Fast Food in Ghana's Restaurants:
Prevalence, Characteristics, and Relevance

An Interdisciplinary Perspective

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'Anything that is humanly possible can never dodge the arrows of determination.'
                                        Mr Theophilus Akatey, my high school English teacher.

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Abstract

Fast food has been extensively criticised for its link to health and environments problems and for its tendency to undermine traditional food cultures. Notwithstanding these aspects, this study questioned the assumption that fast food by definition has negative impact on health, environment and traditional food cultures for three main reasons. Firstly, fast-food restaurants are spreading quickly in the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) of Ghana and have become an important source of urban food. Secondly, fast food in Ghana is undergoing various changes, such as the introduction of healthier food options, use of environmentally friendly packaging and the incorporation of local cultural features. Thirdly, there has been ambiguity in the definition of fast food in existing literature, which is often exclusively built upon practices in Western, modernised countries and hence has determined how fast food is normatively evaluated. Moreover, evidence shows that some of the characteristics of fast food used in these definitions are changing, as well as being perceived differently in various regions or sociocultural settings. Against this background, this thesis sought to clarify what constitutes fast food in Ghanaian restaurants, assess its prevalence and explore its characteristics and relevance for urban food provisioning, health improvement and tourism development. An interdisciplinary and a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to gather data for a restaurant study to assess the availability and characteristics of fast food in the AMA using the cuisine concept as an analytical framework. The same approaches were used to gather data for a consumer study to explain how (i) convenience influences fast-food consumption, (ii) identity influences fast-food consumption and (iii) personal responsibility influences fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal decisions. Findings indicated that the core food items present in fast-food restaurants are menu items such as foods generally recognised as fast food (FGRAFF), including fried rice, fried chicken, burgers, pizzas and French fries, as well as common Ghanaian foods such as *banku* and *kelewele*. Interestingly, the FGRAFFs have been transformed in several ways mainly by the incorporation of aspects of the Ghanaian food culture. Most people eat fast food because of their desire to save time, mental and physical effort, as well as because of the inherent convenience attributes of fast food. Findings also showed that people consume fast food because of its role in identity formation and expression whereby eating in a fast-food restaurant is a way to be connected with what is new and unique, pleasurable and associated with social interaction and sensory and health values. Strikingly, findings showed that fast-food consumers do not only eat fast food for convenience and identity expression, but that they are also reflective about the health and environmental anxieties that might come along with the social practice of consumption. Therefore, consumers may adopt loyalty or exit strategies as a way of reducing the effects of the health and environmental anxieties on themselves and society as a whole. This study has shown that some consumers would prefer to adopt loyalty strategies, implying that fast food provides some major material, social, cultural and behavioural benefits for these consumers and so they may not choose to curtail their fast-food consumption. Therefore, for nutrition and health intervention programmes to be effective, there is a clear need to adopt more holistic approaches by incorporating material, social, cultural and behavioural aspects of food into formal programmes.

CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction

Introduction

Urbanisation, rapid economic development, income improvements and increasing numbers of time-constrained consumers have created a shift towards out-of-home and convenience foods among urban dwellers (Kennedy et al., 2004). A similar trend is observable in Ghana as the metropolitan, municipal and urban centres grow in population and economic activity. In urban Ghana, ready-to-eat, out-of-home food is mainly obtained from informal street food vendors and traditional eateries (*chop bars*), along with formal outlets, such as restaurants. Ghana's informal ready-to-eat food sector has been extensively researched (e.g. Tomlins et al., 2002; Maxwell et al., 2000; Obeng-Asiedu, 2000) but the same cannot be said of the formal sector, the restaurants. Therefore, in this thesis I specifically focus on formal restaurants that offer fast food. Drawing inspiration from the study of material culture, this study examine both fast food and fast-food restaurants as material-cultural objects to which people assign various socio-cultural meanings as they use them. The study differs therefore from others by earlier researchers (e.g. Albala, 2012; Miller & Deutsch, 2009; Belasco, 2008) who considered food as a product-in-itself with little attention to the non-food aspects such as the restaurant. This study also examines the social practices of fast-food consumption, which include buying and eating-out in fast food restaurants – an area which has often been overlooked in material cultural studies (De Solier, 2013).

Restaurants are becoming increasingly prevalent in urban centres, and they undoubtedly contribute a great deal to the provisioning of ready-to-eat food. Unfortunately, limited empirical data has been documented on these enterprises in terms of the characteristics and relevancy of the various kinds of food they offer. However, over the past two decades, any visitor who entered some of these restaurants could see food items such as fried chicken, French fries, burgers and fried rice, which are generally recognised as fast food, being offered. Asiedu et al. (1998), who evaluated the nutritional value of food sold in restaurants in Accra, also sampled these food items for their analyses.

Over the years, fast food has been extensively criticised for its link to health problems (such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes), to environmental pollution (due to the large usage of fast-food companies on plastic and polythene materials), and for its tendency to undermine traditional food cultures. Notwithstanding these aspects, this study questions the assumption that fast food by definition has negative impact on health, environment and traditional food cultures for three main reasons. Firstly, fast-food restaurants are spreading quickly in the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) and have become an important source of urban food. Secondly, fast food in Ghana is undergoing various changes, such as the introduction of healthier food options, use of environmentally friendly packaging and the incorporation of local cultural features (Suter, 2006; Schroder & McEachern, 2005; Rodriguez, 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Asiedu et al., 1998). Thirdly, there has been ambiguity in the definition of fast food in existing literature, which is often exclusively built upon practices in Western, modernised countries and hence has determined how fast food is normatively evaluated. Moreover, evidence shows that some of the characteristics of fast food used in these definitions are changing, as well as being perceived differently in various regions or sociocultural settings (e.g. Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Goyal & Singh, 2007; Yan,

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2005; Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997). Therefore, this thesis seeks to clarify what constitutes fast food in Ghanaian restaurants and assess its prevalence, characteristics (highlighting any changes taking place) and relevance for urban food provisioning, health improvement and tourism development.

This research is scientifically of interest for the unravelling of the fast-food concept and its recontextualisation in Ghanaian restaurants. At a societal level, the research delivers insights relevant particularly for the health and tourism sectors in Ghana. Specifically, the study provides input for the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme currently being implemented in Ghana, which aims at promoting healthy dietary practices and personal and environmental hygiene to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases such as diabetes and obesity – the same problems for which fast food has been criticised. Some studies (e.g. Lang et al., 2009; Caraher & Landon, 2006; Lupton, 1995) have shown that most health promotion programmes that have targeted fast food have not been successful because they have only targeted its negative aspects. Therefore, to contribute to the effectiveness of the RHN and other similar programmes in Ghana, this study seeks to find the reasons behind fast-food consumption in order to identify possible strategies that will enhance the implementation and effectiveness of the RHN programme and tourism development.

In relation to tourism development, studies have shown that tourists often have the desire for new food and dining experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006) but will do so only under hygienic conditions (Amuquandoh, 2004; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). However, many tourists also need a certain degree of familiarity, and therefore their 'core' food preference may still be dominant (Chang et al., 2010; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). On this basis, the study also seeks to assess the appropriateness of formal fast-food restaurants in meeting the needs of both domestic and international tourists in terms of the food (whether it is local [traditional], global or a blend of the two), culture and hygiene. This can be achieved when we understand what constitutes fast food in Ghanaian restaurants and what its characteristics are, particularly in terms of the changes it is undergoing due to the influence of Ghanaian food culture and how consumers perceive its relevance.

1. Research background

1.1. Definition of fast food
In the existing literature, most authors have defined fast food based on some of its characteristics. For example, in relation to its convenience characteristics, 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 can be 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; Pereira et al., 2005; Jekanowski, 1999; Biing-Hwan & Frazao, 1997). This characteristic conforms to the original aim of fast food, which is to provide cheap, filling food to people on the move (Belasco, 2008).

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Today, however, in developing countries in particular, this original fast-food concept of providing cheap food for people on the move is being *recontextualised* such that, for example, other communicative functions and identity formation processes are being associated with it. Consequently, the fast-food restaurant in most developing countries has become a place where people sit, relax, and chat while eating. In other words: a place where people socialise (Yan, 2005; Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997). 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 (Seubsman et al., 2009; Rodriguez, 2004; Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Fantasia, 1995). In developing countries, however, fast food is usually more expensive than other foods (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Goyal & Singh, 2007). 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.

Western fast foods have spread worldwide, mainly through franchise operations, but are also undergoing several changes through the process of mixing Western (global) and local phenomena in a process of hybridisation (Yamashita & Eades, 2002) leading to the acquisition of new characteristics. In some developing countries, fast food is also changing due to an emerging trend whereby it is trickling down from the restaurant to street level, where fast food is sold as street food. Pingali and Khwaja (2003) describe this phenomenon as *copycat street food*.

Another characteristic that has been used to define fast food is its nutritional value. Fast food has been perceived as a nutritionally imbalanced food, which, when excessively consumed, could adversely affect health (Mahna et al., 2004). Nowadays, however, some fast-food restaurants are responding to public health concerns and introducing healthier options, such as fruits, salads and low-fat ice cream and plain, broiled or grilled chicken (Schroder & McEachern, 2005; Rodriguez, 2004; Schlosser, 2001). Asiedu et al. (1998) found that fast food in Ghana has some properties that make them nutritionally beneficial and at the same time still contain properties that provides health anxieties for consumers.

Evidently, some characteristics of fast food are perceived differently in different social contexts (e.g. its convenience characteristics and perception of value) and are dynamic with the passage of time (e.g. its nutritional value and convenience characteristics). However, over the years, fast food has been primarily evaluated based on one or more of the characteristics mentioned above and focusing mainly on the negative issues without taking cognisance of the changes it has been undergoing in time and space. Therefore, it is appropriate to explore the unique characteristics of fast food in Ghanaian restaurants and thereby become more able to evaluate it fairly.

1.2. Global prevalence of fast food

Globalisation 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 globalisation. 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). 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 recently launched its first restaurant in Ghana, and it 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.

Ghana is currently experiencing rapid urbanisation, economic development and income improvement with the resultant 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. There is therefore a need to examine fast-food restaurants in the central district of the country's capital, the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA), to understand the prevalence, characteristics and relevance of their products to consumers and their health and their relation to the emerging tourism sector.

1.3. Criticisms and development 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 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

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spread of diets rich in calories, saturated fat, salt and sugar by corporate chain restaurants (e.g. 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 AMA are either overweight or obese (Benkeser at 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; Ohnuki-Tierney, 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.

1.4. Motivation for the study

As enshrined in the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (1994), the government of Ghana has, over the years, been confronted with the challenge of ensuring human security, which includes food, health and environmental security. One of the objectives of the Ghanaian government is to develop the tourism sector to portray the rich Ghanaian culture. A specific health objective is to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, type II diabetes and obesity, along with cholera, for which Ghana's Ministry of Health (MOH) adopted and piloted the concept of Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN), from 2006 to 2010. Key interventions under this programme are geared towards (1) healthy diet (increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, reducing the intake of sugar, salt and saturated fats); (2) exercise (increasing daily physical activity); and (3) environmental sanitation (maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness). In preparation for the second phase of the RHN programme, training manuals on health and nutrition as well as guidelines for dietary and physical activity were developed in 2013 (which have yet to be used).

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An assessment of the impact on people's behaviour of the first (pilot) phase of the programme showed that the prevalence of some negative lifestyle and behaviours, like smoking, has reduced, while others, like unhealthy dietary practices, have continued to increase (Tagoe & Dake, 2011). The researchers concluded that while it is important to promote healthy lifestyles in urban areas, there is also the need to target the barriers in the urban environment that do not support the adoption of healthy lifestyles. In other words, there is a need to identify factors that will support behaviour change and adoption of healthier lifestyles.

The European Commission (2012) note that identifying the main determinants behind food consumption is essential, because it allows us to better define the most effective tools with which to influence behaviours and policies. Considering the fact that fast food contributes to the health and environmental problems which the RHN programme aims to address, it is imperative to conduct this study to assess the prevalence, characteristics and relevance of fast food and to explain the social, cultural and behavioural determinants behind its consumption in the AMA so as to come up with possible strategies that can be incorporated into the RHN and other nutrition, health and environmental programme to enhance their effectiveness.

In relation to tourism development and promotion of the Ghanaian culture, the government has shown its commitment by realigning the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry Chieftaincy and Culture, with the latter being integrated into the former. Thus, in 2013, the Ministry of Tourism was renamed the 'Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts'. This ministry has two major implementing agencies, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and the National Commission on Culture (NCC), which plays various roles in executing its policies and programmes. Considering the importance of restaurants to the tourism sector, the GTA regards restaurants as tourism enterprises and therefore licenses, regulates, inspects and monitors their operations in collaboration with institutions such the Food and Drug Authority, Ghana Standards Authority, Metropolitan Public Health Department and the National Commission on Culture.

The National Commission on Culture, as part of its efforts to preserve the Ghanaian food culture, collaborates with the Ghana Tourism Authority to organise regular meetings with restaurant and other foodservice operators aimed at emphasising the need for restaurants to serve Ghanaian dishes and use decor made with Ghanaian materials. This is done in accordance with Section 10.4.2 of the Cultural Policy, which states that Ghanaian dishes shall be a predominant feature of menus at state functions, public catering institutions and foodservice enterprises. However, the implementation of the cultural policy is facing some drawbacks due to the absence of backing legislation to enforce it.

The major motivations for international tourists in particular to visit a specific destination are the desire to seek new food and dining experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). However, many tourists also need a certain degree of familiarity, and therefore their 'core' food preference may still be dominant, especially in the case of Western tourists visiting destinations in developing countries such as Ghana where some foods and codes of etiquette are unfamiliar to them (Chang et al., 2010; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Furthermore, studies have shown that most tourists are likely to eat traditional foods during their visits

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but would want to do so under hygienic conditions (Amuquandoh, 2004; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). However, the safety of most traditional foods, including street foods, has been found to be substandard, mainly because the eateries are poorly regulated and the key actors have inadequate education in food safety and hygienic food handling practices (Rheinlander et al., 2008; Addo et al., 2007; Feglo et al., 2004; Mensah et al., 2002).

In contrast, restaurants in Ghana are formal enterprises that are licensed and issued with a Food Hygiene Permit only after the authorities are convinced that they have satisfied the food safety and hygiene requirements. Therefore, fast-food restaurants in Ghana may be better placed to provide the desired newness, familiarity and a blend of the two (global-local) as well as hygienic foods that most tourists desire. On that basis, this study also seeks to examine the relevance of formal fast-food restaurants in meeting the needs of both domestic and international tourists in terms of food, culture and hygiene.

1.5. Theoretical and conceptual framework

1.5.1 Analysis of material-cultural objects

The theoretical inspiration for this thesis was drawn from the studies of *material culture*, where the primary concern of researchers is the mutual relations between people and objects. Essentially, material culture emphasises how objects within the environment act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity (Woodward, 2007). The term 'material culture' is often used in conjunction with 'things', 'material objects', cultural objects, material-cultural objects, 'objects', 'artefacts', 'goods', and 'commodities'.

Basically, material culture involves studying objects to understand the beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a particular community or society at a given time (Dant, 1999). Authors such as Miller and Deutsch (2009) and De Solier (2013) have proposed studying food as a material object, since through this we can learn a good deal about both people and the cultures they live in. In her recent study, De Solier (2013) indicates that essentially, the material culture of food includes not only the food itself but also the cultural products that construct the food. According to her, these cultural products include food media, such as television cooking shows, food blogs and cookery books. In this thesis, I focus on fast food *and* fast-food restaurants (where people obtain and eat the food) as objects and places to which people assign various social and cultural meanings and derive several benefits as they use and visit them. I am interested in analysing fast food and fast-food restaurants in Ghana to understand their prevalence, characteristics and functions in the lives of the people who use them.

