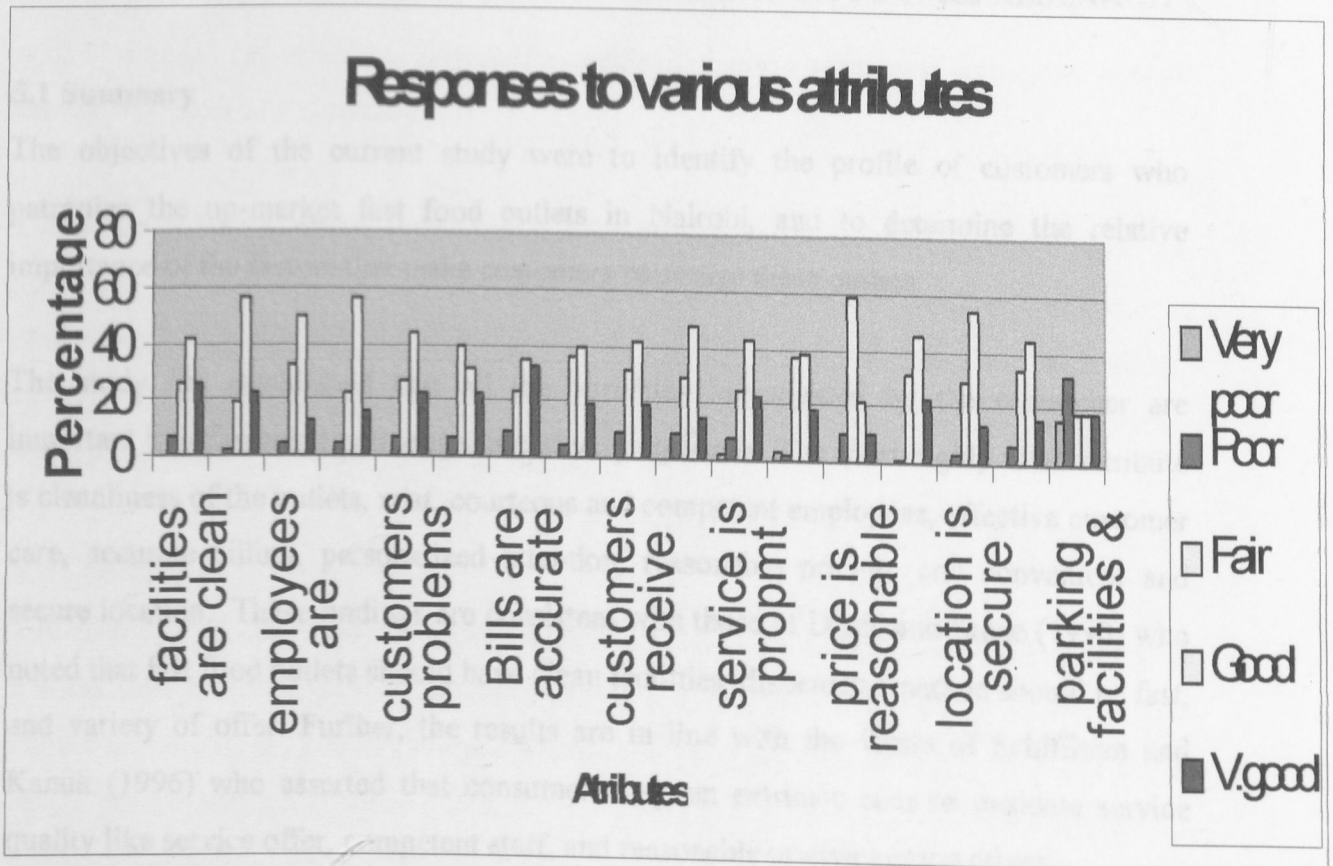
Table 4.12 Customer ratings of the outlet attributes

Factor	Very poor %	Poor %	Fair %	Good %	Very Good %	Total %
Facilities are clean	0	6.15	26.30	41.15	26.40	100
Employees neat in appearance	0	2.50	18.80	56.20	22.50	100
Employees are competent	0	5.00	32.50	50.00	12.50	100
Employees are courteous	0	5.00	22.50	56.20	16.30	100
Customers problems are well addressed	0	6.20	27.50	43.80	22.50	100
Employees respond in a timely manner	0	6.20	40.00	31.30	22.50	100
Bills are accurate	0	8.75	23.75	35.00	32.50	100
Answers to questions are accurate	0	5.00	36.30	40.00	18.70	100
Customers receive personalized attention	0	8.75	31.30	41.20	18.75	100
Employees understand my needs	0	8.75	28.75	47.50	15.00	100
Service is prompt	2.50	7.50	25.00	42.50	22.50	100
Service is reliable	3.75	2.50	37.50	38.75	17.50	100
Price is reasonable	0	10.00	58.70	21.30	10.00	100
Location is convenient	0	1.25	31.25	45.00	22.50	100
Location is secure	0	3.75	28.75	53.75	13.75	100
Hours of operation are secure	0	6.25	33.75	43.75	16.25	100
Parking facilities are available and accessible	16.25	31.25	17.5	17.5	17.5	100
Total number of mentions	18	100	415	565	262	1360

The study results in Table 4.12 show that 78.7% of the sample respondents rated "Employees are neat in appearance" as either "good" or "very good". This was followed by "Employees are courteous" (76.5% of the sample respondents). However, the attribute of "Bills are accurate" received the highest rating of "very good" (32.5%) followed by "Facilities are clean" (26.4%). These four attributes should therefore be emphasized in service delivery.

