

Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Abstract: Objective: The fast food industry is growing in the Congolese capital and understanding consumers is valuable to increase clients' satisfaction, business development, positive health indicators, and socio cultural acceptance.

Materials and Methods: The sample consisted mainly of Congolese consumers approached by convenience sampling in Gombe, Kinshasa. The employed research instruments were structured survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The quantitative data collected were analysed through the use of SPSS.

Results: Findings from this research study first demonstrated that Congolese consumers do have a positive perception of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Kinshasa. Congolese are convinced by the food and drink products offered in quick service restaurants as they consider them qualitative, healthy, variate and occidental. Consumers are not only looking to feed themselves when visiting a fast food outlet, but are also looking for an entertaining and memorable Western experience. Quick service restaurants represent a growing sector of the restaurant industry in cities of the DRC through its linkages with the Western diet and lifestyle.

Conclusion: Overall, leisure and entertainment, guests experience, and profitability in quick service restaurants could surely be all enhanced by adjusting parameters to local realities and consumers' preferences.

Keywords: Leisure, Guest experience, Fast food, Restaurant industry, Africa, Kinshasa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multinationals of the food industry are well established in developed countries. To increase their market shares, they invested and settled in developing regions including Sub-Saharan Africa; the region considered as the last frontier economy. However, the population of some remote parts of the world have only experienced occidental food and drink products on an inconsistent basis since the 1970s [2], [4]. It is the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a not very well-known Sub-Saharan country despite its abundant mineral resources, large population, and vast surface area. Multinational food companies are entering the Congolese market gradually to pursue business growth, increase market share, and to satisfy the consumers' demand for palatable foreign foodstuffs.

There are currently no American quick service restaurants established in DRC. McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Subway, Burger King, Starbucks, etc. are simply not present in the country. Major Western quick service restaurant chains did not settle in the DRC yet due to political instability, fluctuating economy, low purchasing power, weak institutions, high levels of corruption, regular power and water shortage, impotent distribution system, excessive import fees and taxes, etc. As of 2017, Western inspired quick service restaurants operating in Kinshasa comprised the giant South African owned Steers and Debonairs Pizza restaurant chains, local quick service restaurant chains consisting of DFC Restaurant rapide, Waz Burger, and Kin Délicieux and independent fast food outlets including Hunga Busta and City Market Fried Chicken (C.F.C).

The Western inspired quick service restaurants operating in Kinshasa have gradually opened within the past decade, mainly in Gombe area, the city centre of Kinshasa, DRC' capital. As a result, the Congolese population is now exposed to foreign processed food and drink products including pizza, burgers, fried chicken, fried potatoes, soft drinks, etc. For commercial development and sociocultural purposes, the evolution of the changes in eating habits and leisure experiences worldwide encourage the exploration of Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Despite business growth, there is an absence of knowledge in regards to consumer behaviour, restaurant and leisure industries in developing markets, especially in Africa. However, in spite of the political instability, the quick service restaurant industry has expanded in Kinshasa over the past decade. Regardless of the abundance of street vendors and independent restaurants retailing local food specialties, Western inspired quick service restaurants are expanding to meet modern urban consumers' needs driven by globalization, curiosity, and consumerism. Western inspired fast food outlets are novel to the population in DRC and should be developed in the future in order for the local consumers to benefit from it.

Research objectives

- (1) To explore the restaurant industry in Kinshasa and study the relationships between demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- (2) To investigate Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, by applying the Service Marketing Mix model;

Research hypotheses

- H1 Demographics influence Congolese consumers' perceptions of quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- H2 Elements of the Service Marketing Mix model (Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) influence Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Scope of the research

This research study examines Western inspired quick service restaurants operating in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. For the purpose of this research study, quick service restaurants investigated are limited to: Steers, Debonairs Pizza, Waz Burger, Kin Délicieux, Hunga Busta, DFC Restaurant rapide, and City Market Fried Chicken (C.F.C). Only quick service restaurants retailing, amongst others, burgers, pizzas, fried chicken, fried potatoes, and soft drinks with limited table service are qualified to be included in this research study. Street vendors, coffee shops, ice cream parlours, lounges and bars, full service restaurants, etc. are excluded from this investigation. This research study only investigates the Western inspired quick service restaurants listed above in order to focus on a specific growing segment of the restaurant and leisure industry in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. It does not distinguish between the quick service restaurants owner's origin or background. This investigation is limited to the urban adult Congolese population as a benchmark for further research.