The first step in a material cultural study is to identify the primary functions of an object for which it was originally made and used, and secondly to identify which additional uses may have been evolved over time. Indeed, Miller and Deutsch (2009) explained that the characteristics and meaning of an object are not fixed in time and space, because societies, cultures, social networks and individuals are constantly reclassifying them. Thus, an item that is utilitarian today (in a particular region) can become a status object another time (in another region), and vice versa. From the overview of definitions presented earlier, it is evident that fast food is a typical example of a material object whose characteristics keep

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changing and are perceived differently in space and time. In Ghana, fast food is an introduced material object that has been changed and will probably continue to change in a variety of ways, including in respect of its current development in becoming part of the urban diet and lifestyle. There is, therefore, a need to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants in the context of Ghana to understand their prevalence, characteristics (highlighting any changes taking place) and relevance to urban food provision, as well as their impacts on the health and tourism sectors.

Analysis of objects need to be done carefully to understand both the primary functions for which the object was created, additional functions that its users might have evolved *and* the various social and cultural meanings and perceptions people have about the objects (Waugh, 2004). Often, we try to establish functions or characteristics of objects based on our own experiences and often such analogies are accurate. However, these experiences may also be misleading, especially when the object comes from a culture far removed in place and time from our own or was found in an environment far removed from its place of origin (Waugh, 2004). Therefore, it is important to hear the voice of the user for clarity and certainty to develop multiple interpretations, practices and manipulations of the object (Woodward, 2007). This thesis does not only focus on the *objects* (fast food and fast-food restaurants) but also on the *people producing the objects* (restaurateurs or their representatives) and *consumers of the objects* (fast-food consumers and fast-food restaurant users). An analytical framework that is used to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants as material objects is the *cuisine concept,* which focuses on the material, social and cultural aspects of food. The concept is discussed briefly in the next section as analytical approach to the analysis of objects.

1.5.2 Analytical framework for analysis of objects: the cuisine concept

The evaluation of fast food has generally been based on one or two specific characteristics of the food, such as its nutritional value or style of food preparation and presentation. However, this approach does not present a comprehensive picture of the fast-food phenomenon. An analytical framework that could be used to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants as material-cultural objects is the *cuisine concept*. The cuisine concept proposes that a cuisine is often used to indicate material and cultural aspects of food in a specific cultural context. It usually has material aspects, such as the types of ingredients, combinations of ingredients and preparation methods, and refers to a diet or nutrition that belongs to a certain country, region or ethnic group (MacLennan & Zhang, 2004; Messer, 1989). In other words, a cuisine indicates the types and quantities of food and drink and their contribution to human nutrition – this material aspect of food is relevant for body image and physical, social and psychological wellbeing – but cuisine has also sociocultural aspects, such as the social context of eating, gastronomy (the art and science of good eating) and rules dealing with those foods that are considered as acceptable (Fieldhouse, 1986).

Farb and Armelagos (1980) and Rozin (1982) identified four characteristics of a cuisine, namely, (1) the prioritisation of cuisine into 'basic food' or primary 'edibles', based on factors such as availability, ease of production, nutritional costs and benefits, culture and

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customs, palatability, and religious or social sanction; (2) the distinct techniques of preparing food, which often vary widely depending on the energy, time, skill, personnel and technologies available; (3) the distinct 'flavour principle', which varies from culture to culture; (4) a set of manners and codes of etiquette that determines the way food should be eaten.

The cuisine concept can be used to understand the expressive and normative functions of food (Belasco, 2008) and to allow for a side-by-side comparison of fast food and typical Ghanaian food culture. Therefore, in Chapter two, this thesis explores the prevalence, characteristics, and relevance of fast-food in the AMA using the cuisine concept as an analytical framework. Theoretically, it is expected that this study will expand on the cuisine concept by identifying additional cuisine characteristics and specifying new and important research questions relevant to the field of food studies.

1.5.3 Factors that determine the consumption of material-cultural objects: the culinary triangle of contradictions

Fundamentally, material objects function at two levels: (1) the utilitarian or primary function, through which food provides, for example, nutrition, and (2) the communicative or representational function through which an object for example is used to send a message or signal aspirations (Miller & Deutsch, 2009). Douglas and Isherwood (1996) propose that people use objects based on the social objectives, personal meanings they have for them and messages that they send to others. They emphasise that it is our worldview that causes us to make the selections and consumption choices we do. Gronow (2004) identified two social worlds of food, the culinary and the dietary, which influence the way people assess and evaluate food. The culinary world values cookery and etiquette, whereas the dietary world emphasises health and fitness.

A noteworthy argument in this respect is that there are usually *competing factors* that influence people's social worlds of food and their object choices. Hence, the consumer is often in a conflict situation between the material-cultural benefits and costs associated with objects (Belasco, 2008; Ozcarglar-Toulouse, 2007; Steptoe et al., 1995). In relation to food consumption, Ozcarglar-Toulouse (2007) identified personal pleasures and responsibility as sources of conflict, while Steptoe et al. (1995) and Jekanowski et al. (2001) identified a number of socioeconomic factors, such as convenience, that may be in conflict with health considerations. Fast food is also a paradoxical material object insofar as it may both give pleasure and invoke anxieties (Coveney, 2006). Belasco (2008) also notes that for every food product, there are three competing considerations, namely *convenience*, *identity* and *responsibility*, which influence a consumer's decision to eat or not. Belasco conceptualises the consumer as entangled in the *culinary triangle of contradictions*, arguing that the position he/she assumes in the triangle depends on the degree of influence each of the elements has on him/her (Figure 1).

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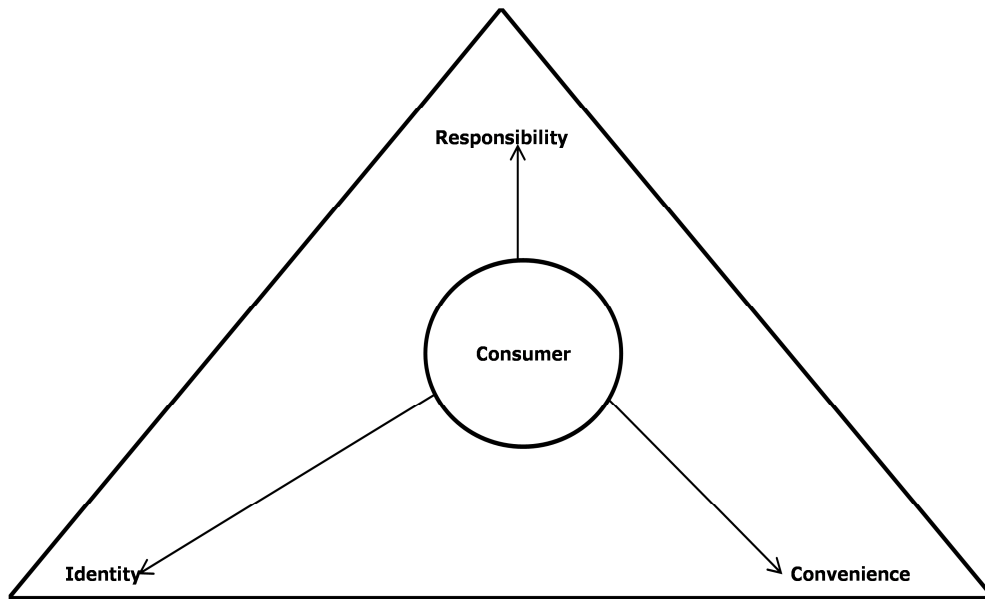
Figure 1.1 The culinary triangle of contradictions (Belasco, 2008)

Convenience is indicative of price, availability, and ease of preparation, which includes energy, time, labour, and skill. It is influenced by the economy, environment, and social structure of where one lives. Identity represents a consumer's personal preference, taste, pleasure, and cultural and ethnic background. It is rooted in tradition and encompasses what, where, and how people eat. Finally, responsibility represents a consumer's awareness of the personal and social consequences of one's actions. People's consumption behaviours thus depend on their awareness of the negative consequences of consumption and their ability to take actions to protect themselves against these negative consequences. According to Belasco, the triangle is not equilateral because "for the most part, people decide what to eat based on a rough negotiation – a pushing and tugging – between the dictates of convenience and identity, with somewhat lesser guidance from the considerations of responsibility". Although responsibility may be less regarded among the general population, encouraging this awareness is a precursor to the success of most nutrition, health and environmental sustainability programmes.

Notably, just as people keep reclassifying objects and assigning new meanings to them, the factors that influence the choice of objects such as convenience, identity or responsibility, as well as the strength of their influence, are also *amenable to change in time and space.* For example, the original concept of fast food was driven by the quest for convenience, so

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fast-food companies tailored their products and services to provide the required convenience. With the passage of time and the spread of fast food worldwide, the aims of eating it in developing countries in particular have extended beyond convenience; communicative functions have thus become associated with it. Over recent years, in contrast, due to the increasing flow of information, especially the 'pooling of knowledge' via internet and social media (Giddens, 1990), consumers have become increasingly aware of the much publicised negative consequences of fast-food consumption. Consequently, the choice of fast food today is determined by the desire to satisfy the need for convenience and identity formation, *and* the desire to minimise one's exposure to its negative effects by choosing it responsibly.

Earlier researchers who considered food as a material-cultural object (e.g. De Solier, 2013; Miller, 2001) have examined anxieties associated with fast-food consumption and how morality of the self can shape people's consumption. De Solier (2013), conducting her studies in Australia, considered anxieties such as overspending when dining-out in expensive restaurants and indicated that her informants reconcile this anxiety with their taste for such expensive restaurants by restricting the frequency of their consumption. Miller (2001, 1998) conducted his studies in the UK where he paid attention to shopping in a supermarket. He argued that his informants' shopping was governed by a morality of thrift in which saving money rather than spending it is the right way to shop. Miller indicated that his informants exercised their morality by, for example, looking for items on sale at reduced prices. This study focuses on two social practices by which fast food is consumed – buying and eating – in Ghanaian fast-food restaurants, where the socioeconomic and cultural contexts are quite different from those in the West.

This study also examines two types of anxieties associated with fast-food consumption: (1) health anxiety caused by the material properties of the food and (2) environmental anxiety caused by the non-food materials that are used in buying, transporting and eating fast food (packaging materials, eating utensils, carrier bags, etc.). What is also particular to this work is that earlier studies used a morality approach of reconciling anxieties with benefits (reducing frequency of consumption in expensive restaurants, saving money during shopping). This study applies a personal responsibility approach that specifically examines the anxieties accompanying the social practices of fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants and the strategies the (reflective) consumers adopt to deal with these. Thus, one of the tasks in this study is to explain how consumers reconcile health and environmental anxieties with their quest for convenience and social identity formation as they consume fast food.

Ideally, it might be aimed to examine the simultaneous effects of the three elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions (convenience, identity, responsibility) on fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants. However, each of these elements is complex and must first be examined independently and even from different theoretical and conceptual perspectives. Basically, operationalising the culinary triangle of contradictions as a determinant of fast-food consumption requires an *interdisciplinary approach* whereby concepts and approaches are borrowed from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, marketing, behavioural sciences, psychology and political science. Therefore, in the next sections, I briefly consider how, using an interdisciplinary approach, each of these three elements (convenience, identity, responsibility) are conceptualised, in order to examine

how they independently influence fast-food consumption. This is further elaborated in the empirical Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis. Then, in the concluding chapter, I synthesise the findings, present the interrelationships among the three elements and expose any contradictions thereof, as well as strategies that fast-food producers, government and consumers can implement to enhance the relevance of fast food for urban food provisioning and the health and tourism sectors.

In the following paragraphs, I deal with convenience, identity and responsibility as determining factors for fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants.

Convenience

The demand for *convenience* is fundamentally being driven by socioeconomic and sociocultural factors, such as increased number of women in the workforce, longer working hours, changes in household compositions, increased time-constraint consumers with higher disposable incomes, declining cooking skills and the breakdown of traditional mealtimes (Buckley et al., 2007; Olsen et al., 2007; Grofton, 1995). Earlier researchers, such as Scholderer and Grunert (2005) and Olsen et al. (2007), proposed that convenience should be examined in relation to the *perceived product convenience* (a product attribute) and the *convenience orientation* (a psychosocial attribute of an individual). Both perceived product convenience and convenience orientation have also been found to be influenced by demographic and lifestyle variables, as well as cooking skills (Furst, 1996; Gofton, 1995; Candel, 2001), although few scientific studies have followed this result in relation to fast-food consumption. Therefore, in this study, I examine how (i) *perceived product convenience*, (ii) *convenience orientation* (consumers' inclination to save time, mental effort and physical effort), (iii) *demographic variable* (age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level), and (iv) *cooking skills* influence fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants in the AMA. Furthermore, I examine convenience orientation not as one single variable, but rather in relation to *consumers' inclination to save* (a) *time*, (b) *mental effort* and (c) *physical effort* in the social practices of food consumption, in order to be able to assess their relative importance. By understanding the relationship between convenience and fast-food consumption, it may become possible to formulate more effective strategies for influencing consumer behaviours and implement a more effective Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) and similar programmes.

Identity

Some researchers (e.g. Van Zyl et al., 2010; Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Yan, 2005) have associated fast-food consumption in a fast-food restaurant with sociocultural factors such as craving for newness and modern tastes and the desire for elegance and pride, all of which indicate aspects of *identity*. Despite the awareness of the relevant role of these sociocultural aspects of identity, very few research projects have explicitly examined and phrased their projects in terms of identity questions. This is done in this study, in which it sought to explicitly examine the interrelationship between *social identity* expression and fast-food consumption with the purpose of achieving conceptual clarity in treating identity as a variable that influences food consumption. This study starts with the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009), who have indicated that the basis for a person to adopt, join or express a particular identity depends on (a) *the identity content* (the meaning of a social

identity, which includes a group's norms and goals, its views and beliefs about other identities, and the group's understandings of its material conditions and interests), and (b) *the degree of its contestation*. They further proposed that there are four types of identity content: (1) *constitutive norms*, which refers to the formal and informal rules that define group membership; (2) *social purposes*, which refers to the goals that are shared by members of a group; (3) *relational comparisons*, which refers to defining a group by the actor's interaction and relationship with others; and (4) *cognitive models*, which refers to the worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interests that are shaped by a particular identity.

Abdelal et al. (2009) propose that their analytical framework can be used to understand how identity affects the behaviour of identity holders. From this premise, this study aims to realise two objectives: (1) to describe the sociocultural meanings consumers ascribe to fast food's social identity and how these meanings are contested, and to explain how the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food consumption (or maintenance of fast-food social identity) in the AMA and (2) to operationalise the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009) and thereby reflect on and assess its applicability in food studies on the basis of the gathered empirical data.

Responsibility

Most often, governments, civil society and other organisations initiate and implement interventions to minimise the health and environmental anxieties associated with food consumption. Fast-food companies are also responding to public concerns and are therefore modifying their products and services to reduce the health (Schroder & McEachern, 2005; Rodriguez, 2004) and environmental impacts (Suter, 2006). Empirical information is limited, however, regarding the extent to which the consumer exercises his/her personal responsibility to minimise these negative societal consequences associated with fast food. Specifically, researchers have not given much attention to personal responsibility in relation to fast-food consumption in restaurants.

Often, consumers are faced with the task of choosing between benefits and risks associated with consumption and tend therefore to adopt certain consumption behaviours or strategies in response to that conflict. These behaviours, known as *responsible consumer behavio*urs or *behavioural intentions*, can be in the form of *loyalty* or *exit strategies*. Examples of loyalty strategies include purchasing products on the basis of ethical concerns, eating healthy options of fast food, exercising regularly and recycling wastes. Examples of exit strategies include situations where the consumer reduces or discontinues his/her frequency of fast-food consumption for health or environmental reasons.

A useful and commonly accepted theory explaining the behavioural intentions of consumers is the *theory of planned behaviour* (Ajzen, 1991, 1985). Originally developed with much input from the field of psychology, this theory posits that three factors – *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour* and *perceived behavioural control* – jointly predict the intention to perform a particular behaviour. The theory further proposes that behavioural intentions and their predictors also act as precursors to a specific or actual behaviour. Some studies have further shown that socially responsible consumer behaviour can be influenced by an *awareness* of the negative consequences associated with

consumption (Roubanis, 2008; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007; Tanner & Kast, 2003; Schahn & Holzer, 1990; Antil, 1984). Thus, in addition to the three factors in the theory of planned behaviour, a fourth factor – *awareness of negative consequences* – is proposed as a predictor of socially responsible consumer behaviour towards fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal decisions. In summary, this study examines the predictive power of *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour*, *perceived behavioural control* and *awareness of negative consequences* on the adoption of *loyalty* and *exit strategies* towards healthy and environmentally friendly fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal in Ghanaian (AMA) restaurants.

