

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

**EVALUATING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE FAST-FOOD
INDUSTRY IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF BIRIM CENTRAL MUNICIPAL IN
THE EASTERN REGION**



**A Dissertation in the Department of HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION
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of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the award of the Master of Technology Education (Catering and
Hospitality Education) degree.**

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, CHRISTIANA FRIMPONG, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of supervisor: Dr Gilbert Owiah Sampson

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my cherished children Prince N. F. Yamoah Cudjoe, the blessed twins Percy and Persis Sefa Yamoah Cudjoe and Benjamin Yamoah Cudjoe Jnr. A special dedication goes to my lovely husband Mr. Benjamin Cudjoe.



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ABSTRACT

Consumption of fast food has become the order of our time especially among the working population and students, who buy lunch from restaurants or street food vendors. Although, fast food is seen to be simpler and more convenient than home-cooked meals it has been identified to have some attendant health challenges. This study was therefore designed to evaluate the socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry in Ghana with specific focus on the Birim central Municipality. The design was a descriptive survey and data was collected using a quantitative method. A purposive sampling approach was used and a sample size of 120 participants, made up of seventy (70) consumers, thirty (30) food vendors and twenty (20) Municipal Assembly staff returned their questionnaires. A five-point likert scale with 28 questionnaire items was used to collect quantitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used as the statistical tools for analyzing the data. Findings of the research revealed that the average person located within the Birim Central Municipality consume fast food four times or less within a week. The study further revealed that the fast-food business provides employment for a number of people who are mostly within the youthful age bracket of between 20 to 45 years. Additionally, the fast-food industry is a source of revenue generation to the Municipal Assembly. In spite of the socio-economics benefits findings also revealed an attendant environmental and health challenges associated with the fast- food industry with improper and indiscriminate plastic waste disposal being key. Based on the findings and discussions the study recommended among other things that other sources within the food service industry such as chop bars should also be sampled to ascertain their socio-economic benefits as well as health challenges. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies need to develop, implement and enforce regulations or bye-laws that would properly regulate the operations of the fast-food industry within the various communities. Further research into the fast-food business across the country is also recommended.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

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 the tradition of cooking and eating at home. People are now more reliant on ready-to-eat meals offered by businesses for their daily sustenance and popular among them are Fast foods. Due to its low cost and convenience, Fast food is consumed each day by an estimated 2.5 billion people world-wide (UN FAO, 2017). Furthermore, it is projected that Fast foods sold by vendors account for up to 40% of the daily diet of urban consumers in developing countries (Consumers International, 2011). Rapid move to the cities coupled with busy lifestyle of the consumer and advancement in technology has greatly changed the way of life of many people worldwide. The traditional family custom of cooking and eating at home have been affected in many ways where all elements of food consumption is concerned. Families and the consumer public are now becoming more dependent on ready-to-eat meals offered by food-related businesses for their daily sustenance and prevalent among them are fast foods providers.

Fast food restaurants have seen a rise in recent times globally with many people, mostly the working population being identified with patronage. According to Kennedy, Nantel & Shetty, (2004) the quest for speedy economic development, income improvements and issues of time-constraint among workers have made consumers shift towards out-of-home and convenience foods among urban dwellers.

Ashakiran & Deepthi (2012) argued that about 75% of Americans eat dinner at home and nearly half of those meals are fast foods. This means that the eating of fast foods has now

become very popular not only with the working population but with other members of society. This has therefore given rise to a number of people engaging in the Fast-food business to serve the growing demand from customers and also as a way of making income. Globalisation has produced a mobile society due to the flow of people, ideas, finance, technology and culture (Urry, 2003). These flows increase the availability of products, symbols and meanings in the consumer's everyday life such that what is available at one place also tends to be available in any other places (Waters, 2015). Fast food is a typical food cultural product that has spread worldwide partly due to globalisation.

In most third world countries the quest for increased economic activities resulting in the search for formal and informal jobs has pushed a lot of people into the cities and other urban areas. Ghana is no exception to this phenomenon as in the Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts, population and economic activities keep growing. In Ghana research has shown that Fast-food restaurants are spreading quickly in most cities, urban areas and these have become an important source of urban food (Omari, 2014).

There has been some amount of extensive research into Ghana's informal food sector by Tomlins et al., (2002); Maxwell et al., (2000); Obeng-Asiedu, (2000) but the same cannot be said of the formal sector. Restaurants are increasingly prevalent in urban centres and undoubtedly contribute a great deal to the provision of ready-to-eat food. Population and swift economic growth, income enhancements and increasing numbers of limited time to consumers have created a move towards out-of-home and convenience foods among urban dwellers (Kennedy et al., 2004).

Davidson (2006) defined fast food as a phenomenon characterised by the notion of going into a public eating place and ordering something that will come quickly and eaten quickly. Based on its convenience, place of food preparation, purchase or consumption, fast

food has also been defined as a convenience food or food purchased in self-service or take-away eating places without waiter service (Rosenheck, 2008). This characteristic conforms to the original aim of fast food, which is to provide cheap, filling food to people on the move (Belasco, 2008). Consequently, the fast-food restaurant in most developing countries has become a place where people sit, relax and chat while eating. Furthermore, in relation to style of food preparation, presentation and perception of value, fast food is defined as relatively cheap food that is prepared and served quickly in the Western style (Rodriguez, 2004; Traphagan & Brown, 2002).

In urban Ghana, ready-to-eat, out-of-home food (fast food) is mainly obtained from informal street food vendors and traditional eateries (chop bars), along with formal outlets, such as restaurants. Drawing inspiration from the study of material culture, this study evaluates the socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry in Ghana with reference to Birim Central Municipal in Eastern Region.

Fast-foods industries are spreading quickly in Ghana and have become an important source of revenue and food for the citizens. The Fast-food business is undergoing various changes, such as the introduction of healthier food options, use of environmentally friendly packaging and the incorporation of local cultural features and the Birim Central Municipality is no exception.

Fast-food industries have menu items such as Fried Rice, Fried Chicken, Burgers, Pizzas and French Fries, as well as common Ghanaian foods like Banku, Tuo Zaafi and Waakye. Most people eat Fast food, especially the working population because of the people desire to save time, mental and physical effort as well as the inherent convenience attributes of Fast food. The consumers have adopted loyalty or exit strategies as a way of reducing the effects of the health and environmental anxieties on society. Fast food restaurants are

springing up all over the country, especially in urban centers. Birim Central Municipality has had its fair share of this up spring.

Food business appears to be on the ascendancy in Ghana (FAO, 2016). The popularity of fast-food joints in Ghana cannot be overemphasized. The emergence of the fast-food business in Ghana has changed how and where people eat.

