

Research Article

# Correlation of Attitudes towards Frequency of Fast Food Consumption in Young Adults

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**Abstract:** Fast food is a type of food with a fast processing process and tends to contain high levels of sugar, salt, and fat. The effects of consumed excessive of fast food will trigger the risk of degenerative diseases. Individual attitudes will influence the amount of fast food consumption in that individual. The aim of this study was to analyzed the correlation between attitudes and the frequency of fast food consumption. The research method was observational with a cross-sectional design. The total sample in this study was 158 samples with the criteria of young adults (19-29 years) and lived in Kepulauan Riau. Collected data were attitudes and frequency of fast food consumption by filling out a questionnaire. Data analysis used was bivariate analysis with the Spearman rank statistical test. The results showed a relationship between attitudes towards fast food consumption and frequency of fast food consumption ( $p = 0.001$ ) and a correlation coefficient value of  $-0.262$ . This study concluded that subjects with negative attitudes towards fast food tend to consume fast food frequently.

**Keywords:** Fast food attitude, frequency of fast food consumption, young adult

## 1. Introduction

Fast food is currently very abundant and easily accessible to consumers. This can pose a negative risk to health due to high calorie intake, which is a major contributor to various diseases [1]. The habit of consuming fast food constantly has a negative impact on the health of children, adolescents, and adult age groups [2].

Fast food consisting of snacks to heavy meals. Fast food consumption can increase intake of energy, fat and sugar excessively [3]. Based on research conducted by Laksono regarding the impact of fast food on health in students, it is known that 64.3% of respondents who consumed fast food experienced weight gain [2].

Based on the Survey Kesehatan Indonesia regarding the consumption habits of instant noodles/other instant foods, it is known that the frequency of consumption in the 20-24 year age group is  $\geq 1$  time per day was 7.6%, 1-6 times per week was 68.8% and  $\leq 3$  times per month was 23.5%, while the frequency of consumption in the 25-29 year age group is  $\geq 1$  time per day was 6.1%, 1-6 times per week was 67.2% and  $\leq 3$  times per month was 26.7% [4].

Factors that influence the high level of modern fast food consumption behavior for workers due to the accessibility and availability of food that is affordable for all groups. Based

on Razkia's research respondents who have a high category of hedonistic lifestyle tend to have a high level of modern fast food consumption [5]. In addition, fast food is very popular among the public because it is easy and time-saving to prepare so it can be consumed immediately. Therefore, fast food is often the main alternative when busy preparing food [6]. The aim of this study was to analyze the correlation between attitudes towards fast food consumption with frequency of fast food consumption.

## 2. Literature Review

Fast food refers to food that is processed and served in a short time and tends to have a high energy and fat [7]. In addition, according to Simamora and Pujiastuti (2024) fast food is defined as food that has a low fiber and high sodium so that if consumed excessively it can have a negative impact on health [8]. High intake of fast food consumption in individuals can be caused by various factors including individual knowledge, attitudes, and behavior towards food selection.

The level of knowledge can influence a person's attitude and behavior in determining the food consumed, which will impact nutritional status [9]. Meanwhile, attitude is a factor that influences a person's health behavior. Individuals with positive attitudes tend to know which foods will be beneficial for health, while negative attitudes can influence individuals to not pay attention to nutritious food [10]. Individuals with positive attitudes and good knowledge tend to have good behavior in choosing food [11].

High intake of fast food consumption behavior will impact health. Fast food is considered to use a lot of Food Additives (BTP) such as preservatives, flavorings, and sweeteners [12]. Excessive use of BTP will cause various health problems, including poisoning, nerve cell damage, and even death [3]. In addition, a nutritional problem that often arises from high fast food consumption is the occurrence of obesity. Uncontrolled fast food consumption will lead to excess energy intake, if not balanced with energy expenditure. This will result in the accumulation of fat tissue in the body and weight gain in individuals [13].

## 3. Proposed Method

This research is an observational study with a cross-sectional approach. Sampling used a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of subjects aged 19-29 years and domiciled in the Kepulauan Riau Province, resulting in a total of 158 people. In this study, the independent variable is the attitude towards fast food consumption, while the dependent variable is the frequency of fast food consumption. Data collection was conducted by using a questionnaire of attitudes towards fast food consumption and frequency of fast food consumption. The questionnaire on attitudes towards fast food consumption was obtained from the level of subject agreement with statements with a 5-choice scale consisting of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The category of attitudes towards fast food consumption included positive if the percentage of attitudes  $\geq$  the median and negative if the percentage of attitudes  $<$  the median. The frequency of fast food consumption was obtained from the number of consumption frequency options filled in for each food group. The choices of consumption frequency included  $>3x/day$ ,  $2x/day$ ,  $1x/day$ ,  $4-6x/week$ ,  $2-3x/week$ , and never. The total frequency of fast food consumption was calculated by adding the average frequency of each option in one day and if never was counted as 0. The category

of fast food consumption frequency included frequent if the total frequency of fast food consumption  $\geq$  the median value and rarely if the total frequency  $<$  the median value. Univariate analysis was used to determine the number of subjects with positive and negative attitude of fast food as well as the frequency of frequent and rare *fast food consumption*. Bivariate analysis used the *rank test. Spearman* to determine the correlation between attitudes towards *fast food consumption food* with frequency of *fast food consumption* .