Limitations of the research & Basic assumption

This research study was partially conducted by means of retrieving completed questionnaires and interviews from Congolese citizens aged 18 and over and located in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo during the data collection period. To ensure respondent's comfort and understanding, the researcher provided the required assistance as objectively as possible. This research study is limited to Congolese consumers that were physically and mentally able and willing to be part of the research study. Finally, only Western inspired quick service restaurants listed above are included in the research study.

Research methodology & Research design

For the purpose of this research study, secondary and quantitative and qualitative primary data were used. Quantitative data were aggregated via street sampling in Kinshasa area using a paper-based self-administered structured survey questionnaire from a sample of Congolese respondents aged 18 and over, located in Kinshasa during the data collection

period and who already visited one or more quick service restaurants of interest. The researcher assisted the respondents to ensure proper understanding of the questions. Quantitative data collected include demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions, intentions, and actual behaviour in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, DRC. Qualitative data collected through interviews consists of Congolese consumers in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, managers of quick service restaurants in Gombe area, nutritionist, medical anthropologist, and former McDonald's franchisee. Finally, respondents were volunteers who agree to be interviewed to share and discuss about quick service restaurants. Individuals of interest within the Congolese population, namely respondents, were selected based on their suitability and availability for the purpose of this research study. Results may be partially biased as the population is not homogeneous [5]. In this research study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was gathered at the same period, commonly known as parallel data gathering. Convenience sampling were used by the researcher because of a more straightforward access to individuals of interest and due to lack of reliable information regarding population living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the last and only census perpetrated in the country dates from 1984 [3].

Survey instruments

A paper-based structured survey questionnaire was developed in order to explore and understand the relationships between demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. The theoretical foundation and the conceptual framework are based on the current literature available about the restaurant industry, leisure and entertainment industry. The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections. The first section consisted of multiple choice questions regarding demographics data of the respondents, the second section gathered information regarding Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experience in quick service restaurants, and the third section focused on Congolese consumers' perceptions, intentions, and actual behaviour in quick service restaurants.

Data collection procedure

The researcher used a paper-based structured survey questionnaire and conducted structured in depth interviews regarding Congolese consumers in quick service restaurants. Quantitative primary data were collected using a paper-based structured survey questionnaire which was developed to assess empirically the demographics of Congolese consumers and perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. Data were collected using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, through fieldwork in different strategic public places highly frequented by the local population in Kinshasa, DRC. This method was chosen because the Democratic Republic of the Congo does not have reliable and up-to-date statistics on all the political and administrative entities of the country. This investigation is limited to the urban adult Congolese population as a benchmark for further research. Qualitative primary data were collected through structured interviews with Congolese consumers to explore and understand their perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. The in-depth interviews were conducted with Congolese citizens aged 18 and over visiting a quick service restaurant of interest during the data collection period. Fieldwork were mainly conducted in Kin D licieux restaurant on avenue De La Presse in Gombe area due to its prime central location. Additional interviews were conducted with managers of quick service restaurants, nutritionist, medical anthropologist, and former McDonald's franchisee to investigate Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa.

Population & Sample

Based on statistics from the 1980s, the Congolese government made projections and estimates the current total population of Kinshasa to be around 11,85 million inhabitants [1]. To collect quantitative data via paper-based self-administered structured survey questionnaire, the research study considered the total population of Kinshasa as part of the study population and each resident of interest had the possibility to be selected for the investigation. The sample included presumably healthy adults aged 18 years old or more and exclude children aged 17 or less, severe chronically ill adults, and pregnant women. Therefore, taking into account a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, the total estimated population of Kinshasa, and a 50% response distribution, the sample size was established at 385 respondents [8]. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was selected by the researcher in order to give all residents of interest readily available at the data collection point during the data collection period an equal opportunity to participate in this research study.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Analysis of Demographics