According to Peters & Kontor-kwateng (2016) the food business is the greatest and fastest-growing industry in Ghana. Peter & Kontor-Kwateng asserted that as compared to developed countries, fast-food is expensive in Ghana owing to factors such as overhead costs and huge investment coupled with the cachet associated with the fast-food business.

However, Mensah et al., (2002) stated that there has been an increase in the number of fast food-joints in Ghana over the years. Factors considered by customers in making a choice of fast-food joint may differ from one geographical location to another.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Consumption of fast food has become the order of our time especially among the working population and students, who buy lunch from restaurants or street food vendors (Frempong 2015; Laryea et al 2016). Although, fast food is seen to be simpler and more convenient than home-cooked meals (Annisa, 2017) it has been identified to have some attendant health challenges. A cursory study has shown that fast foods contain high quantity of saturated fat, calories, sodium, and high chemical composition which makes consumers very susceptible to negative health implications such as high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, cancers, among others.

Besides the health concerns, consumption of fast food can have financial challenges on the individual. Fast foods can issue a financial problem to the family (Anand.2011) One

might think buying fast food is cheaper, this might be true for an individual but for a whole family it would be on a higher side. With the negative health implications associated with fast foods, the resultant effect is an increase in one's medical bills as an individual, and the family as a unit.

Another topical issue associated with fast food consumption is how to dispose of the plastic waste that the business generates. This has become a great concern to stakeholders in –charge of waste management in the country. It is estimated that plastic waste alone account for almost half of waste generated across the country, thereby posing health, environmental, social as well as economic challenges in its management

1.2 Main Objective

The study aims at evaluating the socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry in Ghana, specifically within the Birim Central Municipal Assembly.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the fast-food industry economic impact within the Birim Central Municipal Assembly
2. To investigate the fast-food industry social impact on the Birim Central Municipal Assembly
3. To establish the health implications of fast-food on consumers

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the economic impact of the fast-food industry within the Birim Central municipality?
2. What are the social impact of the fast-food industry on the Birim Central Municipal Assembly?

3. What are the health implication fast-food pose on consumers?



1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is justified on the following grounds:

The findings from this study will clearly unearth the socio-economic influence of the fast-food industry on the people of the Birim Central Municipal Assembly. It will also help the Birim Central Municipal Assembly with requisite data on the fast-food industry in the formulation of policies and bye-laws to regulate the industry

The study would serve as reference document for students that would research on the topic and provide the basis for further research. Again, the findings of the study will also provide basis for the Ministry of Health to investigate further into the relationship between the eating of fast foods and food borne diseases.

Additionally, it will help the Ministry of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other related ministries and regulatory bodies to formulate additional policies to regulate the Fast food industry in the country. Academically, the study will add to the existing literature on the fast-food industry in Ghana.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study was the limited time frame under which the research has to be carried out and submitted. As a result, a wider range of coverage has been retarded. The researcher has sacrificed enough time and financial resources for the study at the expense of normal academic work to come out with a satisfactory result. Another problem which could have effect on the study was the reluctance of some of the participants to give out information.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of fast food

Fast food is an old phenomenon, which is characterized by the notion of going into a public eating place and ordering something that will come quickly and can be eaten quickly (Davidson 2006). Fast food has been extensively debated with most of the debates centred on health risks associated with its consumption and its tendency to undermine local food cultures. Till date, no single study has comprehensively explored the socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry.

Fast food has been defined and characterized differently from different perspectives. Firstly, based on style of food preparation, presentation, and “perception of value”, fast food is defined as a relatively inexpensive food that is prepared and served quickly in the ‘western style’ (Seubsman 2009; Rodriguez 2004; Traphagan and Brown 2002; Fantasia 1995). Fast food generally has been classified as relatively inexpensive, but in developing countries, they are relatively more expensive than other foods such as traditional foods (Olutayo and Akanle 2009). This is partly due to the huge investment and overhead costs borne by fast food restaurateurs and the high level of prestige associated with it.

Secondly, fast food has been characterized as a meal or snack and has synonyms such as junk food, snack food and takeaway. A meal is different from a snack in that meals are larger, more varied, and more filling, while snacks are more likely to be small and eaten in small amounts at an unscheduled time usually between meals. According to Bellisle et al. (2003), meals are about twice as large as snacks in energy and weight. Nutrient intake, in

absolute values, is higher in meals but in terms of proportions, snacks contain more carbohydrates and less fat and proteins. Whether a fast food is a snack or a meal depends largely on the specific food under consideration and the culture where the food is consumed. Olutayo and Akanle (2009) report that some fast-food consumers in Nigeria believe that sandwiches and pastries are not heavy enough to be considered as meals. Similarly, consumers in Japan, China and the Philippines consider McDonald's products as snacks because, for these consumers, rice stands for food in general and is of enormous symbolic value (Matejowsky 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney 1997, 1999).

Thirdly, fast food has been characterized based on the place of food preparation, purchase, or consumption. For these authors, fast food is a convenience food or food purchased in self-service or take-away eating places without waiter service (Rosenheck 2008; Pereira et al. 2005; Jekanowski 1999; National Restaurant Association 1998; Biing-Hwan and Frazao 1997). This characteristic conforms to the original aim of fast-food technology, which is to provide cheap, filling food to people on the move (Belasco 2008). Today, however, in developing countries especially, the original fast-food concept is being re-contextualized such that, for example, identity and other communicative functions are being associated with fast food. Consequently, the fast-food restaurant has become a place where people sit, relax, and chat while eating—a place where people socialize (Yan 2005; Traphagan and Brown 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney 1997). In this light, fast food restaurants have 30 food studies: an interdisciplinary journal been defined as restaurants that have two or more of characteristics such as expedited food service, take-away and/or table service, counter service, limited waiting or service staff, low price, and payment tendered prior to receiving food (Jason et al. 2004; Schlosser 2001; Fantasia 1995).

It is a general notion that fast foods are usually served in restaurants, but nowadays, fast foods are also served at stadiums, airports, zoos, schools and universities, supermarkets, petrol stations, on cruise ships, trains and aeroplanes, and even in hospital cafeterias (Schlosser 2001). In some developing countries, there is an emerging trend whereby fast food is trickling down from the restaurant levels to street levels, where they are vended as street foods. Pingali and Khwaja (2003) describe this phenomenon as copycat street food. Most common fast-food restaurants in the U.S. specialize in one or two main entrees such as hamburger, French fries, pizza, fish or chicken, and a beverage (Rodriguez 2004; Schlosser 2001). These include restaurants such as McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's. Some restaurants, such as KFC, specialize in chicken; Subway provides sandwiches while Taco Bell provides Americanized ethnic foods (Rodriguez 2004).