1.6 Problem statement and research questions

Various theoretical frameworks are presented with the common objective to develop insights into the practices of fast-food consumption. This thesis emphasises that researchers have tended to evaluate fast food on basis of just one or two specific (static) characteristics, mostly perceived from a Western point of view. This thesis also assumes that practices associated with fast food are constantly being recontextualised and changed in time and space. Therefore, it is argued, an empirical analysis is needed to deliver insights into the characteristics of fast food and the social practices of its consumption in Ghana, to which ends it has been decided to investigate particularly the buying and eating of fast food in Ghanaian fast-food restaurants, a domain which is under-investigated. This analysis has been inspired by material culture studies that have led to an effort to analyse fast-food and fast-food restaurants as material-cultural objects, particularly by elaborating the cuisine concept and searching for additional characteristics which may illustrate the recontextualisation of fast-food consumption in restaurants in the AMA. The assumption of a recontextualisation is further investigated through a profound analysis of the three elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions (convenience, identity, responsibility) from an interdisciplinary angle and also by referring to the theory of planned behaviour in a case study on responsible consumption behaviour.

Alongside this scientific motivation and positioning, this research is also characterised by its effort to make a contribution to the reduction of the health, environmental and cultural problems that are often attached to fast-food consumption but which – as this thesis investigates – may also be changeable in a situation of fast-food recontextualisation. Indeed, this thesis also aims to come up with some (modest) recommendations for interventions about a new (possible) role that fast food may play in the Ghanaian urban context. In this sense, the thesis is also relates to and reflects on the goals of the government of Ghana to ensure the food, health and environmental security of its citizens and to develop the tourism sector. Therefore, restaurant operations, which the Ghana Tourism Authority regards as tourism enterprises, have an important role to play in achieving these goals.

This research is carried out from within this juncture of scientific and developmental perspectives to focus on the following problem:

> *How do determinants such as convenience, identity and responsibility influence fast-food consumption in the Accra Metropolitan Area and which strategies can be identified that fast-food restaurateurs, governments and consumers may implement*

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to enhance the relevance of fast food to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development?

To unravel this core problem, the thesis has formulated four sub-questions of which the first relates to the material and sociocultural aspects of fast food in the Ghanaian context, while the other three relate to the scientific objective of delivering additional insights into the various determining factors of fast-food consumption. These questions, dealt with in four chapters, are formulated as follows:

1. What is the prevalence and characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) of Ghana, and what is their relevancy to urban food provision, health improvement, and tourism development?

2. How do the components of convenience (perceived product convenience and convenience orientation) together with demographic and lifestyle variables, such as age and cooking skill, influence fast-food consumption in the AMA?

3. What sociocultural meanings do fast-food consumers ascribe to fast food, how are the meanings contested and how do the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food social identity and consumption?

4. Which factors determine the intentions of a consumer to adopt a loyalty or an exit strategy as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in order to reduce the negative health and environmental consequences of fast food?

In Chapters 2 to 5, these four questions are addressed separately from different disciplinary angles, as outlined above. In the concluding Chapter 6, the complementariness and contradictions among the various determining factors of fast-food consumption in the Ghanaian context are discussed leading to an identification of new research lines in this domain. Moreover, the various recommendations for governmental interventions on these determinant factors – as formulated in the empirical chapters – are also reflected on in the concluding chapter, leading to some concrete advice for responsible fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal decisions.

1.7 Description and justification of study area

This study has been carried out in the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) of the Greater Accra Region (GAR) of Ghana. Ghana is made up of 10 administrative regions (Fig. 1.2) with the GAR being the smallest of in terms of area, occupying a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres or 1.4 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. The GAR is also the most densely populated region, however, with a density of approximately 1,236 persons per square kilometre. It is the second most populated region, after the Ashanti Region, with a population of 4 million accounting for 16.3 per cent of Ghana's total (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). It recorded a 38.0% increase in the population over a 10-year period (2000-10) and currently has a population growth-rate of 3.1%. The region has the highest urban population proportion of 90.5%, followed by Ashanti Region (60.6%).

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The concentration of industries and commercial activities in Greater Accra Region partly account for its relatively high urban population. The administration of the GAR takes place through the local government system, which derives its authority from the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Local Government Act 1993 (Act 462). Under this administration, the region is divided into 16 metropolitan municipal districts. These include the Accra Metropolitan Area, Tema Metropolitan Area, Adenta Municipal, Ashaiman Municipal, and Dangbe West and East Districts (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

Fig. 1.2 Map of Ghana showing the 10 administrative regions

The AMA has been chosen as the site for a study of fast-food restaurants because, first, fast food has been shown to be an urban phenomenon (Yan, 2005) and recent statistics indicate that the AMA, which constitutes 46% of the GAR population, is entirely urban (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Moreover, the AMA harbours the administrative and commercial capitals and the seat of government of Ghana. It is also a major centre for manufacturing, marketing, finance, insurance, transportation and tourism. It has around 350 major industrial establishments, numerous educational institutions and the highest literacy rate of 85.1% in GAR (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012). Although the poor and slum dwellers can also be found, the AMA is mostly home to an elite and middle-class population working in governmental, administrative and commercial centres who might be interested in fast-food restaurants.

The second reason for choosing the AMA as the study site stems from the fact that, at the time of study, some 203 or 61% of all licensed restaurants in the country were located in the Greater Accra Region, with most of them in the AMA.

Thirdly, the 100% urban status of the AMA has predisposed it to development challenges in the form of communicable and non-communicable diseases, environmental pollution and decline in cultural values. For example, the drainage system in the AMA is very poor, resulting in annual flooding in spite of the low annual rainfall. This is often aggravated by the poor disposal practices of plastic wastes in particular. As a result, open drains that are supposed to serve as storm drains have become receptacles for solid, liquid and human

waste disposal. Due to the numerous health challenges, the Accra Metropolitan Public Health Department was set up to promote and safeguard public health.

The activities this Department engages in include assessing, connecting and preventing those factors in the environment that can potentially adversely affect the health of present and future generations. It has a Food, Water, Drugs, Safety and Hygiene Unit, which specifically deals with food-related issues, for example, by certifying food-handlers by examining them for pathogenic micro-organisms, such as paratyphii. The Accra Metropolitan Public Health Department also plays a role in controlling food hygiene, monitoring sanitation-related diseases and pests and inspecting premises for the control of environmental health hazards. It is involved in refuse collection and disposal, along with supervision of drain cleaning and liquid and solid waste disposal. Evidently, the characteristics of the AMA as an urban and commercial and administrative centre coupled with its prevalent health, environmental and cultural challenges – all of which have been found to be associated with fast-food consumption – make it a suitable location for this study.

1.8 Methodological approach

An interdisciplinary approach was used in which theories, concepts and methods were borrowed from disciplines such as material culture, sociology, anthropology, behavioural sciences, marketing, psychology and political science. Those theories, concepts and methods are outlined here and discussed in detail in the empirical chapters.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches has been used to gather data for this study. To answer the first research question, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (restaurant and consumer surveys) are used to study the availability and characteristics of fast food in the study area and assess how consumers evaluate it and how it compares with typical Ghanaian food culture. The second, third and fourth research questions are addressed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches (consumer studies) in considering how the elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions influence fast-food consumption.

Two quantitative surveys have been held – one with restaurant representatives, the other with fast-food consumers. In the restaurant survey, semi-structured questionnaires were also administered to systematically sampled restaurateurs. This survey is used to understand the AMA fast-food industry, its characteristics and prevalence. Additionally, in-depth interviews have been conducted with restaurant representatives in selected restaurants to gain better insights into and explanations of their operations (Miller & Deutsch, 2009). Also, secondary data have been reviewed and in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of relevant government institutions and other informants for further appreciation of typical Ghanaian food cultures.

Prior to the consumer survey, focus group discussions with consumers were held, in order to collate broad views, inputs and items for the construction of the consumer survey questionnaire. Balanced participant observations and informal interviews were also conducted in some restaurants, with the aim of better understanding certain issues and behaviours. The final questionnaire used for the consumer study was constructed using

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Likert items generated from extensive literature review and item purification. The methods used are further elaborated in each of the empirical chapters, 2 to 5.

1.9 Thesis outline

This thesis explores the characteristics and availability of fast-food restaurants in urban Ghana and examines how consumers evaluate fast food based on its characteristics. Additionally, the thesis explains how each element of the culinary triangle (convenience, identity, responsibility) influences fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants. It also identifies the interrelationships and contradictions among the elements of the culinary triangle as well as strategies that fast-food producers, government and consumers can implement to minimise the negatives effects of fast food.

The present chapter has introduced the topic under discussion in this thesis. Specifically, it has clarified the problems under investigation, the theoretical and conceptual framework, the problem statement and research questions, and it has described the study area and part of the methodology.

Chapter 2 elaborates further on the methodology applied in this research and describes specifically the data sources and methods of sampling and data collection. This chapter also gathers concrete data about the objects of study (fast food and fast-food restaurants), by specifically assessing their prevalence, characteristics and relevance for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development.

Chapter 3 focusses on the convenience aspect of the culinary triangle and explains how perceived product convenience, convenience orientation, cooking skills and demographic characteristics are associated with fast-food consumption in the AMA. This chapter also identifies some strategies and policy recommendations that could help policy-makers, public health, food business and consumers to reduce the negative effects of fast food. It shows that individuals are primarily eating fast food because of its convenience attributes and their positive inclination to save time, mental and physical effort at the various stages of the meal preparation and consumption process. On the basis of these empirical data, the study recommends certain interventions, in essence explaining that the effort to decrease fast-food consumption ought rather to focus on strategies to *increase the convenience attributes of healthy foods*, paying much attention to opportunities to reduce the time and mental and physical efforts required during the various stages of the overall meal process.

Chapter 4 focusses on the identity aspect of the culinary triangle and describes the sociocultural meanings that fast-food consumers – or, those with a fast-food social identity – ascribe to fast food and how these are contested in the AMA. It also examines how the meanings together with their degree of contestation influence fast-food consumption (maintenance of the fast-food social identity). The chapter also uncovers the sociocultural determinants that influence consumption behaviours and lifestyle changes. On basis of these findings the study also provides recommendations that might be useful for policy makers and food businesses to develop strategies to improve cultural and food consumption practices particularly among the youth.

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Chapter 5 focusses on the responsibility aspect of the culinary triangle and explains how health and environmental considerations relate to responsible fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal decisions in the AMA. This chapter brings to the fore the factors that determine whether a consumer will engage in loyalty or exit strategies to reduce the negative health and environmental consequences of fast food. Additionally, it uncovers behaviours that consumers tend to adopt to minimise negative societal impacts and behaviours that need to be promoted or discouraged among consumers. It also provides information on how to develop better communication and strategies that can help to reduce negative societal impacts associated with fast-food production and consumption.

Chapter 6 presents some final reflections, including the main conclusions, lessons and recommendations drawn from this research. The chapter also highlights the interrelationships and contradictions among the elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions (convenience, identity and responsibility). Implications of the research, particularly for theory, policy, practice and future research are indicated. Specifically, in this chapter, advice is formulated on the basis of an understanding of the factors that determine the successes and problems of fast-food consumption. Rather than focussing primarily on the strategy of reducing the negative aspects of fast-food consumption, this thesis follows an alternative trajectory that aims to formulate some concrete policy recommendations which are inclined to increase the positive aspects of the recontextualised and changeable fast food in Ghanaian restaurants. Figure 1.3, below, shows the interrelationships of the chapters.

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│       Chapter 1         │
│   General Introduction  │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│       Chapter 2         │
│ Prevalence and          │
│ characteristics         │
│ of fast food in AMA     │
└─────────────────────────┘
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            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│       Chapter 5         │
│ Predicting responsible  │
│ consumer behaviours in  │
│ fast food purchase and  │
│ consumption             │
└─────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────┐
│     Chapter 4       │        │     Chapter 3       │
│ Influence of social │        │ Influence of        │
│ identity on fast    │        │ convenience on fast │
│ food consumption    │        │ food consumption    │
└─────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────┘

          ┌─────────────────────────┐
          │      Chapter Six        │
          │ General discussion and  │
          │ conclusion              │
          └─────────────────────────┘
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Fig 1.3 Interrelationships of chapters

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

Chapter Two

Prevalence and Characteristics of Fast Food in the Accra Metropolitan Area in Ghana[1][2]

2.1 Introduction

In Ghana, fast-food restaurants are becoming prominent in urban centres and contribute a great deal to the provisioning of ready-to-eat food. Still limited empirical information has been documented on the restaurant enterprises. Specifically, information is lacking on the various types of products and services that these restaurants offer. Over the past two decades, any visitor who entered some of these restaurants could see on sale food items, such as fried chicken, French fries, burgers, pizzas, and fried rice, which are regarded as fast food worldwide. Asiedu et al. (1998) also sampled these food items for their analyses when they evaluated the nutritional value of food sold in restaurants in Accra. This study investigates the material cultural aspects of fast food in the Accra Metropolitan Area, focussing on the buying and eating fast food in fast-food restaurants. This study aims to assess the prevalence and characteristics of this fast food in Ghanaian restaurants and to evaluate their relevance for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development.

Over the years, there has been ambiguity in the existing scientific literature about the ways in which fast food had been defined. Most authors (e.g. Davidson, 2006; Rosenheck, 2008; Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Mahna et al. 2004; Jekanowski, 1999) have defined fast food based on some specific characteristics, although some other authors (e.g. Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Yan, 2005; Seubsman et al., 2009) have also indicated that fast food is perceived differently in various sociocultural settings (e.g. its convenience characteristics and perception of value) and with the passage of time (e.g. its nutritional value and convenience characteristics). Nevertheless, fast food has generally been evaluated on basis of one or two (static) characteristics without taking cognisance of the changes it is undergoing in time and space. Analyses and debates about fast food based on these static characteristics do not lead to a comprehensive understanding of the fast food phenomenon but rather leads to confusion. Therefore, it is appropriate to explore the unique material cultural characteristics of fast food in the context of Ghana and to evaluate it fairly in relation to the urban food provision and its impact on health and tourism sectors. This requires profound analysis of fast-food prevalence and characteristics and how these characteristics have been influenced by the Ghanaian food culture.

This study analyses fast food and fast-food restaurants as material cultural objects, which require careful description to understand both the primary functions for which fast food and fast-food restaurants are created as well as the additional functions that its users might have invented. An analytical framework that promises to be useful for such an analysis is the *cuisine concept*. The cuisine concept (Farb & Armelagos, 1980; Rozin, 1982) proposes that a cuisine has often four characteristics namely, (1) the prioritisation cuisine as 'basic foods' or primary 'edibles', (2) the distinct techniques of preparing food, (3) the distinct 'flavour principle' of the food, and (4) a set of manners and codes of etiquette that determines the way food should be eaten.

This chapter explores the characteristics of fast food using the *cuisine concept* as an analytical framework, in which fast-food restaurants are analysed on basis of the four cuisine characteristics and seeks to answer the following research question:

What is the prevalence and characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) of Ghana and what are their relevancy to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development?