In total, 400 respondents filled out the survey questionnaire in Gombe, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A total of 242 men (60,5%) and 158 women (39,5%) answered the survey questionnaire. Findings revealed that most respondents (75,8%) were aged between 18 and 35 years old, 13,5% of the respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years old and a minority of the respondents were aged 46 years old or more. Findings revealed that most respondent have stated to be single (64,8%) or married (31,3%). Other respondents stated to be either in a common-law relationship, divorced, separated or in another type of relationship. In terms of highest education level achieved, 22,5% of the respondents stated having a high school degree, 33,5% a bachelor degree and 41,3% a graduate degree. A minority affirmed holding only an elementary school certificate or another type of certification. Findings indicate that 51% of the respondents already travelled outside of DRC and 49% did not. In terms of monthly family income, 35,2% of the respondents stated earning USD 200 or less, 27,2% evaluate their monthly income to be between USD 201 and USD 500, 21,2% between USD 501 and USD 1000 and a minority stated having a monthly income higher than USD 1001. 5,3% of the respondents politely refused to share their monthly income for the purpose of this research study. Finally, findings revealed that consumers are employed in different areas of Kinshasa; the majority of the respondents stated to work in the neighbourhood of Gombe, 17,8% stated working outside Gombe in other neighbourhood of Kinshasa, and 27,3% stated not working in Kinshasa.

B. Analysis of Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants

The second part of the questionnaire surveyed Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe, Kinshasa, DRC. Overall, most respondents somewhat agree that quick service restaurants provide quality, healthy, various, and Western style inspired food and drink products. Indeed, more than 80% of the respondents stated to somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants provide quality food and drink products. Interviews with Congolese consumers also demonstrated that quality of foods and drinks can be perceived as good due to its foreign origins. Indeed, consumers may have the perception that foreign processed products are higher in quality because they are also consumed in Western countries and have now been imported to the DRC. Moreover, most of the respondents stated to somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants provide healthy food and drink products. Some Congolese consumers have the impression to consume a healthy meal when visiting quick service restaurants. It may be due to the way that foreign foodstuffs are promoted. Indeed, consumers perceived that palatable foods have to be healthy, otherwise, food products would not be so tasty if they were not suitable for human consumption. Moreover, food and drink products retailed in quick service restaurants may be perceived as healthy by Congolese consumers because they are hygienic and safe for immediate consumption; they rarely lead to food poisoning and diarrhoea. A consumer mentioned: "*Yes, it is healthy to visit quick service restaurants because the hygiene conditions are good*". Finally, more than 65% of the consumers surveyed stated to somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants offer a variety of items as well as Western food and drink products. Interviews with Congolese consumers also demonstrated the same perception when it comes to foods and drinks variety in quick service restaurants. However, it may just be a perception as processed food products retailed in quick service restaurants; fried chicken, fried potatoes, pizza, pasta, sandwiches, etc. are mainly made of affordable and starchy ingredients such as potatoes, wheat, corn and soy. Those staple ingredients are mixed with other edible components and transformed in a variety of food products. In the end, the food products may be perceived as different from one another by the consumers but their nutritional values are similar. The same pattern occurs for drink products in quick service restaurants as they are retailed in a variety of flavours and colours but are all mainly made of water, sugar, artificial flavours and colouring agents. Overall, as per their knowledge and understanding of foreign products, most respondents perceive foods and drinks retailed in quick service restaurants to be qualitative, healthy, divers and inspired by the Western countries.

Findings revealed that most respondents also somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants provide affordable food and drink products, an economical leisure and dining experience, a time saving dining opportunity, and offer great quality for money. Indeed, more than 65% of consumers surveyed stated to somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants provide affordable food and drink products. With a wide range of food and drink products at different prices, it is understood that quick service restaurants are somehow financially accessible to the Congolese population. Indeed,