Fourthly, from the perspective of health and nutrition, fast food has been defined as nutritionally imbalanced foods, which, when excessively consumed, could adversely affect health and enhance vulnerability to degenerative diseases (Mahna et al. 2004). Ebbeling et al. (2002) and Prentice and Jebb (2003) identified some factors inherent in fast food that increase risk for obesity and diabetes. These factors are excessive portion size, high energy density, high glycaemic load, and palatability with emphasis on primordial taste preferences for sugar, salt, and fat. Nowadays, some fast-food companies are responding to public concerns about health risks of fast food and are introducing healthier options such as salads, low-calorie or fat-free dressings, low-fat ice cream, and plain, broiled chicken sandwiches (Rodriguez 2004; Schlosser 2001). Finally, some authors have categorized fast food into western and local (or indigenous or traditional) (Olutayo and Akanle 2009; Musaiger and D'Souza 2007; Yan 2005). Western fast food includes items such as burgers, pizzas, French fries, hot dogs, fried chicken, sandwiches, and doughnuts, and have become widely available in most developed and developing countries (Seubsman et al. 2009; Austin et al. 2005). Western fast foods have

spread world-wide mainly through franchise operations. For instance, approximately 70% of McDonald's restaurants in Canada are franchised operations. Local fast foods have been defined as foods that are locally available and are made and served quickly using traditional recipes (e.g., ingredients and preparation methods) (Musaiger and D'Souza 2007). In summary, characteristics of fast food are dynamic in time and space and these in turn influence its evaluation. In Ghana, studies have been conducted to assess the nutritional value of fast food (Agyei-Mensah and de-Graft Aikins 2007; Asiedu et al. 1998), but none have reported on its unique characteristics and availability. This information is relevant because it shows how different socio-economic and cultural settings influence the characteristics and overall evaluation of fast food.

2.3 The global fast-food industry

Globalization has produced a mobile society due to the flow of people, ideas, finance, technology and culture (Urry, 2003; Featherstone et al., 1995; Appadurai, 1990). These flows increase the availability of products, symbols and meanings in the consumer's everyday life such that what is available in one place also tends to be available in any other place (Waters, 1995). Fast food is a typical food cultural product that has spread worldwide partly due to globalization. One of the oldest fast-food restaurant chains, Yoshinoya, which started its operations in Japan in 1899, had by 2000 become a global corporation with 92 franchises in California alone (Traphagan & Brown, 2002). The fast-food industry's significance and contribution to the international service economy have been the subject of discussion among hospitality professionals (Alonso, O'neill, Liu, & O'shea, 2013).

The fast-food industry undoubtedly contributes to individual countries and the world at large in providing food, employment, and revenue to governments. In the United States of America for instance, the National Restaurant Association (2011) estimated that the industry

was going to employ 12.8 million in 2011, making it among the largest private sector employers (As cited in Alonso, O'Neill, Liu, & O'Shea, 2013). In addition, the US fast-food industry restaurant sales recorded \$604 billion, contributing 4 percent of the US gross domestic product in 2011 (National Restaurant Association, 2011). Furthermore, the industry is expected to provide more than one million jobs in the next ten years and as many as 14.1 million jobs by 2021 (Alonso, O'neill, Liu, & O'shea, 2013).

In the USA, fast-food restaurant services began in the 1920s and since then America has been highly instrumental in proliferating fast food across the globe (Belasco, 2008). McDonald's opened its first international fast-food outlet in 1967, and about 31,000 McDonald's restaurants can now be found in 119 countries around the world (McDonalds International, 2011). Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) currently has nearly 38,000 restaurants in 110 countries. This global fast-food giant few years ago launched its first restaurant in Ghana, with plans to open over twenty more across the country by 2016. In addition to such global brands, there are also African and local fast-food brands in Ghana that are penetrating both the formal and the informal ready-to-eat food sectors.

2.4 Fast food in Ghana

According to FAO (2016), fast-food business is in ascendancy in Ghana. The patronage of the fast-food is rapid in nature (Omari & Frempong, 2016) and therefore the popularity of fast-food joints in Ghana cannot be overemphasized. The emergence of the fast-food business in Ghana has changed how and where people eat. Peters and Kontor-Kwateng (2016), argued that the food business is the greatest and fastest-growing industry in Ghana. Consumers in Ghana as compared to developed countries, see fast-food to be expensive and this is owned to factors such as overhead costs and huge investment coupled with the cachet associated with this type of business. Factors which customers consider in making a choice of

Fast-food joint may differ from one geographical location to another. Within Ghana, the fast-food sector currently represents the largest and fastest growing part of the domestic economy, increasing at an annual rate of 20 percent.

Alongside foreign brands, there has also been expansion of informal fast-food outlets that sell fried and jollof rice with fried chicken on the streets of many areas in Ghana. Ghana is currently experiencing rapid urbanization, economic development and income improvement with the fast-food increase of a middle-class population. Food businesses and the tourism sector are likely to experience more growth, implying that fast-food production and consumption will increase.

The fast-food industry is characterized by fast food restaurants that have two or more characteristics, namely, “expedited food service, take-away and/or table service, counter service, limited waiting or service staff, low price and payment tendered prior to receiving food” (Omari, Jongerden, Essegbey, Frempong, & Ruivenkamp, 2013; Jason, Scribner, DeSalvo, 2004). In terms of the techniques used to prepare food and the distinct flavour principles in the Ghanaian market, stir-frying and grilling have become increasingly popular. About 30% of Ghanaian consumers of fast food describe fast food as fried rice, other consumers characterise “quickly, crispy, tasty, easily carried out and easily eaten with fingers while multitasking” (Omari et al., 2013). Pepper sauce, commonly known as “Shito”, is another key item in the characteristics of fast food in Ghana. Eaten with a variety of foods, such as waakye, yam, rice and indomine, Ghanaians like their food hot and spicy. According to a study by Omari et al., (2013), fast food is evaluated as good or bad based on characteristics such the type of food, the nutritional cost and associated benefits and finally how long it takes to get the food.

2.5 Economic implications of the fast-food industry

The fast-food play important roles in the economic development and the livelihoods of most people in Ghana and other developing countries. According to the GAIN Report Number: GH8008 on Ghana Hotels, Restaurants and Institutional Contracts (HRI) Food Service Sector, Ghana's Food Service Sector has been expanding so fast in the last few years that it has recorded extraordinary growth averaging 20 percent per annum due to a variety of factors with the restaurant/fast food sub-sector recording the largest growth. New fast-food outlets have been established in major urban centres such as Accra, Kumasi, Cape coast, Ho and semi urban areas such as the Birim Central Municipality. Industry sources estimate the total revenue of fast-food operations in 2007 at approximately \$100 million. The annual growth rate in the sector is estimated at an average of 20 percent in the last few years. In 2017, economists expected the country to grow at around seven percent. This was envisaged because a noticeable middle class is fast emerging, with its players being a new wave of wealthy consumers who are increasingly embracing western brands, products and lifestyles. This provided businesses with new opportunities for exporters of retail foods, namely cereals, meat (including poultry) and meat products, soyabean meal, prepared food, etc. from the United States. The fast-food is relatively advancing compared to others in Africa. An analysis of the subsector's forecast spending is to increase from \$8 billion in 2015 to \$11 billion by 2019, thanks largely to the growing middle class (GAIN, 2017).