2.2 Food provisioning in urban Ghana (Accra Metropolitan Area)

In the AMA, ready-to-eat food is mainly obtained from home, street food vendors, traditional eateries (*chop bars*), and also from restaurants. With urbanisation, rapid economic development, income improvements, and increasing number of time-constraint consumers, a shift has occurred towards out-of-home and convenience foods among urban dwellers (Kennedy et al., 2004). Street-vended foods are ready-to-eat, out-of-home foods prepared and sold by vendors on streets and in similar public places (Dawson & Canet, 1991). Street food vending and most traditional eateries are categorised under the *informal sector* of the economy and generally require low capital investment, low level of skill and minimal or no formal education. The majority of street food vendors and traditional food eateries operators are women who are involved in food preparation for the family at home and decide to establish a small business offering similar food on the streets. Obeng-Asiedu (2000) and Tomlins et al. (2002) report that most street food vendors and traditional food eateries operators in Accra are often not licensed and operate under informal conditions. Food vended by street vendors and traditional eateries are largely composed of typical Ghanaian foods such as *banku, fufu, kenkey*, and *waakye* (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Street foods vended in Accra

Food Group	*Foods*
Cereals and legumes	*Kenkey, tuozafi, banku, hausa koko, waakye, omotuo,* fried rice, plain rice
Roots and tubers	*Fufu, kokonte*, fried plaintain, fried yam, fried cocoyam, roasted plantain, roasted yam, roasted cocoyam, *kelewele, tatale, kaklo*
Soups and stews	Groundnut soup, palm nut soup, light soup (goat, beef, cow leg, fish pepper soup), okro soup, *kontomire, agushie,* garden eggs stew
Meat, poultry and fish	Beef/fish stew, *khebab*, fried/boiled egg, fried turkey tail

Adapted from Johnson et al. (2006)

Alongside the ready-to-eat street foods, there are also the ready-to-eat foods obtained in restaurants. The restaurant is defined in Ghana as any establishment well-appointed and formally fitted for the preparation and serving of food and beverage for consumption (Ghana Standards Board, 2009). These include cafeterias, coffee shops, fast-food outlets, food courts, and salad bars. Restaurant operations unlike street foods are *categorised under the formal sector* of the economy and are regarded as tourism enterprises. Consequently,

restaurant establishments are licensed, classified, regulated, inspected, supervised, and monitored by the Ghana Tourism Authority in collaboration with institutions such as the Food and Drug Authority, Ghana Standards Authority, Metropolitan Public Health Department, and the National Commission on Culture. It is self-evident that due to these inspections and monitoring the material cultural aspects of the ready-to-eat foods in the restaurants are *gradually changing* in respect to the street foods.

The Food and Drug Authority, for example, has developed guidelines for the *code for hygienic practice for foodservice establishment* (FDA GL05/FSE 01/1-2008). In addition, guidelines are formulated for licensing foodservice establishments (FDA/FSMD/GL-FSE/2013/02) to ensure the safety of food from the establishments. Only those facilities which have satisfied all the requirements in the guidelines received the Food Hygiene Permit from the FDA.

Moreover, the Ghana Standards Authority in collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority and other stakeholders has developed the Ghana Standard, GS 965-1, which is a *criterion for grading restaurants* into three categories, namely, grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3 depending on the facilities and services available. The required facilities include dining rooms, kitchens, cold rooms, washing up areas or pantries with running water and drainage, guests and staff toilets, and services such as waiter and self-service. Another regulatory institution that contributes to the changes in restaurants is the Metropolitan Public Health Department which certifies food handlers by examining them for the absence of pathogenic micro-organisms such as *paratyphii*, a typhoid-causing bacterium. The Department issues a medical health certificate to only those food handlers who are found to be medically fit to handle food for public consumption. Finally it can also be mentioned that the restaurants are also changing due to the regular meetings that the National Commission on Culture in collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority organise for the restaurant and other foodservice operators, to encourage them to serve Ghanaian dishes and use decors made with Ghanaian materials.

Despite all these activities, the role of the formal sector in meeting urban food provisioning has not been well documented as has happened with the informal street food (e.g. Obeng-Asiedu, 2000; Tomlins et al., 2002; Maxwell et al., 2000). Unfortunately, limited studies have been conducted on the restaurant enterprises hence information is lacking on what actually constitute fast food from consumers' perspective, to what extent these foods are available in restaurants, and what its unique material cultural characteristics are. This study aims to make these contributions.

2.3 Recontextualisation of fast food from global perspective

A review of existing literature has revealed some definitions of fast food, based on its material cultural characteristics, scattered in several texts. Firstly, referring to its convenience attributes, style of food preparation, presentation, and 'perception of value', fast food has been defined as '*a relatively inexpensive food that is prepared and served quickly in the Western style*' (Davidson, 2006; Seubsman et al., 2009; Rodriguez, 2004; Traphagan & Brown 2002; Fantasia, 1995). Although fast food has generally been classified as relatively inexpensive, in most developing countries fast food is usually more expensive than most other foods such as traditional foods (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009). This

characteristic is partly due to the huge investment and overhead costs borne by fast-food restaurateurs and the high level of prestige associated with it. 'Western style' in this context implies peculiar features such as outlets with beautiful appearance, brightly lit and climate controlled, shiny counters, stainless-steel kitchenware and highly mechanised operations, music in the background with social interaction highly ritualised and dramatised (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Yan, 2005; Fantasia, 1995). Moreover, it implies a clean kitchen that is more or less a 'factory' designed for mass and quick production of food.

Secondly, fast food has been characterised in Western context as *a snack and has synonyms such as junk food, snack food, and takeaway*. Materially spoken, meals differ from snacks 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. So, 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, for example, 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, any food other than rice cannot be considered a meal because rice stands for food in general and is of enormous symbolic value (Matejowsky, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997, 1999). In Ghana, meals usually consist of large carbohydrate content and mostly eaten with a sauce, soup or stew while snacks can be described as incomplete meals usually eaten without a sauce soup or stew.

Thirdly, fast food has been characterised based on the place of food preparation, purchase, or consumption. Thus, fast food is defined as 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 & Frazao, 1997). This characteristic conforms to the original aim of fast-food technology, which is to provide, in a good time, cheap, filling food to people on the move (Belasco, 2008). Today, however, especially in developing countries, *the original fast food concept is being recontextualised such that, for example, identity and other communicative functions are being associated with it*. For example, the fast-food restaurant has become a place where people sit, relax, and chat while eating. It has become a place where people socialise (Yan, 2005; Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997). In this light, fast-food restaurants have been redefined as restaurants that have two or more of characteristics such as *expedited food service, take-away or table service, counter service, and limited waiting or service staff* (Block et al., 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Fantasia, 1995). Moreover, nowadays, fast foods are not only served in restaurants, but 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). This implies that the characteristics and definitions of fast food keep changing in different sociocultural settings and with the passage of time.

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.

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Pingali and Khwaja (2003) describe this phenomenon as *copycat street food*. In Ghana, *check-check* is a term coined to describe the copycat street food vending operation that is mainly run by men. They usually specialise in only one entry, mostly fried rice (and its accompaniments such as fried chicken, *shito*r, and cole slaw). This is similar to the situation in the USA where most common fast-food restaurants such as McDonald, Burger King, Wendy and KFC originally specialise in one or two main entrees such as hamburger, French fries, pizza, fish or chicken, and a beverage (Rodriguez, 2004; Schlosser, 2001). In contrast to the check-check the fast-food restaurants in Ghana often offer several types of foods including French fries, pizzas, fried rice, and pastries. Nowadays, supermarkets such as the recently opened South African Shoprite have started offering a range of takeaway fast foods including fried rice, fried chicken, meat pies, spring rolls and *jollof* rice.

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; Schroder & McEachern, 2005). Asiedu et al. (1998) found that fast food in Ghana has some properties that make them nutritional beneficial and at the same time properties that provides health anxieties for consumers.

Fifthly and finally, some authors have categorised fast food into *Western and local (or indigenous or traditional) foods* (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Musaiger & D'Souza, 2007; Yan, 2005). 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 & D'Souza, 2007). Western fast food is perceived as including items such as burgers, pizzas, French fries, hot dogs, fried chicken, sandwiches, and doughnuts. However these items have become widely available, not only in most developed but also in developing countries (Seubsman et al., 2009; Austin et al., 2005) making the distinction between Western and local food increasingly vague. The Western fast foods have spread world-wide mainly through franchise operations but have undergone several changes through the process of hybridisation (Yamashita & Eades, 2002), acquiring new material cultural characteristics.

2.4 Theoretical and analytical framework

The theoretical inspiration for this study was drawn from the studies of *material culture*, where researchers are primarily concerned with the mutual relations between people and objects. Material culture involves studying objects to understand the beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions of a particular community or society at a given time (Dant, 1999). Authors such as Miller and Deutsch (2009) and De Solier (2013) have proposed studying food as a material object and by this we can learn a good deal about both people and the cultures they live in. Earlier researchers (e.g. Belasco, 2008; Miller & Deutsch, 2009; Albala, 2012) who considered food as an object focused on food as a product-in-

itself. Recently, De Solier (2013) indicates that the material culture of food includes not only the food itself but also the cultural products that construct the food. She further indicates that these cultural products include food media such as television cooking shows, food blogs, and cook books. This study focuses on fast food and fast-food restaurants as objects to which people assign various social and cultural meanings and derive several benefits as they use them.

The study of a material culture object starts with the identification of the primary functions for which the object was originally made and used followed by the identification of additional uses which may have been invented over time. From the overview of definitions presented earlier, it is evident that fast food is a typical example of a material object whose characteristics keep changing and are perceived differently in space and time. In Ghana, fast food is an introduced material object that has been changed and will probably change in several ways and is becoming part of urban diet and lifestyle. There is therefore the need to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants in the context of Ghana to assess their prevalence, characteristics (highlighting any changes taking place due to the influence of the Ghanaian food culture), and relevance for urban food provision as well as their impacts on the health and tourism sectors.

Analysis of objects need to be done carefully to understand the mutual relations between people and objects therefore it is important to hear the voice of the user for clarity and certainty to give way to multiple interpretations, practices, and manipulations of the object (Woodward, 2007). This study focus on the *objects* (fast food and fast-food restaurants), *people producing the objects* (i.e. restaurateurs and their representatives), and *consumers of the objects* (i.e. fast-food consumers and fast-food restaurant users). An analytical framework that is used to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants as material objects is the *cuisine concept,* which focuses on the material, social, and cultural aspects of food. The concept is discussed in detail in the next section.

2.4.1 *Analytical framework – the cuisine concept*

Cuisine is often used to indicate the material and cultural aspects of food in a specific cultural context. It usually has material aspects such as the types of ingredients, combinations of ingredients, and preparation methods. Furthermore, cuisine refers to a diet or nutrition that belongs to a certain country, region or ethnic group (MacLennan & Zhang, 2004; Messer, 1989). In other words, a cuisine indicates the types and quantities of food and drink and their contribution to human nutrition – this material aspect of food is relevant for body image and physical, social, and psychological wellbeing. In addition, cuisine has also sociocultural aspects such as the social context of eating, gastronomy (the art and science of good eating), and rules dealing with acceptable foods (Fieldhouse, 1986).

Farb and Armelagos (1980) and Rozin (1982) indicate that a typical cuisine has four characteristics (see Fig. 2.1). The first characteristic of cuisine deals with the prioritisation of cuisine into *'basic foods'* or primary 'edibles'. It involves the selection of core or edible foods from a broader range of potential foods. According to Rozin (1982), the basis for the selection of these foods depends on material-cultural factors such as availability of the product, ease of production, nutritional costs and benefits, but also on culture and customs, palatability, and religious or social sanctions. The second cuisine characteristic concerns the

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distinct techniques of preparing food. It shows how creative humans have been in transforming food from 'raw', unpalatable form to 'cooked', palatable forms in numerous ways in different places. The techniques of preparing food often vary widely depending on the energy, time, skill, personnel, and technologies available as well as on the local cultural preferences. Thirdly, cuisines have distinct *'flavour principle'*, which also vary from culture to culture. This characteristic involves the distinctive way of combining flavourings and seasonings in foods. Some 'flavour principles' are distinct for certain cuisines. For example, a typical Chinese cuisine may be expressed through a combination of soy sauce, garlic, ginger, and sesame oil (Belasco, 2008). In Ghana, flavour preferences vary according to ethnic origins however commonly preferred flavour sources include chilli and various types of pepper, spices such as ginger, aniseed, and cloves as well as condiments such as mormornyi, koobi, and dawadawa. The fourth characteristic of cuisine prescribes a set of *manners and codes of etiquette* that determines the way food should be eaten. These codes of etiquette are socially transmitted norms of behaviour that establish the boundaries of acceptability. The specific fashion in which a culture manages eating helps to express, identify, and dramatise the society's ideals and aesthetic style (Visser, 2003). This cuisine characteristic involves, among other things, the number of meals to be eaten per day, when, where, with what utensils, with whom and under what social circumstances food is eaten.

Belasco (2008) proposes that the cuisine concept can be used to understand the expressive and normative functions of food and to analyse its food culture. This thesis starts with the use of the cuisine concept to explore, analyse, and describe fast-food characteristics in the Ghanaian cultural and socioeconomic setting. Alongside a presentation of the fast-food characteristics in Accra Metropolitan Area, this chapter also aims to contribute to an assessment of the adequacy of the framework of the cuisine concept in studying fast food and fast-food restaurants and concludes with formulating some recommendations for improving the relevance of fast food in urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development. At the end of this chapter, I will reflect on the applicability of the cuisine concept and identify new and important research questions relevant to this field of food studies.

In the following table, I summarise the above mentioned cuisine characteristics

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Table 2.2 Analytical framework for the characteristics of a cuisine adapted from Farb and Armelagos (1980) and Rozin (1982)

Basic food or primary edibles	Distinct techniques of preparing food	Distinct flavour principle	A set of manners and codes of etiquette
Selection of foods depends on: • Availability • Affordability • Ease of production • Nutritional costs and benefits • Culture and customs • Palatability • Religious or social sanction.	Techniques often vary widely depending on: • Energy • Time • Skill • Personnel • Technologies available.	Distinctive way of combining flavourings and seasonings in foods – This depends on: • Culture • Availability • Familiarity • Technology	This involves: • Number of meals to be eaten per day • When • Where • With what utensils • With whom • Under what social circumstances food is eaten

2.5 Methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to study the prevalence, characteristics, and consumption patterns of fast food in the Accra Metropolitan Area. The quantitative data was collected from restaurant representatives and fast food consumers. Thus, two surveys were conducted, namely, restaurant survey and consumer survey. The qualitative data was obtained using multi-method qualitative research techniques including focus group discussions, participant observation, key informants interviews, in-depth interviews, informal interviews, and review of secondary data.

2.5.1 The restaurant survey

The *first set of data* was collected through a *survey of restaurants* in the AMA. The purpose of the survey was to *understand the practices* of the restaurant enterprises, their products and services, *and to identify and select restaurants* that could be classified as fast-food restaurants where the consumer study would be conducted.

The sampling frame for the study was a list of restaurants that were of good standing (that is, restaurants that had obtained or renewed their licences) in the GAR by December 2011. The list was obtained from the Ghana Tourism Authority, an institution that issues licenses to restaurants. In total, GAR had 203 or 61% of all licensed restaurants in the country and most of them were located in the AMA. Qualtrics Sample Size Calculator (2011) was used to obtain a sample size of 116 from the 203 licensed restaurants in the GAR at 6% margin of error and 95% confidence level.

Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to systematically sampled respondents (restaurant representatives) to obtain data that will provide a better understanding of restaurant enterprises and their operations and to identify restaurants which could be classified as fast-food restaurants. In total, 90 completed questionnaires were retrieved with a response rate of 77.6%. The questionnaires were administered on a face-to-face basis therefore, field assistants were available to help explain the questions and write out responses (in a language of mutual understanding) as accurately as possible. Self-administration of the questionnaire was allowed, in some cases, at the respondents' request and they filled them out independently. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with some restaurant representatives during and after the survey to get explanations and better insights (Miller & Deutsch, 2009) into their operations, products, and services. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 19) to obtain descriptive statistics, which are presented later in this chapter in the form of tables and figures.

2.5.2 *Identification and selection of fast-food restaurants in the Accra Metropolitan Area of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana*

The second purpose of the restaurants survey was to identify and select restaurants for the consumer survey. This has been done on basis of information from empirical literature review and findings from the restaurant survey. With reference to existing empirical literature, three criteria were developed for differentiating between fast-food restaurants and other types of restaurants. These criteria are:

1. Availability of at least one of the foods that many earlier authors (e.g. Rodriguez, 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Seubsman et al., 2009; Austin et al., 2005) have mentioned as fast food, present in most fast-food restaurants worldwide, such as French fries, burgers, fried chicken, pizzas, and fried rice[3]. In this thesis these foods are referred to as 'Foods Generally Recognised As Fast Food (FGRAFF)', although it is acknowledged that these foods may have been changed in various ways to suit local preferences.
2. Availability of take-away services and table services (Olutayo & Akanle 2009; Block et al., 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Fantasia, 1995); and
3. Absence of fixed mealtimes (Yan, 2005; Fantasia, 1995).