shawarmas, a sandwich made popular by the Lebanese community in Kinshasa, is usually one of the cheapest item on quick service restaurant menus and, therefore, a popular food choice by the consumers. Overall, interviews clearly demonstrated that Congolese consumers mainly opt for affordable food and drink options when visiting quick service restaurants. Therefore, despite low purchasing power, Congolese consumers are still able to have access to perceived affordable food and drink products in quick service restaurants. Interviews with Congolese customers also revealed that consumers in Kinshasa will be willing to spend money in a quick service restaurant when it is perceived as a need to be fulfilled: *"It is affordable only when it is necessary"*. The need can emerge when consumers are in the Gombe area with limited time to have a proper meal in a restaurant; during lunch break for example. The need can also emerge when consumers feel the desire or the pressure to take out friends, love partner or family for meal outside the home. Most of the time, Congolese consumers will visit quick service restaurant as often as they can afford it. It is also noted that more than 70% of the respondents believe quick service restaurants offer economical leisure and dining experiences and great quality for money. Kinshasa has limited entertainment options for couples, families, and friends' gatherings as there is, as per 2018, only one mall and a movie theatre, a few outdated museums and a limited art scene. Therefore, quick service restaurants are perceived by Congolese consumers as suitable location for outings of all sorts. When it comes to the affordability of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants, it mainly depends on the food and drink items the consumers ordered. Most of the customers actually do tend to order the cheapest items on the menu and enjoy their experience in quick service restaurants for as long as they can. Most Congolese consumers interviewed did not notice the promotions offered in those outlets mentioning that prices are fixed and that they never really came across food and drink products on sales. Overall, findings revealed that Congolese consumers seem to be satisfied with the price range associated with the experience they get in quick service restaurants.

Moreover, most respondents also somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants are easily accessible / easy to reach, provide rapid service, and offer convenient opening hours. Indeed, research findings indicate that more than 80% of the consumers perceive quick service restaurant to be easily accessible physically as per their convenient outlet locations in the city centre. Interviews with Congolese consumers demonstrated that office workers of Gombe area may visit quick service restaurants during their lunch break or after their working day. Most Congolese do not own a car, therefore, they usually reach fast-food outlets by walk or taxi. Moreover, more than 60% of consumers surveyed believe that service is rapid in quick service restaurants. Consumers interviewed also answered similarly mentioning that quick service restaurants are a good option when a meal has to be taken quickly. However, observations demonstrated that service rapidity seem to be appreciated even if the consumers are not in rush during their visits. Finally, nearly 90% of the respondents agree that quick service restaurants offer convenient opening hours. Indeed, most outlets are open from early mornings until late evenings, seven days a week. Some outlets, Debonairs Pizza for example, are open throughout the night on weekends. Long opening hours allow consumers to visit quick service restaurants for different occasions at their convenience; during lunch break with co-workers, after church with family, late at night with friends, etc.

For the promotion aspect, 47,8% of the respondents stated to strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that quick service restaurants have effective marketing through social medias, radio, flyers, etc. Research findings actually revealed that about half of the consumers do not believe in quick service restaurants marketing's efficiency. Marketing of those outlets and their different promotions through social medias and flyers or on television and the radio are not perceived as effective as they mainly go unnoticed. Moreover, 73,6% of the respondents stated to strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that quick service restaurants have good promotions, discounts, and combo offers. Congolese consumers interviewed also mentioned that they rarely notice any promotions or sales offers in quick service restaurants. As consumers are looking for the best deals, the communication of promotions and different types of discounts would be appreciated and may lead to increasing processed foods and drinks consumed in quick service restaurants. Overall, consumers do not seem to be convinced that by the marketing and promotion aspects put forward by quick service restaurants.

Research findings also revealed that most respondents somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants have professional and well trained employees and provide agreeable customer service. Indeed, 65% of the consumers surveyed believe that quick service restaurants employ professional and well trained staff. Congolese consumers interviewed underlined that they feel welcomed and valued by the staff in quick service restaurants, but the overall service experience could be improved. A customer even mentioned: *"The service is too formal and not really warm-hearted"*. Moreover,

75% of the respondents perceive agreeable customer service in quick service restaurants. Those outlets in Kinshasa are inspired by the service offered in fast-food restaurants widely implanted in the Western world. Occidental customer service approach is duplicated in quick service restaurants as a way to offer an «American experience» to the guests. Overall, consumers seem to be content with the level of service they experience when visiting quick service restaurants.

Most respondents also somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants provide efficient customer service and consistent products and services. Indeed, findings reveal that nearly 80% of the consumers surveyed believe that staff in quick service restaurants are working in a well-organized and competent way. Consumers interviewed mentioned their appreciation for the quick service. Additionally, more than 75% of the respondents perceive food and drink products in quick service restaurants to be identical and/or made and presented the same way over time. This believe may involve the application of food and drink standards to ensure accuracy in those type of establishments. Foods and drinks' standardization are actually part of the basics multinational fast-food outlets developed and reinforced to build their worldwide network; this strategy also seems to be used by quick service restaurants in Kinshasa.