The fast-food subsector is a labour-intensive industry that provides employment for about 5,000 workers at present, mostly unskilled. Due to a favourable liberal market environment, Ghana is attracting an innumerable of both local and foreign investors. The demand for fresh produce and foods without preservatives has also increased.

There are three distinct segments in the fast-food market:

- 1) The indigenous brands led by Papaye and Frankie's,
- 2) international franchise brands such as Nandos, Chicken Liken, and
- 3) the myriad of single, neighbourhood outlets.

The growth in fast food operations in Ghana offers U.S. exporters the opportunity to supply innovative products such as seasoned potato chips, sauces and seasonings. These has tremendously increased revenue for both the fast-food industry and the country. Another economic implication is the provision of jobs for the young generation.

2.6 Socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry on the Birim Central Municipal Assembly

Socially, the introduction of fast-food in the municipality has affected the livelihood of the locals and the assembly in a number of ways. According to Boafo (2016), “young adults – 15 to 45 years – were the biggest consumers of fast food in Ghana”. The situation at Birim Central Municipality almost mimics this finding. Because men don't often cook, they are the most group that consume more fast-food. In addition, most unmarried or single men and women are the most likely visitors to the fast-food joints. To some of these people who enjoy fast-food, it helps them identify themselves with Western culture therefore leading modern ways of life. There are also health implications (i.e. obesity, diabetes, High Blood Pressure, etc.) that impact both social and economic life of the municipality under study. A Ministry of Health report in 2012 attested to this fact.

Economically, while the production and consumption of fast-food generates income for the industry, revenue for the municipal assembly and create jobs for youth in the locality, it is in another way adversely affecting the environment. Disposable packing used for serving fast-food litter the municipality and causes drainage blocks and sometimes death to domesticated animals who swallow these plastics. This has raised environmental concerns.

The socio-economic impact is both advantageous and detrimental to the well-being of the people living within the Birim Municipal Assembly. The social construct of traditional home-cooking and breaking down in some section of the society due to easy access to fast-food Badmus, (2011).

2.7 Challenges associated with fast food

The societal effects of fast food have been extensively debated, with most of the debates centred on its negative consequences on health (Gill, 2006; Mahna et al., 2004), environment (Kweon et al., 2004), and culture (Yan, 2005; Miele & Murdoch, 2003; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997). These negative consequences, it should be noted, also constitute important development challenges in urban and rural Ghana that will be addressed in this thesis. Ghana is currently dealing with increasing incidences of non-communicable diseases, environmental pollution largely from plastic wastes and the decline in cultural values, which are all associated with the processes of national development, including urbanisation and industrialisation.

The first aspect of fast food that has been intensively debated and criticised is the assumption that fast food can enhance the vulnerability to degenerative diseases and is perceived as a risk factor for obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes (Seubsman et al., 2009; Rosenheck, 2008; Duffey et al., 2007; Musaiger & D'Souza, 2007; Ulizaszek, 2007; Gill, 2006; Jeffery et al., 2006; Pereira et al., 2005; Mahna et al., 2004; Prentice & Jebb, 2003; Ebbeling et al., 2002; Guthrie et al., 2002; Kosulwat, 2002; Popkin et al., 2002). Some factors inherent in fast food that increase risk for obesity and diabetes are said to be high energy density, high glycaemic load and palatability with emphasis on primordial taste preferences for sugar, salt, and fat, which are compounded by excessive portion size and single large meals often approaching or exceeding individual daily energy requirements

(Prentice & Jebb, 2003; Ebbeling et al., 2002). Indeed, studies have shown that diverse urban populations throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America are now experiencing sharp increases in obesity, cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes due to the promotion and spread of diets rich in calories, saturated fat, salt and sugar by corporate chain restaurants (Example: Ulizaszek, 2007; Gill, 2006; Popkin et al., 2002). In fact, non-communicable diseases including diabetes, kidney problems, cardiovascular disease and obesity constitute major development challenges that Ghana's health sector is currently grappling with. Studies have shown that there is a gradual shift from eating typical Ghanaian foods with abundant unrefined carbohydrate, high fibre and low fat to westernised diets, with highly refined, oily, energy-dense and sugar-based foods (Ministry of Health, 2013). As a result, overweight and obesity and other non-communicable diseases, which were previously considered problems only in high-income countries, are now increasing in Ghana.

The Ghana Health Service (2007) has reported hypertension, a major risk factor for many cardiovascular diseases, as the number-one killer in Ghana, accounting for about 70% of all deaths at the country's leading teaching-hospital, Korle-Bu, in Accra. Cases of kidney diseases are also increasing, especially among the youth, such that between January 2006 and July 2008, 558 cases (143 females and 415 males) were reported at Korle-Bu. A recent study reveals that 64.9% of women in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) are either overweight or obese (Benkeser et al., 2012).

A second aspect of criticism is the linkage of fast-food production and consumption to environmental concerns, such as littering public spaces with plastic and polythene materials. Recently, the use of large volumes of plastics in the fast-food industry became an issue of public attention because of the potentially huge environmental accumulation and pollution problem (Kweon et al., 2004). Essentially, fast food poses a threat to the environment through

the extensive use of plastics such as polystyrene (plates, cups and cutlery), polyurethane (containers, plastic cups and tableware), polyethylene terephthalate (PET) (bottles) and polythene (bags), among others. Many of the items made of these materials are not properly disposed of. In the worst instances, they are merely thrown on the ground and end up in drains and water bodies, thus aggravating problems of floods and sanitation-related diseases, such as malaria and cholera. Even if the non-degradable plastic materials are properly disposed of, current policies and practices mean that they still significantly impact on the rate of depletion of landfill sites.

Now, in urban Ghana in particular, plastic waste menace constitutes an important development challenge that municipal and city authorities are grappling with. In the past two decades, plastics have become the most favoured materials for food and water packaging, contributing to the large rise in their proportions in the waste streams in Ghana (Fobil, 2000). The situation is aggravated because of consumers' irresponsible plastic disposal culture and government's weak disposal interventions, which fail to address the plastic load in waste streams (Agyenim-Boateng, 1998; Yankson, 1998; Archer et al., 1997). As a result, plastic wastes are scattered around the cities, choking drains, threatening small animals, damaging the soil and polluting beaches. Open-drains and waterways have become choked with these plastics, forcing urban storm-water to overflow the banks of the drains and thereby causing destructive floods in the cities and serving as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and pathogens.