Customer ratings of the outlet attributes are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Ratings



In summary, the findings of the current study show that there are various attributes which influence customer patronage. The study however clearly revealed that none of the factors alone could independently influence outlet patronage. The findings further revealed that, majority of customers were satisfied by the services provided in these outlets and were ready to tell others about such outlets.

In addition the study revealed that more males visit the up-market fast food outlets than females. It was noted from the findings that, respondents who frequented these outlets spent between ksh 200- ksh 400 per meal and belonged to relatively high income brackets. Majority were single people, and many fell under the age bracket of 26-35 years. The findings further suggested that the higher the level of education, the higher the level of customer patronage.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Summary

The objectives of the current study were to identify the profile of customers who patronize the up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi, and to determine the relative importance of the factors that make customers patronize these outlets.

The study has established that all the variables investigated by the researcher are important in influencing patronage, but at varying levels. The most highly rated attribute is cleanliness of the outlets, neat, courteous and competent employees, effective customer care, accurate billing, personalized attention, reasonable pricing, and convenient and secure location. These findings are consistent with those of Davis and Stone (1990) who noted that fast food outlets should have clean facilities; dispensing method should be fast, and variety of offer. Further, the results are in line with the views of Schiffman and Kanuk (1996) who asserted that consumers rely on extrinsic cues to evaluate service quality like service offer, competent staff, and reasonable pricing among others.

The study also revealed that safety and convenience of the location influence customer patronage. This supports Okoth (2003) who noted that safety, convenience and flexibility of service are rich in influencing customer patronage. It is further noted, that customer care, professionalism of staff and affordability of services do influence patronage. The results are consistent with Kotler's (2000) assertion that for firms to win and retain their customers they should provide those unique services which meet their needs and expectations.

The current study supported the view that customers do patronize outlets where their needs are attended to, ambience is appealing and other personal problems are addressed. This is in line with Waller (1994) who noted that customers will always frequent a joint where personalized service is rendered regardless of one's status and where the interior design and décor are appealing.

The study further revealed that some factors like hours of operations do influence the patronage but at a lower scale compared to other factors. Various intrinsic and extrinsic cues were also found to influence patronage top among them being clean facilities, variety of offer, prompt and reliable services, competent and courteous employees, reasonable pricing and convenient location.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this research have brought to light many important highlights. It is evident from the findings that there are various factors which influence customers in their choice of outlets. It is of paramount importance therefore that service providers in the sector ensure that they identify and understand the profile of customers who patronize the up-market fast food outlets and the factors that make them patronize these outlets. This will help them in their marketing strategies, pricing methods, and customer relations so as to be superior to their competitors, attract and retain a large customer base.

5.3 Direction for Future Research

The study examined Customer Patronage of up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi with a view to identifying the profile of customers who patronize the up-market fast food outlets and determining the relative importance of the factors that make them patronize these outlets. To determine whether the same findings apply to other populations, it is suggested that similar research studies be conducted with other populations in different urban settings.

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7. Hooters Lively & Sports -Harold House, Ground Floor, Kenyatta street

Inisour Kenya Ltd - Harcus (Dial A-Delivery)

8. Westlands

9. Ngong Road

10. Lussaka Road

11. Union Towers

12. Nairobi Java House, Adams Arcade - Ngong Road

Stevens/Debonairs

13. Mpaka Road

14. Mainini Mbingu street

15. Tom Mboya street

16. Village Market

17. Wabera street

18. Enterprise Road

19. Thika Road

20. Chomazoni Mwa road

21. Southern Fried Chicken, the Village Market

22. Pizza Corner Ltd, Elencis road

23. Pizza express Ltd Ya Ya Centre -Argwings Kothick Road

24. Walkers Fast Foods Ltd, Re-insurance plaza

Appendix 1

The sampling frame of the fast food outlets

1. American Snack Bar- Market St.
2. Burgerland Fast Foods Ltd -Imenti house, ground floor, Moi avenue
3. Burger Dome Restaurant -Old mutual building, Kimathi street
4. Burger Chef Ltd -Argwings kodhek road
5. Brunch Burger Ltd- Kenyatta Avenue
6. Hoggers Restaurant Ltd -Muindi Mbingu street
7. Hooters Eatery & Spirits -Hamilton House, Ground Floor, Kaunda street,
Innskor Kenya Ltd – Nandos (Dial A- Delivery):
8. Westlands
9. Ngong Road
10. Lusaka Road
11. Union Towers
12. Nairobi Java House, Adams Arcade- Ngong Road.
Steers/Debonairs Pizza:
13. Mpaka Road
14. Muindi Mbingu street
15. Tom Mboya street
16. Village Market
17. Wabera street
18. Enterprise Road
19. Thika Road
20. Chomazone Msa road
21. Southern Fried Chicken, the Village Market
22. Pizza Corner Ltd, Elmolo road
23. Pizza express Ltd YaYa Centre -Argwings Kodhek Road
24. Walkers Fast Foods Ltd, Re-insurance plaza