All three criteria must be satisfied for a restaurant to be classified as a fast-food restaurant.

The restaurant survey data showed that 86 out of 90 restaurants satisfied criterion 1 (i.e. availability of at least one FGRAFF in the restaurants); therefore, the rest were excluded. Also, all the 86 restaurants that offered at least one FGRAFF also provided a combination of waiter/table and take-away services (criterion 2) and were subsequently retained. The findings further showed that 67 of the 90 restaurants had no fixed mealtimes while 23 had. Thus, based on criterion 3 (absence of fixed mealtimes), the 67 restaurants were retained while 23 were excluded. Following these three criteria, fast-food restaurant as used in this study was defined as:

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[3] Fried rice, which is originally a Chinese or Oriental cuisine, was included among the Foods Generally Recognized as Fast Food because in Japan, China, and the Philippines, for example, fried rice has been introduced to the McDonald's menu and offered as a fast food. Fried rice is also precooked like many fast foods and reheated upon request and has been considered a fast food in Nigeria and South Africa.

> *A restaurant that offers at least one Food Generally Recognised As Fast Food (FGRAFF) worldwide, both take-away and table services, and has no fixed mealtimes.*

Based on this definition, the SPSS dataset was sorted by the three criteria and the results showed that 61 of the 90 restaurants could be classified as fast-food restaurants. These 61 fast-food restaurants then became the restaurant population from which some were selected (see below) for the consumer survey and the qualitative study.

2.5.3 *The consumer study*

From the 61 fast-food restaurants identified in the restaurant survey, 20 were systematically sampled from the four zones of Accra (Accra East, West, Central and North) in which subsequently a cross-sectional consumer survey was conducted. Before the consumer survey was carried out, first, some willing consumers were selected from some of these 20 fast-food restaurants for focus group discussions in order to collate broad views and to get inputs for the construction of the consumer survey questionnaire. In total, three focus groups were held – one each with male and female consumers who were students and the third one with persons in employment.

The sample size of consumers used for the consumer survey was based on the AMA population of approximately 2 million representing 46% of the Greater Accra Regional population. Using a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, the Qualtrics Online Sample Size Calculator (2011) gave a sample size of 385. However, in total, 425 respondents, 15 years and older, selected by convenience sampling technique participated in the survey. This sampling technique was chosen because of the expectation that participation would be based on a self-selection of individuals willing to participate in the survey (Castillo, 2009).

The questionnaires were administered face-to-face, so field assistants were available to help explain the questions and write out responses (in a language of mutual understanding) as accurately as possible. Self-administration of the questionnaire was allowed, at the request of respondents, who filled them out independently. This reduced potential interviewer bias. To ensure that respondents have a common understanding of what constitute fast food, they were asked to state whether they have ever eaten any of the Food Generally Recognised As Fast Food such as French fries, burgers, fried chicken, fried rice, and pizza from a fast-food restaurant. Only respondents who indicated having eaten at least one of these foods were allowed to complete the questionnaire. The data was collected over a period of sixteen weeks (from November 2011 to February 2012) and on all the days of the week and at different times of the day including the nights.

The questionnaire for the survey was constructed in such a way that it contained questions that provided data for chapters two (current chapter), three, and five of this thesis. The detailed methods and questions will further be elaborated in each of the subsequent chapters. Balanced participant observation and informal interviews were also conducted in some restaurants to understand certain issues and behaviours better. The observations and interviews also provided data for Chapter four of the thesis. Data on the Ghanaian food

culture was obtained through desk research and key informant interviews. In this current chapter we refer only to those answers of the respondents and informants on questions which provide data for exploring and analysing the material cultural characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants.

The study design complied with the 2002 guidelines of American Psychological Association and the WMA Helsinki Declaration guidelines confirming that the research would not to be assumed to create distress or harm to the participants. However, participants were told that the survey was being conducted by the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute and the Wageningen University to identify patterns of fast-food consumption and the factors responsible. Thus, participants gave their non-written consent by willingly completing the questionnaires and participating in the focus group discussions and informal interviews. For individuals who were 15 to 17 years old, only those in the company of adults were involved in the study and non-written consent was obtained from these adults.

2.5.4 *Data analysis*

Out of the 425 questionnaires administered, 400 valid ones with no missing values were retrieved and used for data analyses. Data analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20). Although the qualitative research had a deductive orientation by focusing on the framework of the cuisine concept, inductive approach was used in the data collection and analysis to enable the generation of new cuisine characteristics as much as possible. The focus group and informal interviews and observational field notes were read carefully until I became familiar with the contents and the data were sorted, analysed and reported using ethnographic summaries and content analysis.

2.6 Findings and discussion

In this section, I present the findings from both the restaurant and consumer studies. First of all, a brief description of the characteristics of respondents in both the restaurant and consumer surveys is provided followed by the findings on the prevalence of fast food in the Accra Metropolitan Area. A presentation and discussion of the characteristics of fast food in the context of Ghana is made, where I also show how the fast-food phenomenon has been mixed and influenced by Ghanaian food culture. In that same section, I also present how fast food is evaluated in terms of its relevance for health and body image and urban food provision and subsequently some additional fast-food characteristics are discussed that emerged outside the cuisine concept. This chapter concludes with discussing some theoretical and policy implications.

2.6.1 *Characteristics of respondents*

In this section, some characteristics of respondents are presented to provide insight into the various types of personnel working in fast-food restaurants as well as the various types of consumers who participated in the study.

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Restaurant survey

Ninety respondents made up of 50 males and 40 females took part in the survey. Two major characteristics of the respondents were examined (1) their status in the restaurant enterprise and (2) their educational background. As shown in Table 2.3, of the 90 respondents, 42 were sole owners of the restaurants, nine were part owners, and 39 were employees holding various positions such as Manager, Operation Officer, Accountant, Supervisor, and Chef/Cook. Concerning the educational level, the findings showed that more than half of the respondents had tertiary level education (university and polytechnic) which differs strongly from the informal food vending sector where formal education has been found to be minimal. A high educational level is further stimulated by training courses for the hospitality and tourism industry organised by the University of Cape Coast and the polytechnics. The University offers degree courses up to the PhD level while the polytechnics offer tertiary programmes leading to the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) certificate in Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management as well as non-tertiary programmes which provide training leading to Basic Cookery (812/1) and Advance Cookery (812/1) certificates.

Apart from these educational courses offered by various tertiary institutions, in the past decade, several catering institutions have sprung up with some offering courses in pastry and cookery arts. The training usually equips trainees with relevant skills for making cakes, pastries, local and Western cuisines. The minimum entry requirement to most of these institutes is the Basic Education Certificate but some only accept applicants with Senior High School certificate or higher. These vocational/technical institutes are mainly run by government, individuals, religious organisations and NGOs, which sometimes provide free-of-charge training to trainees. There is also the state-owned Hotel Tourism and Catering Training Institute (HOTCATI), which is now being managed by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). These training institutions play a key role in training personnel to acquire various skills that enable them to set up their own foodservice enterprises, partnership with others, or be employed by other food enterprises. The schools also provide cooking skills for various types of dishes such as continental and Western cuisines, Asian cuisines, and Ghanaian cuisines and this might also have contributed the spread of restaurants and various types of 'foreign' cuisines most of which might have been transformed in various ways to suit local Ghanaian contexts.

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Table 2.3 Characteristics of restaurant survey respondents

Status of respondents in restaurant	% of respondents
Sole owner	46.7
Part owner	10.0
Employee	43.3
TOTAL	100
Formal Educational Level	
University	31.1
Polytechnic	28.9
Senior High	18.9
Vocational/Technical	11.1
Basic	5.6
Other	4.4
TOTAL	100

Consumer survey

The characteristics (demographic and lifestyle variables) of respondents and their influence on fast-food consumption is examined in detail in Chapter three. In this chapter, some characteristics of respondents are briefly presented to give an indication of the type of persons who largely visit fast-food restaurants. Also presented is the frequency of fast-food consumption among the respondents in the AMA.

As shown in Table 2.4, the majority of respondents were youthful and in the 15-35 years age range[4] (88.5%) with a mean age of 25.9 ± 7.63 years. Male respondents constituted 61% of the sample, 84.5% were single, 60.0% had tertiary level degree (e.g., university, polytechnic), 49.0% were employed, and 41.3% were students mostly in tertiary education. It is remarkable that 68.8 % of the respondents indicated that they have cooking skills while 41% (mostly students in tertiary education) had no monthly income. More than half (65.8%) of the respondents reported eating fast food from a fast-food restaurant at least once a week and were thus classified as fast-food restaurant frequenters based on the classification of Satia et al. (2004) while 34.2% were non-frequenters.

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[4] The National Youth Policy of Ghana defines the youth as persons in the 15-35 years age range.

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

Table 2.4 Characteristics of consumer survey respondents (n = 400)

Characteristics		No. of respondents	% of respondents
Age	15-35 years	354	88.5
	>35 years	46	11.5
Gender	Male	244	61.0
	Female	156	39.0
Education level	Tertiary	239	60.0
	Senior High School	146	36.5
	Basic	12	3.0
	None	2	.5
Occupation	Employed	196	49.0
	Student	165	41.3
	unemployed	39	9.7
Monthly income	<100 GHS (Ghana Cedis)	19	4.8
	100 – 500 GHS	115	28.7
	501 – 1,000 GHS	56	14.0
	1001 – 1,500 GHS	22	5.5
	1,501 – 2,000 GHS	12	3.0
	>2,000 GHS	12	3.0
	None	164	41.0
Cooking skill	Yes	275	68.8
	No	125	31.2
Frequency of fast-food intake	One or more times a week (frequenters)	263	65.8
	Less than three times a month (non-frequenters)	137	34.2

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

2.6.2 *Prevalence of fast food in restaurant enterprises in the Accra Metropolitan Area*

The findings presented in Figure 2.1 below show that over the past three decades, number of newly established restaurants has increased exponentially with the exception of the period between 2005 and 2009 when there was a reduction in the number.
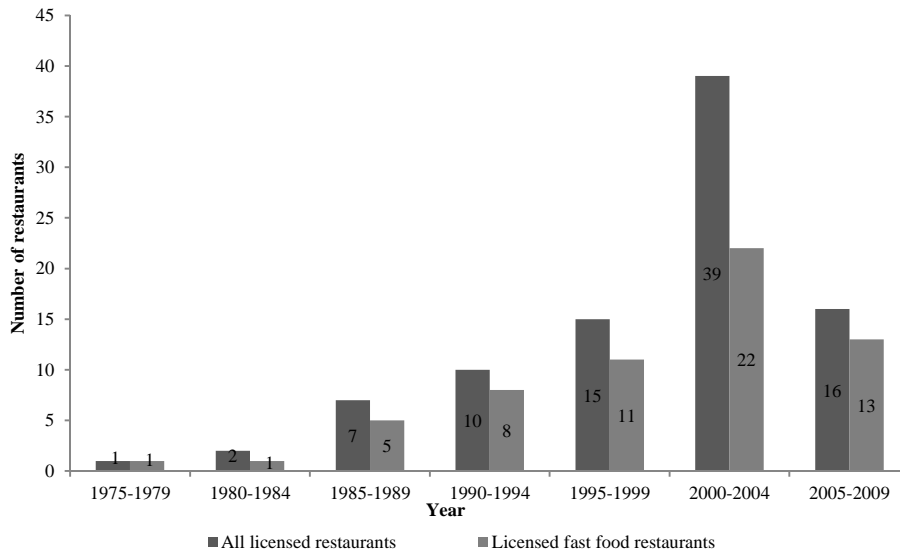
Fig. 2.1 Number of new restaurants established in the Greater Accra Region from 1975 to 2009 and number of restaurants classified as fast-food restaurants

The overall sharp increase in the number of newly established restaurants in the period from 2000 to 2009, in particular, could partly be due to the anticipated increase in demand for hospitality services, such as hotels and restaurant during Cup of African Nations (CAN) 2000 and CAN 2008 competitions, and some international conferences such as UNCTAD 2008 that were hosted in Ghana. The increase might also have been facilitated by increasing urbanisation, income improvements, and Ghana's quest to develop its tourism sector. The reduction in the number of new restaurants established between 2005 and 2009 might be the result of saturation in the restaurant market since the previously established ones were still actively in operation.

As presented in section 2.5 earlier (i.e. under the subtitle: identification and selection of fast-food restaurants), in total, 61 (68%) of the 90 restaurants surveyed have been classified as fast-food restaurants. Figure 2.1 also shows the trend in the growth of fast-food restaurants over the past three decades where between 1980 and 1989 nine new restaurants were established out of which six have been classified as fast-food restaurants. Similarly, between 1990 and 1999, 25 new restaurants were established out of which 19 have been identified as fast foods while between 2000 and 2009, 55 new restaurants were established

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of which I have classified 35 as fast foods. Evidently, more than 50% of new restaurants could be classified as fast-food restaurants in all the periods under consideration indicating the rapid growth and social relevance of fast food in food provision in the Greater Accra Region.

2.6.3 *Characteristics of fast food based on the cuisine concept*

The cuisine concept - as would be recalled - indicates that a cuisine has four characteristics namely, prioritisation of cuisine into some basic or core foods, distinct techniques of preparing food, distinct flavour principle, and a set of manners and codes of etiquette that determines the way food should be eaten. The findings on the characteristics of fast-food and fast-food restaurants as material-cultural objects are thus discussed in the following sections referring to these four characteristics in which also the dynamic process of mixing local and foreign food cultures will be indicated.

Fast food as basic or core food

The selection of a core food depends on factors such as what foods are available, the culture and customs, nutritional importance, and affordability. This section starts with first presenting how the availability of certain foods as well as Ghana's food culture and customs have influenced what have been selected as the core foods in fast-food restaurants.

As indicated earlier, 61 out of the 90 restaurants surveyed in the AMA were fast-food restaurants and out of these 50 (82%) offer not only Foods Generally Recognised As Fast Foods (FGRAFFs), such as fried rice, pizza, French fries, burgers, and fried chicken, but also Ghanaian foods that are commonly prepared and eaten at home such as *jollof*[5]*, banku*[6]*, waakye*[7]*, kelewele*[8]*,* plain boiled rice*,* and *fufu*[9] as well as other foods such as noodles and pastries. Interestingly to mention is that only 18% of the fast-food restaurants offer only the FGRAFFs. These findings suggest that most restaurants might have undergone various transformations. For example, on the one hand, some restaurants that previously offered only typical Ghanaian meals 'modernized' their operations, for example, by incorporating modern restaurant design, style of food preparation and service, and introduced the FGRAFFs into their menus. This way, restaurateurs could appeal to international customers, meet the demands of local modern consumers, and be competitive on the market. On the other hand, some restaurants that previously offered only FGRAFFs began to adapt their operations to suit local contexts. Foods Inn, for example, introduced *fufu* in their Kumasi outlet because many customers requested it. Clearly, these findings illustrate that various transformations are taking place in the restaurants whereby local and foreign food cultures are being hybridised.

Another interesting finding is that 85 out of 90 restaurants that were surveyed offered at least one of the five FGRAFFs (see Table 2.4) indicating how popular these foods are in restaurants and have become part of Ghanaian urban diets.

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[5] A one-pot dish prepared by boiling rice in tomato stew/sauce and is eaten with a sauce, meat or fish and sometimes vegetables.

[6] A meal prepared from fermented maize and cassava dough and is usually served with ground chilli pepper and grilled tilapia or okro stew

[7] Rice and cowpeas boiled together and eaten with stew, meat or fish and sometimes vegetables

[8] It is a nicely diced spicy fried ripe plantain that is often eaten as a snack or desert.