Finally, most respondents also somewhat or strongly agree that quick service restaurants are clean and hygienic, provide a pleasant atmosphere, and are equipped with modern facilities and furniture. Findings revealed that nearly 90% of the consumers surveyed perceive quick service restaurants to be immaculate while providing a sanitary dining place. In occident, McDonald's set up high standards of hygiene and cleanness from its opening and established the benchmark in terms of tidiness for all fast food outlets worldwide. Quick service restaurants in Kinshasa are no exception; most of them maintain high standards of cleanliness. Additionally, more than 90% of the respondents also stated that quick service restaurants offer an enjoyable atmosphere including music and ambiance. In Kinshasa, quick service restaurants usually play a mix of local and Western music moderately loud. The friendly and family oriented ambience were appreciated by Congolese consumers interviewed. Finally, more than 85% of the consumers surveyed mention that quick service restaurants' outlets are modern as per the furniture and facilities. Indeed, most quick service restaurants in Kinshasa display imported bright colour appliances and neon which are eye catching and distinguished. Congolese consumers interviewed felt privileged to visit quick service restaurants inspired by the Western world as they are perceived to be impeccable and fancy. Consumer summarized the experience as: "*The pleasure of eating well, good atmosphere and the happiness of finding friends*". Overall, most respondents do have positive perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants.

C. Analysis of the relationships between Demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants

Results of the analysis presents only weak and very weak correlations (All correlation coefficients are inferior to 0.240) between Demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. It can be concluded that Demographics including gender, age group, marital status, level of education, travel outside DRC, family income, and working neighbourhood, do not seem to influence the local population's impression of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. Congolese consumers of different profile who were interviewed seem to be delighted by the food and drink products offered in quick service restaurants as they consider them qualitative, healthy, variate and occidental. Fast food outlets not only represent a time saving dining opportunity but are also perceived as an economical leisure and dining experience which offer good value for money. Regardless of their profile, Congolese consumers interviewed also stated that quick service restaurants are easily accessible, offer rapid service and convenient opening hours. However, promotions mainly go unnoticed nonetheless of the marketing support. On the other hand, customer service is mainly perceived as agreeable and efficient but uneven from a visit to another. Finally, Congolese consumers interviewed stated that quick service restaurants are clean and modern with an agreeable atmosphere. Overall, regardless of their personal characteristics, Congolese consumers seem to have positive perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants.

D. Analysis of Congolese consumers' leisure experiences and food consumption patterns in quick service restaurants

An interview with a former French-Portuguese McDonalds franchisee which has been working as an executive within the tourism industry in Kinshasa for over four years took place and brought a business perspective about Congolese consumers' leisure experiences in quick service restaurants. He notes that quick service restaurants welcome consumers looking for a comfortable setting including modern furniture and air conditioning, to relax for an hour or two while

sipping on a soft drink. This reality taken into consideration, quick service restaurants may look quite crowded and filled with clients but provide modest revenues for the outlets. *“Quick service restaurants’ marketing strategies should be reviewed and suggestive sale should be implemented”*. Despite retailing safe foods, offering a welcoming environment and providing a descent service, products’ prices are perceived to be the main obstacle for most Congolese consumers to visit quick service restaurants on a regular basis. In other words, most Congolese do not have sufficient disposable income to visit those type of outlets regularly.