Wimpy fresh foods (k) Ltd:

- 25. Kenyatta Avenue
- 26. Bamburi Road
- 27. Sarit Centre
- 28. Tom Mboya street
- 29. Corner House
- 30. Ta Mambo Ltd - The Mall, Westlands
- 31. Zeep -Kimathi street/Moi avenue junction

Kengeles:

- 32. Nairobi west
- 33. University way (ABC place)
- 34. Thika Road
- 35. Lavington

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours faithfully,

Christine Mutua (MCA candidate)

Prof. A. Wanyo, PhD
Project Supervisor and Professor
of Strategic Marketing

Appendix 2

Letter of introduction

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS

Christine Mutua
University of Nairobi
School of Business
Dept. of Business Administration
P.O.Box 30197
NAIROBI.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the School of Business, University of Nairobi. In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA), I am currently conducting a study entitled "An empirical investigation of factors that determine customer patronage of up-market fast food outlets in Nairobi."

I am therefore, requesting for your assistance in responding to a few study related questions. The information that you will provide will be used for academic purpose only and will be treated in strict confidence.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Christine Mutua (MBA candidate)

Prof. F. Kibera, PhD
Project Supervisor and Professor
of Strategic Marketing.

**QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR CUSTOMERS**

Please answer the following questions as candidly as possible. There is no right or wrong answer. Your perceptions, opinions, feelings and experiences are the ones which are important.

1. Other than this fast food outlet which others do you patrol?

2. How frequently have you come to this outlet for a food/drink? _____

3. Why have you decided to patronize this outlet? _____

4. Do you always eat on the premises or do you at times carry out?

- on the premises only
- carry out at times

Other (please specify) _____

5. How much do you normally spend per meal in this outlet?

- Kshs. 100 – 200
- Kshs. 201 – 400
- Above Kshs. 400

Overall level of satisfaction : (Please tick the appropriate box)

6. What is your overall level of satisfaction with services / products offered by the outlet?

Very satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Strongly dissatisfied

7. I shall use the outlet's products again

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know

8. I shall tell other people about the quality of service of this outlet

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't know

9. Please indicate the number that best represents your feelings from the following set of statements. The set of numbers relates to the degree of excellence that the outlet does or possesses the following characteristics (attributes):

5 = very good ; 4 = good ; 3 = fair ; 2 = poor ; and 1 = very poor.

	Very Poor	poor	fair	good	very good
9.1 Facilities are clean.	1	2	3	4	5
9.2 Employees are neat in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
9.3 Employees are competent	1	2	3	4	5
9.4 Employees are courteous.	1	2	3	4	5
9.5 Customers problems are well addressed	1	2	3	4	5
9.6 Employees respond in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5
9.7 Bills are accurate	1	2	3	4	5
9.8 Answers to questions are accurate	1	2	3	4	5
9.9 Customers receive personal attention	1	2	3	4	5
9.10 Employees understand my needs	1	2	3	4	5
9.11 Service is prompt	1	2	3	4	5
9.12 Service is reliable	1	2	3	4	5
9.13 Price is reasonable	1	2	3	4	5
9.14 Location is convenient	1	2	3	4	5
9.15 Location is secure	1	2	3	4	5
9.16 Hours of operation are convenient	1	2	3	4	5
9.17 Packing facilities are available and accessible	1	2	3	4	5

Demographics.

To be able to classify data, I would like to know a few things about yourself. Please tick as appropriate.

1. Gender of the respondent () Male () Female

2. What is your approximate age? less than 18 years ()
 18 - 25 years ()
 26 - 35 years ()
 36 - 45 years ()
 above 45 years ()

3. What is the highest level of your formal education level?

Primary school ()

Secondary school ()

College certificate ()

University degree ()

Post graduate certificate ()

4. Are you a salaried employee? ()

Self employed? ()

Unemployed? ()

If salaried employed, what kind of employment? _____

5. What is your marital status?

Single

Married with children

Single parent

Widow/widower

Other (specify) _____

6. What is your approximate monthly income in Kenya Shillings?

Below Ksh. 10,000 ()

Ksh. 10,001 – 20,000 ()

Ksh. 20,001 – 30,000 ()

Ksh. 30,001 – 40,000 ()

Ksh. 40,001 – 50,000 ()

Over Ksh. 50,000 ()

Thank you very much for your co-operation. The information which you have provided is highly appreciated.