Thirdly, fast-food production and consumption has been regarded as a threat to traditional food cultures – the main reason why its introduction in some countries such as Italy was stiffly opposed (Seubsman et al., 2009; Yan 2005; Miele & Murdoch, 2003; OhnukiTierney, 1997). The immediate motivation for establishing the Slow Food movement

in Italy, in 1986, was the growing concern about the potential impact of McDonald's on food cultures there. Via Campesina, which developed the food sovereignty concept, has also criticised the globalisation of fast food (Ayres & Bosia, 2011). According to their 2007 Declaration of Nyeleni, food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. In relation to the cultural issue, for example, it has been noted that in Japan fast-food restaurants have been viewed as fostering table manners that are the opposite to traditional Japanese food etiquette (Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997; 1999). This is because according to the traditional Japanese table manners, one must not touch food with one's bare hands when eating or eat while standing – with the arrival of McDonalds, 'finger foods', such as hamburgers and French fries, were served with neither cutlery set nor tables and chairs provided.

Basically, fast food has received much political attention worldwide because it is perceived as changing food practices and threatening national cultures and identities (Watson & Caldwell, 2007). Whether fast food does or does not threaten cultural identities, it is worth noting that traditional food cultures are very important in defining our identities and that the relation between food and identity needs to be considered. Incidentally, Anquandah (2006) has noted that Ghana's cultural food traditions and values have been on the decline over the past century due to national development processes such as urbanisation and modernisation. He indicated that in relation to food culture, some indigenous foods, such as Anum spiced maize/red plantain meal and Nkonya Fefle hill rice meal (known to the Guans, who are believed to be the oldest ethnic group in Ghana), have virtually ceased to be prepared. On the other hand, it has also been observed that some products have been introduced in which traditional foods have been mixed with a 'foreign' food culture to create a blend of 'new'

products. Similarly, some of the introduced foods have also been mixed with the Ghanaian food culture to create another blend of 'new' products.

2.8 Factors contributing to the consumption of fast-food.

2.8.1 Socio demographics and fast-food consumption

The increasing phenomenon of fast food across the world is now a routine part of consumers' food habits, purchase behaviours and consumption pattern (Burger Chakraborty et al., 2016; Boo et al., 2008). This situation may be attributed to some socio demographic characteristics of a population.

2.8.2 Educational Level and fast-food consumption

There is increase in the frequency of fast-food consumption with increasing level of education. Ljubičić et al. (2017) established a correlation between higher education and increased frequency of fast-food among Croatian adults which unexpectedly correlated with a higher consumption of healthy food ($p < 0.001$). The authors explained that the first correlation may be owed to a generally higher income and less time to cook and the second to being better informed about healthy food choices. Another study of Malaysian adults found that subjects who had tertiary qualifications reported a significantly higher prevalence of fast-food consumption than those of secondary levels (64.5%, $p < 0.001$) (Abdullah et al., 2015). Naska et al. (2015) in their study found that, the probability of fast-food consumption was also higher among both men and women of higher education such as university compared to those with no or only completed primary education. [(OR 1.34, 95% CI 1.13- 1.59 for males and (OR 1.62, 95% CI 1.40- 1.87) for females]. Although the relationship was not significant, a similar trend in US was found among university college graduates as compared to those with high school for both females and males with fast-food consumption frequency

of ≥ 5 times per week (15 % versus 7% and 25% versus 15% respectively) (Seguin et al., 2016).

2.8.3. Age and fast-food consumption

With respect to adults ages and fast-food consumption frequency, some studies have reported that early adulthood is characterised by increased fast-food consumption which decreases as age increases in adulthood (Kant & Graubard, 2004; Kearney, 2010; Orfanos et al., 2007). A noted trend by Burger Chakraborty et al. (2016) indicated that, there was a higher tendency to eat out among Phillipian's adults age group 25 to 40 years than 41 to 55 years. Another study by Srividhya (2014), showed that although there was no significant difference between adult age and fast-food consumption frequency, adults between 20- 30 years had the maximum cumulative frequency of fast-food. According to Bezerra and Sichieri (2010), the highest frequency of fast-food consumption occurred in the 20- 40 years age group. Despite these generational effects on fast-food consumption, patterns might change as individual grow older due to varying needs at different life stages (Drescher & Roosen, 2013).

2.8.4 Gender and fast-food consumption

The role of gender is considered important in predicting fast-food consumption among individuals and population, as many studies have found it to be a strong predictor to fast-food consumption. Works of Kant & Graubard (2004); Orfanos et al. (2007); Bezerra & Sichieri (2010) and Vandevijvere et al. (2017) have reported that overall, men rather than women tend to frequently consume fast-food. Seguin et al. (2016) also noted that, significantly higher proportion of males consume fast-food 5 times or more meals per week than females (22% versus 12%; $p < 0.001$). Contrary to this, some studies found no statistical difference between gender and frequency of fast-food consumption (Pereira et al., 2005; Bes-

Rastrollo et al., 2010; Duffey et al., 2009).

2.8.5 Marital Status and fast-food consumption

The relationship between marital status and fast-food consumption published by several studies suggests the fact that unmarried/ single adults have the greater likelihood of EO frequently than married, divorced, separated or widowed (Naska et al., 2015; Srividhya, 2014; Tiwari et al., 2017). Dave et al. (2009), found that the frequency of fast-food consumption differed substantially by marital status where, singles seek food outside their homes more than those who are married. The culture and norms of marriage provides a commensal relationship and encourages eating at home (Lee, 2008).

2.8.6 Employment and fast-food consumption

In general, the employed are significantly more likely to consume fast-food ($p < 0.05$) and its frequency was found to be higher if the person responsible for meal preparation is employed (Tiwari et al., 2017; Verlegh, 1999). Specifically, among women, known to be providers of meals for their family, a number of studies have indicated that employment status of women contributes to fast-food consumption by their families (Fraikue, 2016; Tian et al., 2016). Some earlier studies however did not find a positive correlation between employment status of the wife and the consumption of fast-food (Darian & Klein, 1989; Kim, 1989).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

There are various types of research designs but for the purpose of this project, the researcher selected the descriptive survey method which is simply described as a type of research which deals with the relationship among non-manipulated variables. It is primarily concerned with the collection and analysis or the answering of questions concerning the current state of phenomena (Bartel, 1997). Descriptive survey method was used because it asked the respondents about the economic benefits, socioeconomic weight and challenges of food vendors. Survey research helped to gather information from a sample of the population using questionnaires.

The study used both primary and secondary data as well. Primary data was direct information obtained from the people who were most likely to be affected or conversant with the socio-economic impact of the fast-food industry. Through administering of questionnaires, participants gave an in-depth information that helped in accomplishing the objective of the study.