An interview with a registered Congolese nutritionist also took place and brought a medical and dietetic perspective about Congolese consumers’ food consumption patterns in quick service restaurants. She noted: *“Foods retail in quick service restaurants in Kinshasa are not regulated by the authorities and usually contain considerable amounts of animal fats, refined starches, sugars and sodium”*. Salads made from vegetables, excluding potatoes, are not widely available in fast food outlets and rarely ordered by the consumers. Moreover, she noted: *“Most Congolese consumers are more interested in food quantity than food quality as they are looking for tasty foodstuffs that will fill them up”*. Congolese consumers, when visiting fast food outlets or any other type of restaurant, do not seem to be aware of the food and drinks processes, ingredients, and nutritional values. That being mentioned, she observed that Congolese are still attached to their traditional diets and adopt gradually, when they can afford it, a Western diet and lifestyle. In Kinshasa, the local population visit fast food restaurants for leisure purposes and to taste foreign or novel foods and drinks. Quick service restaurants are popular settings for Congolese to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions with a partner, friends and family. Some fast food outlets do indeed offer packages including music system, cake, decorations, games, etc. to facilitate the organization of gatherings. Teenagers and young adults usually enjoy taking photos and selfies in those outlets perceived by the locals as outstanding, modern and luxurious. It is to be believed that taking photographs is one of the motivations to visit fast food outlets. Fast-food restaurants' atmosphere allows friends and co-workers to unwind during lunch break while eating a quick hot meal and enjoying the casual atmosphere.

Most fast food outlets in Kinshasa opened a few years ago, are located in Gombe area and operate daily from morning until late in the evening. The concepts of those establishments are obviously inspired by Western quick service restaurants but with an African twist in regards to the menu. It was noted that Congolese consumers seem to be pressured by their peers to visit quick service restaurants to celebrate special occasions as those outlets are perceived to be the perfect locations to organize birthdays, anniversaries, and graduation parties, etc. with amusing atmosphere, easy booking, cake and music. Consumer interviewed stated *“Visiting quick service restaurant is entertaining, especially with my 5-year-old sister, the perfect place for kids”*. Consumers also mentioned feeling pressured by: *“Friends and family”*, *“Girlfriend to please her”* and *“Relatives such as nieces and cousins”* to visit fast food outlets. Actual reliable visit frequency is slightly harder to measure through survey, observation demonstrated that some privileged Congolese consumers seem to be able to visit quick service regularly; twice a month or more. Most consumers visiting those outlets are Congolese aged between 20 and 45 years old. Adults with kids are rarely seen in the restaurant on week days but family gatherings are more frequent during the weekend. Some clients bring their computers or have business meetings in the dining halls. Office workers of the area also visit the restaurant during lunch breaks. Utensils are sometimes used, no matter of the food ordered, including burger or pizza. It was noted that most Congolese consumers are more interested in food quantity than food quality as they are looking for tasty foodstuffs that will fill them up. Consumers interviewed, in regards to their eating in quick service restaurants, mentioned: *“Yes, I eat a lot”*. Shawarma paired with a soft drink is a popular combination. It was also demonstrated that when Congolese customers visit quick service restaurants, most of them do order and consume what they intended to feast on; sandwiches, shawarmas, and/or fried potatoes paired with soft drinks. Fried chicken, slightly more expensive, is also quite a popular food option. Combos including a burger/fried chicken, fried potatoes, and a drink are available in most fast food outlets. Most clients, regardless of the food items eaten, will accompany their meal with mashed pimiento pili-pili, mayonnaise and ketchup. Service attitude in most of those outlets is not customer oriented like most establishments in the western world. Quick service restaurants consumers are mainly looking for a comfortable setting including modern furniture and air conditioning, to relax for an hour or two while sipping on a soft drink. Orders to take away and home deliveries are also common. It was observed that Congolese are still attached to their traditional diets and adopt gradually, when they can afford it, a Western diet and lifestyle.

3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary and conclusions of demographic factors

In total, 400 respondents filled out the survey questionnaire and 30 respondents were interviewed in regards to quick service restaurants in Gombe area, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Most of the respondents who answered the survey questionnaire were single, males, and/or aged between 18 and 35 years old. Consumers of quick service restaurants tend to be privileged: employed, slightly wealthier and usually more educated than the average Congolese person. Some of them also stated previous travel outside of the DRC. Those characteristics correspond to the demographics of Congolese consumers observed when visiting quick service restaurants. Wearing semi-casual outfits including colourful shirts with jeans or pants, customers of quick service restaurants came alone, in couple or in small groups. They may visit quick service restaurants to have a quick meal during their lunch break, to handle business meetings or do computer work of all kinds, to celebrate a special occasion on weekends with family or love partner, etc. Customers visiting fast food outlets stand out from the general population in the DRC by what is perceived to be higher living standards and outstanding demographic profile.