[9] A meal prepared mainly from boiled cassava and plantain and eaten with soups

Table 2.5 Number of Foods Generally Recognised As Fast Foods offered in restaurants (n=90)

Number of FGRAFFs offered in restaurants	Number of restaurants	Percent (%)
Zero	4	4.4
One	5	5.6
Two	13	14.4
Three	31	34.4
Four	20	22.2
Five	17	18.9
TOTAL	**90**	**100.0**

Specifically, 83 out of 90 restaurants offered fried rice, 73 offered French fries, 67 offered fried chicken, 38 offered burgers and 28 offered pizzas. These findings show that even some restaurants, which were not classified as fast-food restaurants, also offer these FGRAFFs further illustrating the popularity of these foods in AMA restaurants. The FGRAFFs were not only popular in restaurants but they were also highly purchased and consumed. As shown in Figure 2.2, about 79% of consumers most often buy fried rice when they visit the fast-food restaurant. Fried rice was also among the top four fast-moving foods in all the 83 restaurants that offered it. The findings further showed that in 13 of the restaurants, burgers and pizzas were among the top four fast moving foods while French fries moves fastest in 33 of the restaurants. Fried chicken was also found to be popular as a dish but it is usually served with rice dishes, French fries, or, to a lesser extent, with a drink.
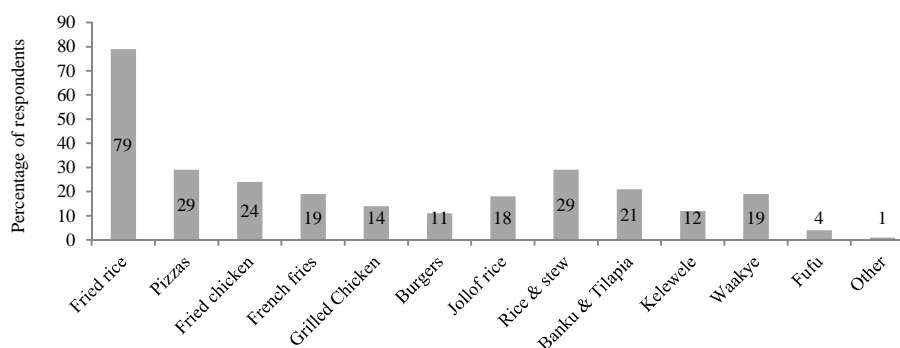
Fig. 2.2 Most popular fast-food consumer purchases
(max. 3 responses allowed)

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Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

As also shown in Figure 2.2, foods such as *banku, fufu*, and *kelewele* are also present in fast-food restaurants although they are seldom consumed. These typical Ghanaian diets, which are usually prepared at home and are available in most traditional eateries, are largely composed of abundant unrefined carbohydrates such as maize, cassava, yam, cocoyam, plantain. The foods are also made of high fibre, low fat and usually low protein.

The popularity of fast food especially the FGRAFFs is an indication that dietary patterns are changing in urban Ghana and several reasons could account for this. For example, the popularity of rice dishes could stem from the fact that Ghana experienced a rapid dietary shift to rice, particularly in urban centres, during the early post-independence period. The shift was largely due to increased income, favourable government pricing policies, good storability of rice, ease of cooking, and rapid urbanisation (Asuming-Brempong et al., 2006; Nyanteng, 1987). Rice is becoming a staple in most homes and is usually used for dishes such as plain boiled rice, *jollof* rice, *waakye,* and *omo tuo* (boiled rice moulded into balls). Fried rice however is not usually prepared at home because it requires special skills that most people lack and at the same time its preparation is quite laborious; hence it is often prepared and eaten on special occasions or eaten as an out-of-home meal.

One of the pioneers of fast-food restaurants in Ghana, Papaye Fast Food Restaurant, specializes in fried rice and, to a lesser extent, French fries and other foods and snacks. It is perceived that Papaye Fast Food Restaurant popularised fried rice in Accra therefore some consumers simply refer to fried rice as '*papay*e'. A manager at Inscor Africa (Foods Inn) indicated that the company initially entered the Ghanaian market with their popular brands (French fries and pizzas). However, they had to introduce fried rice upon realising that most customers often requested fried rice or simply '*papaye*'. Since then, fried rice has become one of the fast-moving products at Foods Inn. In contrast, the newly opened KFC restaurant was not offering fried rice so a man (39 years, employed, married) lamented after he has been served his meal:

> '*How can they give me two pieces of fried chicken parts and a few strips of fries without pepper sauce at GHS7 and expect me to come back here? I can pour all these fries into my palm and squeeze them into a tiny ball. In fact, if they don't introduce fried rice, they may not survive*'

Obviously, this customer felt the staple portion (carbohydrate) was much scantier than what he was used to more carbohydrates and more or less protein. His concern was that the food might not be filling enough.

It is worthy of note that *banku and tilapia meal* became popular in restaurants about a decade ago and is in fact one of the most expensive foods in many restaurants where it is offered. For example, in one restaurant, whereas a plate of fried rice with chicken costs seven Ghana cedis, a plate of *banku* with grilled tilapia was eighteen Ghana cedis. One reason for its popularity was the desire of consumers to shift from the intake of oily fried foods and meat to less oily foods and fish, which have been publicised by nutritionists and health professionals as healthier. Although *banku* is a meal commonly prepared at home its accompaniment, grilled tilapia is often not prepared in most homes because the fresh fish is expensive and its preparation requires specialised skills and sometimes equipment.

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

The selection of food as basic or core food also depends on the nutritional importance (Rozin, 1982). Findings in this study have shown that different types of food items, each with its unique nutritional properties, have been classified as fast food and are being sold in fast-food restaurants as core foods. Therefore, in evaluating fast food based on its nutritional importance, it is important to consider the specific food type and its unique material properties rather than lumping all together as one whole as has been done by most authors (e.g. Mahna et al., 2004; Ebbeling et al., 2002; Prentice & Jebb, 2003). In a focus group discussion, a female consumer (30 years, employed, married), who, like most consumers think fast food is synonymous with fried rice, said:

> *Fast food offers me an opportunity to eat more nutritious, minimally processed vegetables (usually Cole slaw and stir fried exotic vegetables such as spring onions, carrots, and paprika), and a substantial amount of chicken- a good source of animal protein. So, for me, fast food is nutritious.*

The remarks from this female consumer were corroborated by some focus group participants and informal interviewees. For them, a nutritious food is that which is rich in vegetables (raw or minimally processed) and protein. Incidentally, raw or minimally processed vegetables are usually lacking in most Ghanaian meals because typically, Ghanaian vegetables have longer cooking time hence some micronutrients may be lost during cooking. Moreover, raw or minimally processed Ghanaian vegetables are usually unpalatable and may irritate the mouth and throat. Also, animal protein is usually consumed in small amounts in most Ghanaian homes mainly because it is expensive hence the quantity and quality of meat or fish in the diet usually serve as indicators of status and wealth (Salm & Falola, 2002; Osseo-Asare, 2005). In this light, *fast food (fried rice in particular) appears to meet some nutritional (i.e. carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and micronutrients) requirements of consumers.* This finding partly supports Asiedu et al. (1998) who found that fast foods in Ghana generally have high protein content and therefore are likely to meet consumers' recommended daily allowances for protein. Also, the informants' realisation of the importance of eating more vegetables and proteins supports Fresco (2006) and Popkin (2000) who indicated that rapid urbanisation and relative increase in income in developing countries would result in nutrition transition such that there would be more animal protein consumption across all levels and a shift towards more fruits and vegetables among middle and upper classes.

Relating these findings to Mintz (1996) who propose that meals in developing countries such as India consist of a core food item (C) such as rice, a fringe item (F) such as a sauce, and a legume (L), I will propose that typical meals in Ghana consist of core food item (C) such as *fufu* or *banku*, fringe item (F) such as soup or sauce, and small animal protein (p) such as meat or fish (i.e. C+F+p). However, with urbanisation and the emergence of fast food, the meals in the AMA have slightly changed to core food item (C) such as fried rice or *banku*, fringe item (F) such as soup or sauce, large animal protein (P) such as meat or fish, and at least a vegetable (V). This can be presented as C+F+P+V.

In contrast to the perception held by informants that fast food was nutritious, some informants were of the view that fast food usually contains excess fat mainly due to the choice of cooking method. This view supports the findings by Asiedu et al. (1998) who

report that in Ghana carbohydrates in fried rice alone contributes 44% of the total calories for adults while the fats contribute more than 30% of their total calories[10]. This implies that when fried rice is eaten with fried chicken, for example, the caloric contribution could be more than the recommended daily values. This situation can result in the accumulation of excess fat in the body, which can eventually cause health anxieties particular in relation to body image. Asiedu et al. (1998) also found that fast foods were excessively high in salt thus, predisposing consumers to higher risk of cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and renal disorders.

Clearly, the paradox associated with fast food calls for an investigation of both its positive and negative health impacts and to develop appropriate policies and programmes to improve the positive aspects and eliminate the negative ones. One approach of doing this is by understanding the determinants of fast-food consumption and then integrating them into policies and programmes. These issues are discussed in the ensuing chapters.

Another basis for selecting fast food as a core food is affordability. Generally, most informants described fast food as expensive but as indicated in Table 2.3, more than half (65.8%) of the respondents reported eating fast food from a fast-food restaurant at least once a week (i.e. the frequenters) while 34.2% were non-frequenters. This is an indication that regardless of its relatively high price most people highly purchase and consume fast food for various social, cultural, and behavioural reasons, which are also discussed in the ensuing chapters.

Distinct techniques of preparing fast food

The second aspect of the cuisine concept concerns the food preparation techniques, which depend on culture, type of energy or fuel, skill, and technology. Most typical Ghanaian foods are cooked by various methods before consumption. Common cooking methods include boiling, deep frying, steaming, baking, and roasting. Usually, Ghanaians prepare soups and stews using slow-cooking techniques and simmering for a long time over a low heat (Osseo-Asare, 2005). In contrast to this food preparation practices at home, this study found that most restaurants *used precooked food items* such as pre-fried potatoes, precooked rice or chicken, which could be fried quickly for customers upon request. This precooking technology has produced a number of convenience foods that require minimal cooking time, which is necessary for mass and quick production of food. Another cooking method that was often used in the restaurants was *frying* therefore it was not surprising that about 30% of consumers described fast food as fried food. This supports Belasco (2008) who indicated that fast-food consumers often demand foods that are served quickly, crispy, tasty, easily carried out, and easily eaten with fingers and coincidentally, these properties are inherent in fried foods. Fried rice, for instance, is prepared by stir-frying, but most fried fast foods are deep-fried. Papaye Fast Food cooks its chicken by *broasting technique*. The technique essentially combines pressure cooking with deep frying to fry chicken that has been marinated and breaded. The resulting chicken is crispy on the outside and moist on the inside but less greasy. Another advantage of broasting over deep-frying is that large quantities of chicken can be prepared more quickly (i.e. in 12–13 minutes instead of 20 minutes).

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[10] Institute of Medicine recommends that adults should get 45% to 65% of their total calories from carbohydrates, 20 percent to 35 percent from fat, and 10 to 35 percent from protein.

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

As discussed in the previous section (under basic or core foods), the choice of cooking method impacts the nutritional and health benefits of foods. Therefore, with the growing general health consciousness of consumers, *demand for healthier cooking techniques such as stir-frying, grilling, and steaming is increasing*. Thus, it was common to find foods such as stir-fried vegetables and rice, grilled chicken or fish, and steamed vegetables being offered in some fast-food restaurants. The use of various kinds of cooking techniques has been *made possible by the level of cooking skills the actors acquire from their training* as well as various technologies and equipment that have been develop for easy food preparation and cooking. The restaurants have *equipment* such as blenders; vegetable cutters, graters and slicers; char grills, broilers and rotisserie oven; microwave ovens; and deep-fryers. The use of these different types of equipment has also been facilitated by the availability of various energy sources including electricity, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), charcoal, and wood in the AMA.

Distinct flavour principle in fast food

The third characteristic of cuisine relates to the types of flavours that are used in food preparation and these can vary depending on the culture, availability, familiarity, technology, the findings showed that a typical Ghanaian product called *shitor* (or black pepper sauce) is used in most fast-food restaurants. The *pepper sauce* is commonly eaten with a number of dishes such as kenkey, fried yam, waakye or jollof rice, but also with fried rice and French fries. A typical serving of French fries, which is usually served with mayonnaise or ketchup worldwide, is served in Ghana with *shitor,* with or without mayonnaise, and/or ketchup. Freshly ground chilli pepper (or other types of pepper) with slices of onions and tomatoes is eaten in Ghana with banku and tilapia. Grilled tilapia and grilled chicken are often laced with *freshly ground ginger* and other spices.

The extensive use of pepper and hot spices is due to the fact that Ghanaians like hot, spicy foods and it is believed that pepper cools the body and cleanses it of impurities (Salm & Falola, 2002). Osseo-Asare (2005) has also reported that generally West Africans including Ghanaians liberally use *hot chilli peppers* in most of their cuisines. In relation to this, a typical Ghanaian who has eaten food without soup, stew or pepper sauce could say 'I have not eaten the whole day' because of the usual Ghanaian food culture where 'real food' must be accompanied by soup or sauce containing pepper. Findings showed that previously, common Ghanaian spices such as ginger, onions, black pepper, aniseed, cloves, peppercorn, thyme, nutmeg, and condiments were usually used in restaurants. However, I found that their use in restaurants is *gradually waning* due to the importation of lots of other spices, seasonings and flavour enhancers. In a focus group discussion, consumers raised concern about the *excessive use of monosodium glutamate (MSG)*, a flavour enhancer, in fast foods as this might have health implications. A female participant (28 years, employed, single) who claimed to have previously worked in a fast-food restaurant said

> *I never ate fried rice in the restaurant where I used to work because they always added a great deal of MSG to the food.*

A male consumer (25 years, student, single) also said that he disliked eating out-of-home meals because of the large amount of MSG used in preparing the food. He said 'you can feel it in your mouth and throat.' For some consumers, taste and aromatic experiences form

part of the social objective for consuming fast food therefore they feel satisfied when this social objective has been achieved. Consequently, fast-food providers make frantic efforts to enhance the sensory properties (taste and aroma) of the food to make them more appealing to consumers and in the process end up misusing certain substances.

A set of manners and codes of etiquette in relation to fast-food consumption

The fourth cuisine characteristics is the codes of etiquette, which basically prescribe the number of meals to be eaten per day, when, where, with what utensils, with whom and under what social circumstances. Thus, the findings indicated that about 60% of consumers obtained fast food mainly from restaurants and that the food could be eaten in the restaurant or taken away depending on the context which may include amount of time available, the occasion, or who is eating the food. Concerning reasons why people take food away, in a focus group discussion, some consumers said that they often do so when they have no time to sit and eat in the restaurant. However, most of these people indicated that they would sit, eat, and chat with friends or family members in the restaurants when they have sufficient time or on special occasions such as birthdays, festive seasons, or when on a date. Other reasons for taking food away include discomfort in using utensils other than fingers and the need to share food with household members. These issues relate to the *convenience attributes* of fast food and have been explored further in Chapter three of this thesis.

Although fast food over the years has been closely linked with American culture of individualism the findings in this study showed that only 27% of respondents often visit the restaurant alone while the rest (73%) do so *in the company of others* including partners (wife, husband, fiancé), friends, family, co-workers, and business partners among others. The findings imply that in the restaurants in the AMA, there is every indication that the typical Ghanaian cultural etiquettes and values are manifesting. For example, traditional Ghanaian code of etiquettes require, for instance, that a group of people (family members, friends, etc.) usually sit around the table and *share one bowl of food* - food is usually served from a communal bowl. Thus, some elements of commensalism still persist in the fast-food restaurant. On the other hand etiquettes also change. Unlike most typical Ghanaian homes, where talking is prohibited or kept to the minimal during eating, in fast-food restaurants it has become the norm to find people eating and talking - a practice that some informants still frowned upon. This emerging practice also contradicts the Ghanaian proverb that says 'when the food is good, the people are silent' (Osseo-Asare, 2005). Also, usually, it is rare to see Ghanaians eat in public and for women in particular, it might give the impression to some people in Ghana that these women do not know how to cook. However, the empirical findings have indicated that although most of the women who participated in this survey have good cooking skills, they still buy and eat in fast-food restaurants. Moreover, with urbanisation, economic improvement, and increased number of women in the workforce, many people are eating out-of-home food including fast food (Agyei-Mensah & de-Graft Aikins, 2007). An informant even described this change as representing an aspect of women emancipation.