#### 4. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Distribution of Attitude Categories and Frequency of Fast Food Consumption

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Fast Food Consumption Attitudes</i>		
Positive	71	44.9
Negative	87	55.1
Total	158	100
<i>Frequency of Fast Food Consumption</i>		
Often	82	51.9
Rarely	76	48.1
Total	158	100

Table 1 shows that subjects who have the positive category of fast food attitude was 44.9%. The attitude categories regarding fast food were grouped based on the subjects' opinions regarding negative statements related to fast food consumption habits as a snack and has become a lifestyle change in modern era, while some of the positive statements are related to the negative impact of consuming fast food frequently on health, limiting consumption of fast food and consuming nutritious, balanced, and varied foods every day. A person's attitude towards consuming fast food can be influenced by their level of knowledge. If the subject's knowledge is in the poor category, it can cause the subject to have a negative attitude towards choosing fast food [14] .

Table 1 also shows that the majority of subjects has frequency often towards fast food consumption was 51.9%. The frequency of fast food consumption was determined by asking about a number of fast food groups. Food consumed by subjects within a day or a week. The fast food group consists of instant noodles, frozen foods, and savory snacks. The results indicate that subjects with frequency often towards fast food consumption are more likely to consume fast food than those with frequency rarely of fast food consumption. This is evidenced by the fact that most subjects were consumed instant noodles, frozen foods and sweet foods with an average frequency of  $> 1x/day$ .

**Table 2.** Results of the Analysis of the Relationship between Attitude and Frequency of Fast Food Consumption

Variables	Mean $\pm$ SD	Min - Max	r	p
Fast Food Consumption Attitudes	38.52 $\pm$ 4.29	20 – 46		
Frequency of Fast Food Consumption	1.78 $\pm$ 1.95	0 – 11	-0.262	0.001

The analysis results in table 2 obtained a p-value of 0.001 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on these results, it can be seen that there is a significant correlation between attitudes towards fast food consumption and the frequency of fast food consumption. This is in line with research conducted by Susanti and Indrawati that there is a relationship between a person's attitude and their behavior because a person will tend to evaluate everything they receive, then this evaluation will trigger the formation of individual attitudes [14].

The results of this study show a correlation value of -0.262, indicating that the strength of the relationship between the two variables is weak and the direction of the correlation between attitude and frequency of fast food consumption is not unidirectional. This means that the higher (positive) a person's attitude towards fast food, the lower (rarely) frequency of fast food consumption will be. The attitudes of subjects towards fast food consumption in this study were mostly categorized as negative. Attitudes towards consumption are subjective assessments that are highly dependent on the level of satisfaction and importance of the subject [15]. Subject satisfaction in consuming fast food is indicated by the number of subjects with a higher frequency of consumption in the frequency often category. The results of this study differ from Anshari's study in 2019 which showed that most subjects had a positive attitude towards fast food. Subjects' attitudes towards fast food are influenced by interactions with the surrounding environment, such as advertisements in print and electronic media containing messages that can attract subjects to consume it [16].

This research is in line with Tazkiah's research that there is a relationship between individual attitudes and junk food consumption behavior. Respondents with a high-calorie food consumption frequency in the frequent category chose this food because it tastes good, is easily accessible around the house, is a companion for studying/daily activities, and tends to be cheap [17]. Behavior individual influenced by attitudes and beliefs about the resulting impact. If the individual believe that action the give positive effect, then will do it [18].

Excessive fast food consumption can increase energy intake and lead to the accumulation of fat tissue if not balanced with the output of balanced energy. Excess weight or obesity can impact a person's ability to perform physical activity being slowly [13]. Therefore, there is a need for a positive change in attitudes towards fast food consumption through health education and promotion to reduce the frequency of fast food consumption in young adults.

## 6. Conclusions

The results of the study show that there is a correlation between attitudes towards fast food consumption with frequency of fast food consumption. Subjects who have a negative attitude towards fast food tend to consume fast food frequently. It is recommended that health workers can provide nutrition education to increase knowledge that can change attitudes and

behaviors so that the frequency of fast food consumption decreases and prevent health problems such as obesity and other diseases.

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