B. Summary and conclusions of research objectives and hypothesis

Relationships between Demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of quick service restaurants

Research findings indicate weak and very weak correlations between Demographics and Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants. It can be concluded that Demographics including gender, age group, marital status, level of education, travel outside DRC, family income, and working neighbourhood, do not seem to influence the local population's appreciation of leisure and dining experiences, attitude, and social pressure toward quick service restaurants and ability for Congolese consumers to visit them. Indeed, Congolese consumers of different profile who were interviewed seem to be delighted by the food and drink products offered in quick service restaurants as they consider them qualitative, healthy, variate and occidental. However, consumers, as per their profile, may order different foods and drinks and may visit quick service restaurants at different timings or for distinctive reasons. For example, consumers with higher disposable income may order costlier items or simply more food and drink products than a consumer with less financial means. Limited access to the city centre and lower financial means do not seem to prevent Congolese consumers from visiting quick service restaurants at regular frequency. Congolese consumers interviewed stated that quick service restaurants are somehow easily accessible, offer rapid service and convenient opening hours. Fast food outlets not only represent a time saving dining opportunity but are also perceived, in some way, as an economical leisure and dining experience which offer good value for money. Promotions mainly go unnoticed nonetheless of the marketing support. Congolese consumers interviewed stated that quick service restaurants are clean and modern with an agreeable atmosphere. The local population also considers fast food outlets to be tasteful, healthy, and amusing. Customer service is mainly perceived as agreeable and efficient but uneven from a visit to another. Overall, regardless of their personal characteristics, with high rates of appreciation through out respondents surveyed and interviewed, Congolese consumers seem to be in control of their visit in quick service restaurants, have positive perceptions and attitude toward them, but perceive considerable pressure from their peers to visit those outlets.

Congolese consumers' perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants; the Service Marketing Mix model

Congolese consumers were surveyed to understand their perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants in Gombe, Kinshasa, DRC. Most of the time, respondents questioned used positive adjectives to describe quick service restaurants. Indeed, they believe those outlets provide quality, healthy, various, and Western style inspired food and drink products. In terms of cost, they believe that quick service restaurants provide affordable food and drink products, an economical leisure and dining experience, a time saving dining opportunity, and offer great quality for money. Findings also revealed that Congolese consumers seem to be satisfied with the price range associated with the experience they get in quick service restaurants. It is also believed by the consumers that quick service restaurants are easily accessible and/or easy to reach, provide rapid service, and offer convenient opening hours throughout the week. In terms of promotion, consumers are not convinced by the effectiveness of marketing through social medias, radio, flyers, etc. and do not seem to notice quick service restaurants' promotions, discounts, and combo offers. Consumers however noticed that fast food outlets have professional and well trained employees who provide agreeable customer service. Congolese consumers interviewed also underlined that they feel welcomed and valued by the staff in fast food outlets.

When it comes to processes, respondents agree that quick service restaurants provide efficient customer service and consistent products and services. This believe probably involve the application of food and drink standards to ensure accuracy in those type of establishments. Finally, most consumers also believe that quick service restaurants are clean and hygienic, provide a pleasant atmosphere, and are equipped with modern facilities and furniture. Congolese consumers interviewed felt privileged to visit quick service restaurants inspired by the Western world as they are perceived to be impeccable and fancy. It can be concluded that most Congolese consumers have positive perceptions of leisure and dining experiences in quick service restaurants.

C. Research findings' limitations

This research about Congolese consumers' leisure experiences in quick service restaurants in Kinshasa presents several limitations. First, only 400 privileged Congolese consumers aged 18 or more answered the survey questionnaire and only 30 more customers were interviewed between the months of January and April 2018 in Gombe area, Kinshasa. Secondly, due to the lack to reliable data about the Congolese population living in the capital, the conclusions and recommendations of this research should be interpreted with moderate caution as the study was not based on a representative sample of Kinshasa's population. Thirdly, for the purpose of this research study, only privileged Congolese consumers, the ones who already visited quick service restaurants of interest, were surveyed, interviewed and observed. It leads to uncertainties to evaluate the average Congolese consumers' food consumption patterns and leisure experiences in quick service restaurants in Kinshasa as they may have never visited such establishment.

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