The secondary sources of data are mainly research done by others and information that already existed, for instance articles which provided the researcher with a better overview of what had been established about similar topics elsewhere.

3.2 Population

The target population for the study involved Fast-food vendors and consumers within the Birim Central Municipality including personnel from the revenue and environmental health units of the Municipal Assembly. The respondents were made up of Fast-food restaurants vendors and consumers within Akim Oda in the Birim Central Municipal. The target population was 200 participants from the Municipality. However, the research primarily focused on the Fast-food restaurants vendors and consumers that are directly involved in the preparation, selling and eating of Fast-food.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Baron (2010) maintains that population sample should be small enough to provide a manageable volume of data but the sample must accurately represent the population if any valid inferences are to be drawn from the sample results. While the sampling technique is the method of selecting the elements that will represent the population under study (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). Therefore, focusing on the objectives of this study Purposive sampling was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) participants comprising seventy (70) consumers, thirty (30) fast food vendors and twenty (20) management staff from the Birim Central Municipal Assembly. The participants were chosen because they are 'information rich', and also for proximity and convenience.

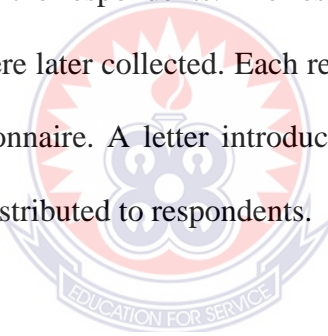
3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used in data collection was the researcher's own designed questionnaire approved by the supervisor. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections. Section 'A' sought data about the background of the respondents, while section 'B' was used to obtain data on the socio-economic impact of Fast-food business on respondents.

Section 'C' also dealt with the health impact of the fast-food business on respondents, with section D dealing with the challenges faced by fast food vendors. Additionally, the respondents were interviewed to throw more light on their responses on the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were pretested to detect any weakness in the research design. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001) the instrument should be administered to 5 percent of the population. The respondents were requested to raise issues of duplication or ambiguity in the questions. The final version of the questionnaire was distributed to respondents in the sample size, omitting those who participated in the trial phase. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The researcher gave them time and space for privacy purposes, and they were later collected. Each respondent was given as much time as they needed to fill the questionnaire. A letter introducing the purpose of the study and copies of the questionnaire was distributed to respondents.



3.6 Data Analysis Methods

From the analysis of data, coding was undertaken with sensitivity as it would influence the acquired results. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics to assess the frequency distribution of the demographic characteristics of participants and their responses in the questionnaires. Data was presented in tables, figures and frequencies tabulated through SPSS (Statistical Programming for Social science) version 20. The level of significance was α 0.5 which was appropriate for scientific research (Teddlie, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

The distribution of respondents according to their gender revealed 98 of the respondents were males, which formed 81.7 % of all the respondents. The results also revealed that 22 of the respondents were females, representing 18.3 % of all the respondents. The results indicate that majority of the respondents were males. The difference in this gender distribution will however not affect the outcome of the study since the questions asked in the study were not gender specific, but purely professional.

Table 4. 1 Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	98	81.7
Female	22	18.3
Total	120	100

4.2 Respondents' Age

For the distribution of the respondents according to their ages, the study revealed that 4 (3.3%) of the respondents were less than 15 years of age; 27.5 % representing 33 participants were between the ages 15-24years; a majority of 36 respondents constituting 30% were between the ages of 25-34years; 32 (26.7%) were between the ages of 35-44years; 15(12.5.%) were 45 years and above. The finding indicates that majority of respondents at the Birim Central Municipal (68, 56.7%) were between the ages of 25 to 44 years.

Table 4. 2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 15	4	3.3
15-24	33	27.5
25-34	36	30.0
35-44	32	26.7
45 and above	15	12.5
Total	120	100

4.3 Educational Qualification of Respondents

Also on the research instrument was a question on the educational qualifications of respondents. This question sought to know as to whether the respondents have the capacity to understand the questions and are able to provide appropriate answers to them. It was found that 4 (3.3%) of them have basic education qualification; 26 (21.7%) have senior high school qualification; 71.7% representing 86 respondents have tertiary education qualification and 4 respondents indicating 3.3% have no educational qualification. The results showed that the respondents have at least a basic qualification.

Table 4. 3 Respondents' Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic	4	3.3
Secondary	26	21.7
Tertiary	86	71.7
No education	4	3.3
Total	120	100

4.4 Occupation

Findings from the data revealed that majority of the respondents were students and teachers located within the Birim Central Municipal. 22 participants constituting 18.3% were health workers while of them representing 26.7% were traders.

Table 4.4 Respondents Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	23	19.16
Teaching	27	22.5
Health workers	20	16.67
Trading (Food vendors)	30	25.0
Assembly staff	20	16.67
Total	120	100

4.5 Source of Income

It was also revealed that 55.84% indicating 67 of the respondents are on monthly salary serving as their source of income. These respondents are teachers, health workers and staff from the Municipal Assembly. 23 of the respondents who are students representing 19.16% are on allowances while 25.0% constituting 30 respondents who are traders depend on daily wages out of their trading activities as their income source.

Table 4.5 Source of Income

Source of Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Salary	67	55.84
Wages	30	25.0
Allowance	23	19.16
Total	120	100

4.6 Affordability of square meals per day

With regards to the number of square meals respondents could afford within a day, 2 (1.7%) indicated they could afford 1 square meal a day; 16 (13.3%) respondents indicated

they could afford 2 square meals in a day; 99 respondents representing 82.5 % indicated that they can afford three square meals a day; 3 constituting 2.5% indicated that they could afford 4 and above meals within 24 hours.

Table 4.6 Affordability of square meals per day

Meals per day	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	2	1.7
2	16	13.3
3	99	82.5
4 and above	3	2.5
Total	120	100

4.7 Number of time fast food is eaten within a week

Majority of the participants which is 103 representing 85.8% indicated they eat fast-food four or more times within a week; 6 (5.0%) indicated they eat fast-food three times in a week; 9 representing 7.5% eat fast food three times within a week; and lastly 2 participants constituent 1.7% of respondents who eat fast-food once a week.

Table 4.7 Number of times fast food is eaten within a week

Number of Times	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Once	2	1.7
Twice	9	7.5
Thrice	6	5.0
Four or more	103	85.8
Total	120	100

4.8 Fast food location

2 respondents corresponding to 1.7% revealed the fast-food joint is located within the urban setting; 115 respondents indicating 95.8% which is majority disclosed the fast-food joints were located within the town. Additionally, 3 respondents corresponding to 2.5 % revealed the fast-food joints were also located in a village.