The findings also showed that 45% of consumers often *ate with cutlery* in the restaurant, 9% with fingers, and 1% with chopsticks while 46% *eat with both fingers* and cutlery

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depending on the food type. In a focus group discussion, participants expressed worry about the manner in which restaurateurs compel consumers to eat with cutlery in restaurants. They expressed the view that restaurateurs often made no provisions for hand washing so consumers were compelled to use cutlery no matter how uncomfortable it might be. By this, consumers were denied the unique and desirable taste they derive when eating with fingers. However, some consumers who consider themselves as bold eat with both cutlery and finger, for example, eating rice with cutlery and eating chicken with fingers. In contrast, the Ghanaian codes of etiquette require that food be eaten with fingers but one needs to ensure that the left hand does not touch the food because it is considered dirty (Salm & Falola, 2002) and therefore reserved for personal hygiene (Osseo-Asare, 2005). Besides, it is considered an insult to eat with the left hand. The usual practice in most Ghanaian homes is to pass water round the table for each person to wash his or her hands before food is eaten.

Codes of etiquette also *prescribe the time when food is eaten* therefore from the findings, about 51% of consumers ate fast food only at lunchtime, 30% ate at suppertime, and 16% between lunch and supper. At these mealtimes, 'real food' or heavier food is usually eaten in conformance to Ghanaian culture of eating – eating soups/stews and starches at lunch and supper and, in some cases, breakfast to provide adequate satisfaction and energy (Osseo- Asare, 2005). Findings also indicate that some consumers eat these 'real foods' at late hours up to about midnight and this can lead to health problems. Another finding was that all but one respondent indicated that they often drank some liquid before or during eating in a fast-food restaurant. The liquids included soft drinks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, fruit juices, water, and milk shakes. In some cases, consumers did not intend to drink but were compelled to do so while waiting too long for their food. This supports other studies that indicate that fast food is often served with carbonated soft drinks in particular thus compounding its associated health problems (Schlosser, 2001; Ebbeling et al., 2002; Prentice & Jebb, 2003). By the Ghanaian codes of etiquette however, generally no liquids, including water, are taken before or during meals in order to leave more room in the stomach for the food (Salm & Falola, 2002). *Nowadays, it is common to find people taking some forms of liquids before or during mealtime* even in their homes for various reasons including boosting one's appetite and aiding digestion.

In summary, 68% of the restaurants in the AMA are fast-food restaurants and offer fast food, which comprises mostly a combination of FGRAFFs and typical Ghanaian foods such as *banku* with tilapia and *jollof* rice as the *core foods*. The core food most frequently consumed is fried rice with its accompaniments. Generally, the core foods were perceived to be good sources of carbohydrates fats, protein and some micronutrients but at the same time they can affect health particularly body image. In terms of *techniques of food preparation*, precooking technology was commonly used in preparing most popular foods. However, with the growing general health consciousness of consumers, restaurateurs are now also using healthier cooking techniques such as stir-frying and grilling. In relation to *the distinct flavour principles*, findings showed that *shitor,* pepper, and hot spices such as ginger are the main sources of flavour in most fast foods. This has been influenced by the Ghanaians' likeness for pepper and hot spices, which are believed to be body coolants and cleansers. In relation to *the codes of etiquette*, buying and eating in fast-food restaurants was found to be mainly due to the desire for convenience and to socialise with relations and friends. The desire to socialise has been influenced by the commensality attitude of typical

Ghanaians, which contradicts the original aim of fast food – getting food quickly and eating quickly. On the one hand, the findings have shown how typical Ghanaian codes of etiquette have been integrated into fast-food restaurants – for example, the use of both cutlery and fingers to eat certain foods such as fried rice and chicken shows the typical Ghanaian way of eating with fingers. On the other hand, the findings have also shown how codes of etiquette in fast-food restaurants have restrain the practice of some Ghanaian codes of etiquette in the restaurants. For example, the Ghanaian codes of etiquette prescribe hand washing before eating but no provision is made for that in fast-food restaurants. Also, the Ghanaian table manners prohibit talking during eating but in fast-food restaurant this practice has become the norm.

2.6.4 *Emerging cuisine characteristics*

The first interesting finding from which an additional cuisine characteristic has been discovered is that all the fast-food restaurants offered *both table and takeaway services with limited self-service*. Moreover, I observed that during most takeaway purchases, depending on the specific restaurants, customers often joined a queue either standing or seated waiting to be served. This finding shows that in Ghana fast-food restaurant departs from the original fast-food concept that sought to provide mainly self- and drive-through- services for people on the move (Belasco, 2008). Similarly, I observed that in all the restaurants - except KFC - *customers demanding table services often remained seated while waiting to be served*. This is typically how Ghanaians want to be served in a restaurant *as a sign of respect* for them. To corroborate this, a lady (27 years, single, employed) remarked during an informal interview that she felt like a queen whenever she was being served at a table in the fast-food restaurant.

However, at the newly opened KFC restaurant, customers requesting both takeaway and table services join the queue standing and after being served the customers carry their food upstairs to sit and eat. To some of these customers and onlookers, this practice is demeaning; therefore, it was not surprising that a customer who was visiting KFC for the first time mistook another customer, who was carrying food upstairs, for a waiter. These observations showed that for most Ghanaians, *'techniques of serving food'* is an important cuisine characteristic, which prescribes the way the food provider or restaurant staff makes food or services available to the consumer. Here, food provider-consumer relationship is important because a consumer's choice of fast food also depends on the treatment or service received from the provider.

Secondly, the need to take food away necessitates the use of packaging materials and for most consumers the *'techniques of packaging'* is an important cuisine characteristic. The techniques of packaging depend on the type of packaging materials available and the ease with which they can be used. Previously, in Ghana, out-of-home ready-to-eat food *used to be packaged in leaves* such as Thespesia populnea. But most often these leaves were poorly handled, often dirty and kept in the open with little or no provision for washing before use. These led to public concern about the likelihood of the leaves being a source of microbial contamination. This and other factors such as modernisation *led to a shift to mostly plastic and polythene materials*. The finding showed that with the exception of KFC, which uses paper packages, most takeaways were packed in plastic and polystyrene materials. Regrettably, such packaging materials are non-biodegradable and therefore add to the filth

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in the environment. Papaye restaurants also packs its main dishes directly in aluminium foil packages and most of their side dishes such as cole slaw and *shitor* are packed in plastic materials. Cutleries were also made of plastic materials.

In connection with these findings, a consumer's fast food choice might be influenced by its *'environmental appropriateness'*. This probably explains the finding that most informants who indicated that they were always concerned about sanitation of the environment also agreed strongly that fast-food restaurants contributed to the plastic menace in the environment. For these people, their strategies to reduce the plastic menace would be to abstain from buying takeaways in plastic materials, dispose of fast-food packages properly, or advocate for a ban on plastic disposables or support the use of alternative packages such as paper. The extent to which these environmental considerations influence fast-food consumption and purchase decisions has been further explored in chapter five of this thesis.

The fourth additional cuisine characteristic is the *'geographical or cultural origin'* of the food, which relates to the country or region of the world with whom the cuisine is commonly associated. The findings showed that most fast-food restaurants offered both typical Ghanaian food and the globally recognised fast foods such as French fries, fired rice, pizzas, and burgers (which have been hybridised to suit local preferences). However, most informants indicated that they *eat mostly the foods generally recognised as fast food* any time they visit the restaurant. This is because they were of the view that the common Ghanaian foods offered in these restaurants might not be authentic since authentic food could only be obtained from traditional eateries. These suggest that among other reasons consumers often visit the restaurants to eat foods that they think are new, unique and different. Interestingly, although fast food in Ghana has undergone some hybridisation, findings showed that most respondents and informants largely linked fast food with Americas and Asia (Chinese in particular) and therefore eating fast food to them means *identifying with a 'new' and different culture*. These issues of identity and fast-food consumption are further explored in chapter three of this thesis.

Related to the geographical or cultural origin, is the issue of source of ingredients for food preparation. It was discovered that 79 out of 90 restaurants used only imported rice, 80 used only imported chicken, 71 used only imported potato, and 53 used only imported tomato paste. Indeed, some informants expressed concern about the low level of usage of locally produced foods and ingredients in the fast-food enterprises. Hence, there is the need for fifth cuisine characteristics, 'distinctive *infrastructure' or 'food chain'* (Belasco, 2008) by which food or ingredients moves from farm to fork. The huge dependence of Ghana's fast-food enterprises on foreign resources such as food ingredients does not only affect the local production levels, economy and employment opportunities but it also increases food miles resulting in environmental consequences such as greenhouse gas emission (Oosterveer, 2005).

For most of the global fast-food chains, franchising has been a major means by which their brands have spread worldwide. The findings showed that only 5 of the 61 fast-food restaurants identified were franchises of international fast-food companies. The franchised restaurants are:

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(1) Inscor Africa Limited, also known as Foods Inn (owners of the Pizza Inn, Chicken Inn, Creamy Inn, Galito's and Bonjour brands) with the parent company in Zimbabwe;
(2) Southern Fried Chicken, a British fast-food chain;
(3) Nigeria's Mr. Biggs;
(4) Chicken Republic also from Nigeria; and
(5) Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant, which was launched in Accra in 2011.

The rest of the fast-food restaurants were stand-alone and these include Papaye Fast Food, Odo Rise, Frankies, Melting Moments, Julikart Fast food, Everything Chicken, and Churcheese. It is worthy of note that although these restaurants are stand-alone some of them together with the franchised restaurants operate several outlets thus contributing to the rapid spread of fast food in the AMA. Foods Inn, for instance, has six outlets in Accra, Mr. Bigg's, which launched its first international restaurant in Accra in 2003 currently, operates four outlets while Chicken Republic, which began its operation in Ghana in 2008, now has three outlets in Accra. The recently launched KFC has already opened three outlets in Accra and plans to open about 22 outlets throughout the country by 2016.

These findings show that in describing fast food it is important to consider the '*marketing system*' which is being used to proliferate it. For instance, approximately 70% of McDonald's restaurants in Canada are franchised operations (McDonalds International, 2011). However, in Ghana, findings have shown that in addition to franchising (which is minimally used) restaurants devise their own marketing systems of spreading their outlets. The marketing system is comprised of a number of elements such as the particular products, the characteristics of participants (e.g. the producer or brand owner, the franchisee, the consumer etc.), the functions or roles that each participant performs in the market, and the locations, and physical infrastructures involved (International Livestock Research Institute, 1995). Future studies particularly in the field of marketing may examine the marketing systems in detail and develop insights into the further development of hybridised fast food restaurants.

In summary, six additional cuisine characteristics have emerged from the findings that can potentially expand the cuisine concept. The characteristics are (1) *techniques of serving food* prescribes the way food provider or restaurant staff makes food or services available to the consumer, for example, by self- or table service. In connection with this, it came to light that serving food on the table for a Ghanaian consumer in the restaurant is important because to them, it is a way of showing respect to customers. (2) T*echniques of packaging* basically concern the type of packaging materials used and their safety. (3) The techniques of packaging also relates to the *environmental appropriateness* of the packaging material, which entails the ease with which they can be disposed of and their eco-friendliness. In this regard, the findings revealed that most consumers were worried about the safety and extensive use of packages made of plastic and polythene materials because of their negative effects on the environment. (4) '*Geographical or cultural origin'* relates to the newness, uniqueness, and basically food that is different from the 'usual'. (5) The '*food chain',* by which food or ingredients moves from farm to fork, relates to the sources of raw materials and other ingredients used in fast-food preparation and how it impacts local food

production, the economy and the environment. (6) M*arketing system* deals with the techniques that are used for proliferating fast food either locally or internationally.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the material cultural aspects of the fast food by focusing on the *objects* (i.e. fast food and fast-food restaurants), *people producing the objects* (i.e. restaurateurs or their representatives), and *consumers of the objects* (i.e. fast-food consumers and fast-food restaurant users). The study sought to assess the prevalence, characteristics, and relevance of fast food and fast-food restaurants in urban food provision, health promotion, and tourism development in the AMA. The chapter also sought to evaluate how the fast-food culture has been mixed with Ghanaian food culture and to assess the adequacy of using the framework of the cuisine concept in studying fast food so as to recommend some improvements where necessary.

Concerning the prevalence of fast food the findings showed that out of the 90 restaurants surveyed, 61 (representing 68% of that total) were classified as fast-food restaurants, which were defined as restaurants that offer at least one food generally recognised as fast food (FGRAFF) worldwide, both take-away and table services, and have no fixed mealtimes. It was also remarkable that out of the 90 restaurants surveyed 80 were established between 1990 and 2009 indicating that the spread of restaurants has been quite a recent phenomenon which could have been facilitated by growing urban middle class population and the quest of Ghana to develop the tourism sector. Moreover fast food can also obtained from other outlets such as supermarkets and street vendors thus indicating that the overall prevalence of fast food in AMA could even be more 68%. These findings imply that fast-food restaurants increasingly contribute to urban food provisioning.

The characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the AMA have been investigated in reference to the cuisine concept, which has been useful for describing fast food in terms of four cuisine characteristics, namely, *basic or core food*, *distinct flavour principle*, *distinct techniques of preparing food*, and *codes of etiquette*. In terms of (1) *basic or core foods*, the finding indicated that basically, the core foods available in the fast-food restaurants comprise foods generally recognised as fast food (FGRAFFs) worldwide and these include French fries, burgers, fried chicken, pizzas, and fried rice. Other foods offered in the fast-food restaurants include typical Ghanaian foods such as *banku* with pepper and tilapia, *kelewele*, *waakye* and *jollof* rice, and other foods such as noodles and pastries. It was remarkable that 82% of the fast-food restaurants offer a *combination* of FGRAFFs, typical Ghanaian foods, and other foods such as noodles while only 18% offered solely the FGRAFFs. These foods that are generally recognised as fast food worldwide were imported into the country but have been *transformed in various ways to suit local preferences* and are now available and have become part of urban diet that are highly consumed in restaurants. The transformations include the serving of fried rice and French fries with *shitor* and the serving of fried chicken more often as a side dish or an accompaniment to other meals rather than as a dish in itself. Moreover, with the inclusion of a sauce (*shitor*) these FGRAFFs are perceived as 'real' foods or meals rather than snacks. The findings show that fried rice is the most consumed core food while foods such as burgers and sandwiches that are not accompanied by a sauce or soups are seldom consumed in fast-food restaurants.

Concerning its role for *urban food provision,* the realisation that most respondents (66%) are fast-food restaurant frequenters (i.e. people who buy or eat from fast-food restaurant one or more times a week) indicates the relevance of fast-food restaurants in urban food provision. These frequenters rely on fast-food restaurants to provide their lunch or supper at least once a week. The relevance of fast food in food provision is also manifested in the prevalence of fast-food restaurants as well as the rapidity with which these restaurants are spreading in the AMA. In relation to *health improvement*, generally, fast food was perceived to be nutritionally important for urban food provision and nutrition and health improvement due to its appreciable *carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and micronutrients* content. With the exception of carbohydrates and fats, which are also adequately present, most typical Ghanaian foods are usually deficient in animal protein and micronutrients such as vitamin A and iron. Typical Ghanaian foods usually contain **C**ore item or carbohydrate, **F**ringe item or sauce, and small **p**rotein (C+F+p) however fast food as found in this study usually contains **C**ore item or carbohydrate, **F**ringe item or sauce, big **P**rotein, and at least a **V**egetable (C+F+P+V) making them capable of meeting the energy, protein, and micronutrient needs of consumers and hence improving their health. Notwithstanding these nutritional and health relevance, fast food was also perceived to contain some properties such as excessive fat and food additives such as MSG that can provide health anxieties such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity for consumers. It was however perceived that the intensity of the health anxieties can be reduced, for example by using healthier cooking methods such as grilling and baking, and limiting the use of food additives to acceptable levels. Evidently, the nutritional value of fast food in the AMA is paradoxical and therefore evaluating it fairly requires further detailed analysis of the material properties of each specific fast-food item.