Table 4.8 Fast food location

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	2	1.7
Town	115	95.8
Village	3	2.5
Total	120	100

4.2.0 Type of fast-food joint

62 respondents representing 51.7% indicated that the kind of fast-food joint they operated or visited were restaurants spread across the municipality. On the other hand, the remaining 58 respondents representing 48.3% indicated a road side food joint.

Table 4.9 Type of fast-food joint

Fast-food joint	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Restaurants	40	33.33
Road side	80	66.67
Total	120	100.0

4.2.1 Number of years for fast-food business/patronage

66 respondents which is constituting 55% of the total participants indicated they have either been patronizing or operated the fast-food business for four to five years now. 28 representing 23.3% indicated less than 3 years and the remaining 26 (21.7%) selected 6 years or more.

Table 4.2.0 Number of years for fast-food business/patronage

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 3	28	23.3
4-5	66	55.0
6 and above	26	21.7
Total	120	100.0

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics for Economic Benefits

In this study, the researcher used 5 questionnaire statements to measure the economic benefits construct. The mean analysis of these statements revealed a mixture of findings. Some of the respondents agreed while some were neutral on some of the five items. For instance, they agreed that the fast-food industry has reduced hardship on their lives in terms of financial rewards (Mean=3.63 and SD=0.899). The study also revealed that the respondents agreed to the statement that “my family highly values fast food industry, it has helped us economically” (Mean=3.73 and SD=0.836). It was as well found that the respondents agreed that most people in the community have engaged in fast-food industry and it has helped in reduction of unemployment in the community (Mean=3.51 and SD=0.823). Furthermore, the respondents also agreed that the fast-food industry has reduced poverty in the community (Mean=3.61 and SD=0.872). On the other hand, the respondents expressed their neutrality on the last item on the instrument which stated “fast-food industry increases the assembly’s revenue” (Mean=3.43 and SD=1.078)

Table 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics for economic benefits

Economic Benefits	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Devn	Rank
I believe that fast-food industry has reduced hardship on my life in terms of money.	120	1	5	3.63	.899	2
My family highly values fast food industry, it has helped us economically.	120	1	5	3.73	.836	1
Most people in the community have engaged in fast-food industry and it has help in reduction of unemployment in the community.	120	1	5	3.51	.823	5
The fast-food industry has reduced poverty in the community.	120	1	5	3.61	.872	3
Fast-food industry increases the assembly revenue.	120	1	5	3.43	1.078	4

4.2.3 Descriptive Statistics for Social impact

In this study, the social impact construct was assessed using seven statements on a questionnaire. It was revealed that the respondents agreed to all the seven questionnaire statements measuring the construct. The mean scores ranged from 3.73 to 3.51. The mean scores are greater than 3 (neutral on the 5-point Likert scale) and are closer to 4 (agree on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating that most of the respondents agreed to these statements. The statement with the highest mean score was the assertion that “One of the major causes of environmental harm is fast-food plastic and polythene packaging materials” (Mean=3.73 and SD=0.861) while two statements jointly had the lowest mean scores of 3.51. It can thus be concluded that there is moderately high level of socio-economic weight at the Birim Central Municipal.

Table 4. 2.2 Descriptive Statistics for social impact

Social impact	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Devn	Rank
You avoid eating food that will make you ill	120	1	5	3.62	.966	2
You avoid eating fried fast foods	120	1	5	3.51	.926	6
You eat fast food occasionally	120	1	5	3.51	.863	6
You avoid eating fast food that will make you put on weight	120	1	5	3.55	.979	4
You must reduce the frequency of fast-food intake	120	1	5	3.59	.898	3
One of the major causes of environmental harm is fast-food plastic and polythene packaging materials	120	1	5	3.73	.861	1
Improper disposal of fast-food plastic packages has very serious negative consequences for the environment	120	1	5	3.52	.817	5

4. 2.4 Descriptive Statistics for Challenges of Vendors

The researcher in this study used six questionnaire statements to measure the challenges of vendors construct. The mean scores for these statements ranged between 3.56 and 3.76, which indicate that the respondents generally agreed to all the statements under the challenges of vendors construct. The statement “Packaging choices have a direct impact on the environment” got the highest mean score (Mean=3.76 and SD=0.864) whiles “Plastic menace will affect future generations” got the lowest mean (Mean=3.56 and SD=0.798). These findings indicate that the respondents generally perceive the challenges of vendors as moderately high.

Table 4.2.3 Descriptive statistics challenges of food vendors

Challenges of Vendors	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Devn	Rank
A major cause of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension is excessive fast-food consumption	120	1	5	3.72	.967	3
Indiscriminate dumping of plastic packages accounts for most of the sanitation-related diseases such as malaria and cholera	120	1	5	3.63	.859	4
People have stopped buying take-away fast food for environmental reasons	120	0	5	3.72	.863	1
Disposal choices have a direct impact on the environment	120	1	5	3.74	.901	2
Packaging choices have a direct impact on the environment	120	1	5	3.76	.864	3
Plastic menace will affect future generations	120	1	5	3.56	.798	5

The three main objectives of this study were to determine the fast-food industry economic impact within the Birim Central Municipal Assembly; investigate the fast-food industry social impact on the Birim Central Municipal Assembly and to establish the health implications of fast-food on consumers.

With regards to the economic impact of the industry, the study revealed that respondents agreed that the fast-food industry serves as a source of income generation which increases the assembly's revenue. This is because operators of fast-food joints within the municipality are made to pay some operational taxes to the assembly. In addition, they also pay some fees to the environmental health unit of the assembly in order to be granted permits to operate their businesses and also to acquire the requisite health certification. This in the long run will help the assembly generate enough financial resources to be able to embark on developmental programmes to improve the lives of the people.

Findings from the study further indicate that the fast-food business serves as a means of employment for people within the informal sector. This finding is supported by Todd (2014) who posited that food vendors in the fast-food business are better off economically and this helps in reducing poverty in communities. Indeed, the fast-food business, which is part of the Food Service Sector, is expanding fast with the increase in urbanization in Ghana and this is serving as a fertile ground for reducing youth unemployment. This could be attributed to the fact that the fast-food business do not require much of skill labour hence a sizeable number of vendors are mostly school leavers. It was revealed from the findings that majority of food vendors were within the youthful age bracket of between 15 to 45 years. This undoubtedly helps to reduce the youth unemployment syndrome facing the government. It must also be noted that income from operating fast food joints also go a long way to sustain the families of the operators economically as shown in studies done by Olutayo & Akanle, (2009); Bezerra & Sichieri (2010) and Burger Chakraborty et al. (2016). In effect, poverty reduction within communities and amongst individuals goes a long way to impact positively on the national economic outlook.

Fraikue (2016) posited that fast-food plastic packages negatively impact the environment. This statement firmly supports the findings of this study. Findings from the study has shown that respondents did acknowledge the side effect of the fast-food packaging contents to the environment and the indiscriminate disposal of the packaging materials which are mostly plastic. It is worthy to not that generation of large volumes of waste materials also has an effect on the Municipal Assembly because of the cost of generating dumping sites and also gathering the materials for disposal. Again, within the Birim Central Municipal, the fast-food industry even though is important, has to be regulated and effectively monitored in order to avoid its negative effect on the environment as posited by Naska et al. (2015) and Tiwari et al. (2017).

Apart from the unguarded and indiscriminate waste disposal, findings also show that another challenge of the fast-food industry is usually concentrated on its health implications on the consumers and the vendors as well. While some consumers agreed that they could be exposed to some non-communicable diseases and conditions such as diabetes and obesity due to excessive intake of fast-foods others also contend that the environmental hazards could cause the spread of some diseases. These findings are consistent with what the Intermedia Group (2018), did in Australia with regards to the health implication associated with the consumption of fast food. Furthermore, the prevalence of diabetes in a study sample done by Ofori-Asenso & Garcia, (2016) was the outcome of fast-food consumption at a high level. In Ghana a study by the Ministry of Health in 2013 revealed that there was a gradual shift from eating typical Ghanaian foods with abundant unrefined carbohydrate, high fibre and low fat to westernised diets, which contain highly refined, oily, energy-dense and sugar-based food. It must however be noted that despite the health challenges, the occasional consumption of fast-food has no aggressive health implication according to Anderson (2017). To the knowledge of this current study's author, no published work has determined whether fast-food consumption has a relationship with the health of a Ghanaian sampled population and thus the results of this study provide a novel contribution to literature and a good basis for further research into the phenomenon. It provides a premise to extend knowledge on the fast-food consumption among Ghanaians in general, and its contribution to the prevalence of diet related conditions which is limited due to the lack of national data on fast-food consumption. The finding highlights the growing burden of overweight and obesity and also the concerns raised by other researchers such as Abubakari & Bhopal, 2008; Anderson, 2017.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions may be drawn:

Fast food business serves as a major employment avenue for many unemployed youths thereby acting as a catalyst in reducing youth unemployment in Birim Central Municipality and Ghana as a whole.

Again, it could be concluded that fast food business helps Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in revenue mobilization. This is derived from fees and other taxes imposed on food vendors by the respective assemblies

It is also safe to conclude that although the fast food business serves as a revenue mobilization avenue for assemblies the issue of indiscriminate waste generation with its attendant socio-economic effect is a major concern to citizens. The cost of waste disposal to the municipal assembly is a major concern while disposal of plastic waste into drains and gutters leading to choked gutters with the potential threat of flooding is a worry to the citizenry.

Finally, it is also concluded that a sizeable number of workers and students enjoy eating fast food as a way of attending to hunger at work places and in school.

5.2 Recommendations

Observations and findings from this study have implications for further research and policy. The following recommendations have therefore been made as a result of the findings of this research:

1. Further studies across the country need to be conducted on using a larger sample size to determine the health implication associated with the consumption of fast-food.
2. Other sources like chop bars should be sampled to ascertain their socio-economic benefits.
3. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies need to develop, implement and enforce regulations or bye-laws that would properly regulate the operations of the fast-food industry within the various communities. This will help limit the effect of the attendant environmental hazards that go along with waste disposal especially plastic waste.
4. Proper and regular health education should be given to operators of fast food joints on proper waste disposal so as to reduce the threat on the environment. The Environmental Health Unit of the Municipal Assembly and the Ghana Health Service must properly inspect sites where fast food joints are located and make appropriate recommendations to the Municipal Assembly for effective regulations and monitoring.
5. To the general public, awareness must be created on the importance of eating healthy and be empowered to demand healthy meals from fast food vendors.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the topic: **evaluating the socio- economic impact of the fast-food industry in Ghana: a case of Birim Central Municipal**. This is purely for academic purposes. Any contribution either on paper or verbal will be strictly confidential and private and your anonymity is assured. No name or self-identity is needed on the questionnaire.

Thank you.

PART A:

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please tick [] or write where applicable.

1. Gender: Male: [] Female: []

2. Age in years: Less than 15yrs [] 15 – 24yrs [] 25 – 34yrs []
35 - 44yrs [] 45 and above []
3. Educational background:
Basic [] Secondary [] Tertiary [] No education []
Other [] specify.....
4. Occupation: Student [] Teaching [] Nursing []
Trading [] Other [] specify.....
5. Source of income: Salary [] Wages [] Allowance []
Other [] specify.....
6. How many square meals can you afford within a day? 1 [] 2 []
3 [] 4 and above []
7. How many times do you eat fast food in a week? Once [] Twice []
Thrice [] Four or more []
8. Fast food Location: Urban [] Town [] Village []
9. What kind of fast-food joint do you operate /visit?
Restaurant [] Road side []
10. Number of years in the fast-food business/ patronage: Less than 3yrs []
4-5yrs [] 6yrs and above []

PART B**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF THE FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY ON THE PEOPLE**

Indicate your response by ticking [] in the relevant column on the table on which you agree or disagree to. 5-Strongly Agree (SA), 4-Agree (A), 3- Neutral (N), 2- Strongly Disagree

(SD)**Response****and - 1 Disagree (D)**

S/N	ECONOMIC BENEFITS	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (SD)	1 (D)
11.	I believe that fast-food industry has reduced hardship on my life in terms of money.					
12	My family highly values fast food industry, it has helped us economically					
13.	Most people in the community have engaged in fast-food industry and it has help in reduction of unemployment in the community					
14.	The fast-food industry has reduced poverty in the community					
15.	Fast-food industry increases the assembly revenue					

PART C**THE HEALTH WEIGHT OF FAST FOOD ON THE PEOPLE**

S/N	SOCIO IMPACT	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (SD)	1 (D)
16.	You avoid eating food that will make you ill					
17.	You avoid eating fried fast foods					
18.	You eat fast food occasionally					
19.	You avoid eating fast food that will make you put on weight					
20.	You must reduce the frequency of Fast-food intake					
21.	One of the major causes of environmental harm is fast-food plastic and polythene packaging materials					
22.	Improper disposal of fast-food plastic packages has very serious negative consequences for the environment					

Other specify.....

PART D**CHALLENGES THAT VENDORS IN THE FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY FACE**

S/N	CHALLENGES OF VENDORS	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)
23.	A major cause of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension is excessive fast-food consumption					
24.	Indiscriminate dumping of plastic packages accounts for most of the sanitation-related diseases such as malaria and cholera					
25.	People have stopped buying take-away fast food for environmental reasons					
26.	Disposal choices have a direct impact on the environment					
27.	Packaging choices have a direct impact on the environment					
28.	Plastic menace will affect future generations					