The findings have also shown that fast-food restaurants can be relevant for *tourism development.* The realisation that most fast-food restaurants in the AMA offer a combination of FGRAFFs and typical Ghanaian foods possibly makes them attractive to international tourists in particular. Most often, international tourists seek new food and dining experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006) but at the same time, many tourists also need a certain degree of familiarity and therefore their 'core' food preference, which may include FGRAFFs, may still be dominant especially in the case of Western tourists visiting destinations in developing countries such as Ghana where foods and some codes of etiquettes are typically unfamiliar (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Chang et al., 2010). Furthermore, most tourists are likely to eat traditional foods during their visits but would want to do so under hygienic conditions (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Amuquandoh, 2004). Incidentally, as indicated in the introduction section of this chapter, restaurants unlike most traditional eateries in Ghana are licensed and issued with Food Hygiene Permit only after Authorities are convinced that they have satisfied food safety and hygiene requirements. Therefore, fast-food restaurants in Ghana are better placed to provide the desired newness, familiarity, and a blend of the two (global-local) as well as hygienic food and decent eating environments that most tourists desire.

In terms of *techniques of food preparation*, precooking technology was commonly used in preparing most popular foods. However, with the growing general health consciousness of consumers, the demand for and the sale of foods prepared by healthier cooking techniques such as stir-frying, grilling, baking, and steaming, was found to be increasing. The use of

various kinds of cooking techniques has been made possible by the level of cooking skills the actors acquire from their training as well as various technologies and equipment that have been developed for easy food preparation and cooking. In relation to *the distinct flavour principles*, which entail types and quantities of seasonings and additives used in fast food, findings showed that *shitor (black pepper sauce)*, freshly ground pepper, and hot spices such as ginger are the main sources of flavour in most fast foods. This has been influenced by the Ghanaians' likeness for pepper and hot spices, which are believed to cool the body and clean it of impurities.

In relation to *the codes of etiquette*, which prescribes among others the social circumstances under which food is eaten, the findings indicated that most respondents often obtained fast food from restaurants where they either ate in or took the food away. On the one hand, the findings have shown how typical Ghanaian codes of etiquette have been integrated into fast-food restaurants. For example, eating in fast-food restaurants was found to be mainly conditioned in the AMA by the desire to sit, relax, interact and socialise with different categories of people including families, friends, and business partners. These findings, which were clearly influenced by the *commensality* attitude of typical Ghanaians, contradicted the original concept of fast food which aimed at providing in good time, food for people on the move- the main reason why the concepts of self-service and drive-through were introduced. Most respondents ate fast food at lunchtime, suppertime, or between lunch and supper and at these mealtimes, 'real food' is usually eaten in conformance to the typical Ghanaians culture of eating – starches and eating soups/stews at lunch and supper and, in some cases, breakfast to provide adequate satisfaction and energy. This explains why the most common fast foods found in the restaurants were 'real foods' or meals rather than snacks. On the other hand, the findings have also shown how codes of etiquette in fast-food restaurants have restrain the practice of some of the Ghanaian codes of etiquette in the restaurants. For example, the Ghanaian codes of etiquettes require that water should be passed round the table for each person to wash his or her hands before food is eaten however, most restaurateurs often made no provisions for hand washing so consumers were compelled to use cutlery. As a result, some consumers are denied the unique and desirable taste they claim to derive when eating with fingers.

The findings have revealed six additional cuisine characteristics namely, (1) *techniques of serving food*, (2) *techniques of packaging*, (3) *environmental appropriateness* of the packaging material, (4) *geographical or cultural origin of the food*, (5) the *food chain* by which food or ingredients moves from farm to fork, and (6) the *marketing system.* An understanding of these six additional characteristics is needed in order to evaluate fast food fairly in different social and cultural contexts. For urban food provision, *techniques of serving food, techniques of packaging, environmental appropriateness* of packaging materials, and *marketing system are important* while *geographical or cultural origin* of the food is relevant for tourism development. Concerning health improvement, *techniques of packaging* is very critical as the use of wrong packaging material may compromise the safety of the food while *environmentally harmful packages* may pose both environmental and health risks for consumers and the society as a whole.

The findings imply that when fast food is analysed along these six plus the original four cuisine characteristics one is better placed to identify similarities, differences and

hybridisations in terms of the fast-food phenomenon and what it means to people in different sociocultural contexts and generations.

This chapter contributes to the scientific debates of fast food in which fast food and fast-food restaurants have been examined as material objects. First of all, the research makes a contribution by examining the social practices of consuming material culture such as buying and eating-out in a non-material cultural object such as the restaurants - an area which has been overlooked in material culture studies to date (De Solier, 2013). Whereas fast food has previously been evaluated based on static characteristics (e.g. poor nutritional properties) this study has shown that the characteristics of fast food are dynamic in space and time and therefore its relevance in different sociocultural contexts can also differ. The findings on the various characteristics of fast food calls for the need to re-examine the previous definitions of fast food as well as its characteristics and the criticisms levelled against it. The findings have also shown that fast food is a broad term that constitutes various types of food, each with its unique material properties. Therefore, a proposal is made for future studies and analysts to examine the individual fast-food items separately to identify the relevance or otherwise of each item rather than lumping them all together as one whole.

Secondly, by using the cuisine concept (Farb & Armelagos, 1980; Rozin, 1982), which has four cuisine characteristics, as an analytical framework and applying inductive approach of data collection and analysis, it was possible to assess the characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the AMA and to show how these characterises have been influenced by the typical Ghanaian food culture. At the same time, six additional cuisine characteristics emerged from the study. In spite of its usefulness in analysing a cuisine such as fast food and thereby understanding its primary and invented functions, the application of the cuisine concept in the field of food studies has been limited. Therefore, future research should incorporate these six additions cuisine characteristics into the cuisine concept when studying food as a material cultural object to identify not only the cultural attributes of food but also the social, economic, and behavioural attributes.

The findings have shown how government's policy of reducing the incidences of non-communicable dietary–related diseases such as diabetes and obesity has resulted in increased awareness of benefits of healthy eating. As a result, consumers now demand healthier foods such as grilled foods in preference to fried foods, or fish in preference to meat (as in the case of *banku* and grilled tilapia). The government's Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme can take advantage of consumers' preference for healthier foods to ensure that these foods are available in fast-food restaurants, which have been shown in this study to be relevant for urban food provision. Government's policy of developing the tourism sector has also led to the establishment of various training institutions that provide relevant human resource for the tourism sector including fast-food restaurants. The presence of a combination of FGRAFFs and typical Ghanaian foods in most of the fast-food restaurants could be the result of interventions by the National Commission on Culture and the Ghana Tourism Authority, which encourage restaurateurs to portray features of Ghanaian culture in their restaurants. Essentially, the government of Ghana supports the integration of foreign and traditional cultures therefore fast-food

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restaurants as tourism enterprises can be used as an important avenue for showcasing Ghanaian food culture.

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Chapter Three

The role of convenience as a social objective for fast-food consumption in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana[11]

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[11] This Chapter has been submitted for publication as Omari, R., et al. (2014c).

3.1 Introduction

People derive social objectives from, create personal meanings to, and send specific messages to others as they use material objects (Douglas & Isherwood 1996). In the case of fast food, which is being considered here as a material culture object, some authors (e.g. Satia et al., 2004; Bowman et al., 2004; Block et al., 2004; Steyn et al., 2011) have associated its consumption with social objectives such as convenience. Convenience encompasses people's desire to save time and energy while engaging in the social practices of consumption. These social practices of consumption include planning, shopping, storage, preparation, and consumption of products as well as cleaning up and disposal of leftovers and wastes (Yale & Venkatesh, 1986; Berry et al., 2002; Darian & Cohen, 1995; Gofton, 1995; Scholderer & Grunert 2005). It also entails the transfer of significant amount of preparation time, culinary skills or energy inputs from the home kitchen to the food processor or distributor (Candel, 2001; Costa et al., 2001; Bender & Bender, 1995).

The demand for convenience is fundamentally being driven by socioeconomic and sociocultural factors, such as increased number of women in the workforce, longer working hours, changes in household compositions, increased time-constraint consumers with higher disposable incomes, declining cooking skills, and breakdown of traditional mealtimes (Gofton, 1995; Olsen et al., 2007; Buckley et al., 2007). Earlier researchers such as Scholderer and Grunert (2005) and Olsen et al. (2007) proposed that convenience should be examined in relation to the *perceived product convenience* (which is a product attribute) and the *convenience orientation* (which is a psychosocial attribute of an individual). Also, both perceived product convenience and convenience orientation have been found to be influenced by demographic and lifestyle variables as well as cooking skills (Gofton, 1995; Furst et al., 1996; Candel, 2001). However, little scientific studies have given attention to this issue in relation to fast-food consumption. Therefore, in this study, I examine how (i) *perceived product convenience,* (ii) *convenience orientation* (i.e. consumers' inclination to save time, mental effort, and physical effort), (iii) *demographic variables* (i.e. age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level), and (iv) cooking skills influence fast-food consumption in the AMA. Furthermore, I did not examine convenience orientation as one whole variable but rather in relation to *consumers' inclination to save* (a) *time, (b) mental effort,* and *(c) physical effort* in the social practices of food consumption to be able to assess their relative importance.

Studies conducted in Ghana by Omari et al. (2013) (also Chapter two of this thesis) and Asiedu et al. (1998) have shown that although fast food may be beneficial for urban food provision, health improvement (i.e. source of energy, protein, and some micronutrients), and tourism development it can also contribute to health problems such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases as well as environmental sanitation problems. Therefore, fast-food restaurateurs and fast-food consumers are key actors for addressing the health and sanitation problems on which the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) Programme of the Ministry of Health in Ghana focuses. To determine whether and in which ways the effectiveness of the RHN programme can be enhanced to reduce health and sanitation problems associated with fast-food consumption, it is important to understand the main determinants of its consumption. Therefore, this chapter focuses on explaining the ways in which convenience influences fast-food consumption in the AMA. By understanding the

relationship between convenience and fast-food consumption, it may become possible to formulate more effective strategies for influencing consumer behaviours and implement more effective RHN Programme – this will be discussed at the concluding part of this chapter. First of all, I will discuss the conceptual framework, from which my analysis of the role of convenience starts, then the methodological approach and findings followed by a discussion of the findings.

3.2 Conceptual framework

Convenience has often been assessed in terms of the *perceived product convenience,* which refers to how consumers evaluate convenience attributes associated with planning, purchasing, preparing, serving, and eating a particular product (Darian & Cohen, 1995; Steptoe et al., 1995; Lockie et al., 2002; Rortveit & Olsen, 2009). Researchers such as Steptoe et al. (1995), Lockie et al. (2002), and Dave et al. (2009) have all found an association between the perceived product convenience and food choices and consumption. Perceived product convenience has also been found to interact with contexts and therefore may be influenced by social, economic or demographic variables and factors such as cooking skills and experience (Gofton, 1995; Furst et al., 1996).

Another dominant theoretical approach used to explain the increasing importance of convenience is *convenience orientation* (Scholderer & Grunert 2005), which refers to 'the degree to which a consumer is inclined to save time, mental effort, and physical effort with regard to the social practices of consumption (Candel, 2001). Thus, convenience orientation may be examined in terms of three components namely, (i) consumers' inclination to save time, (ii) consumers' inclination to save mental effort, and (iii) consumers' inclination to save physical effort. Convenience orientation is also related to food choice and consumption and is in fact, regarded as a mediator between determinants such as demographic characteristics and convenience-related behaviours such as purchasing convenience products and using convenient shopping and fast-food outlets (Scholderer & Grunert 2005).

Researchers have found that perceived product convenience and convenience orientation are *positively related* and have therefore proposed that both should be combined in order to have a comprehensive measure of convenience (Scholderer & Grunert, 2005; Olsen et al., 2007). For example, the effect of convenience orientation on fish consumption was completely mediated by the perceived convenience of fish (Olsen et al., 2007). Other studies showed that convenience orientation may be *influenced by individual differences* such as demographic and lifestyle variables and cooking experience (Candel, 2001). For example, lack of confidence in cooking skills can be an important barrier for food preparation and hence lead to frequent fast-food consumption (Caraher et al., 1999; Larson et al., 2006; Van der Horst et al., 2011).

In summary, *convenience* is a measure of how a consumer evaluates the convenience attributes of a product (i.e. perceived product convenience) and the degree to which a consumer is inclined to save time and mental and physical efforts while engaging in the social practices of consumption (i.e. convenience orientation). Furthermore, both perceived product convenience and convenience orientation can be influenced by demographic and

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life style variables as well as cooking skills, and all these factors can influence food choice and consumption.

Although convenience is an important factor associated with fast-food consumption limited scientific studies have examined convenience in terms of the perceived product convenience and convenience orientation. Dave et al. (2009) examined the importance of attitude on fast-food consumption and considered factors such as 'perceived product convenience' and aspects related to cooking but called for further research to elucidate the potential associations of fast-food intake with some of the important psychosocial and attitudinal aspects of an individual. Van der Horst et al. (2011) also assessed the association of convenience with fast-food consumption by considering factors such as perception of meal preparation effort, time scarcity and cooking skills. None of these two studies has examined convenience comprehensively. Several studies have also found a relationship between demographic variables and fast-food consumption. For examples, several researchers in developed countries (e.g. Ebbeling et al., 2002; Satia et al., 2004; Bowman et al., 2004; Dave et al., 2009; Kumanyika & Grier, 2006; Paeratakul et al., 2003) have found that youth, males, employed, and singles have greater odds of eating fast food more frequently than their counterparts. Steyn et al. (2011) and Van der Horst et al. (2011) who conducted their studies in South Africa and Switzerland respectively have found a positive relationship between income level and frequency fast-food consumption. Fryar and Ervin (2013) who assessed the relationship between income level and fast-food consumption among USA adults found an overall no difference in income status and the amount of calories from fast food consumed. However, in the youngest age group, 20–39 years, the amount of fast-food calories significantly decreased with increasing income level. The findings on the relationships between income level and fast-food consumption are inconsistent and therefore need to be explored further in a developing country like Ghana.

In view of these gaps in various studies and referring to the conceptual background this study seeks to explain how (i) perceived convenience of fast food, (ii) convenience orientation, (iii) cooking skills, and (iv) demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level) influence fast-food consumption among consumers in the Accra Metropolitan Area in Ghana and to assess the relative importance of these factors in fast-food consumption. Furthermore, unlike other studies (e.g. Olsen et al., 2007) that examine convenience orientation as one whole variable, in this study, convenience orientation is examined in relation to saving time, mental effort, and physical effort in one or more social practices of consumption to be able to determine the relative importance of time, mental effort, and physical efforts in relation to fast-food consumption.

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From the conceptual background, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 1

There is a positive relationship between perceived product convenience and frequency of fast-food consumption

Hypothesis 2

There is a positive relationship between convenience orientation and frequency of fast-food consumption – this hypothesis is further developed into three additional specific assumptions, namely:

a. There is a positive relationship between consumers' inclination to save time and frequency of fast-food consumption

b. There is a positive relationship between consumers' inclination to save mental effort and frequency of fast-food consumption

c. There is a positive relationship between consumers' inclination to save physical effort and frequency of fast-food consumption

Hypothesis 3

There is a negative relationship between cooking skill and frequency of fast-food consumption

Hypothesis 4

There is a specific relationship between some specific demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level) and perceived product convenience, convenience orientation, and frequency of fast-food consumption

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 *Study participants and procedure*

A cross-sectional consumer survey was conducted in 20 systematically sampled fast-food restaurants in the Accra Metropolitan Area using the same study participants and procedure as described in Chapter two (section 2.5) of this thesis.

3.3.2 *Item generation and measures*

Perceived product convenience was measured by five items. Three of the items were adapted from the perceived product convenience scale (Steptoe et al., 1995; Lockie et al., 2002; Dave et al., 2009). Two items were added to reflect convenience at different stages of the meal process. These items were: 'I eat fast food because it requires little effort to clear-up after eating' and 'I eat fast food because it is easy to eat'. All the items were each rated on a five-point Likert scale.

The items measuring convenience orientation were derived from convenience orientation scale (Candel, 2001) and the scale for perception of meal preparation effort (Van der Horst et al., 2011). In total, convenience orientation was measured by 14 items (four for the inclination to save time; and five each for the inclination to save mental and physical efforts). Based on earlier theoretical discussions and the type of food under discussion, in this case fast food, we slightly modified the items to emphasise buying, eating and clearing-up. Thus, convenience orientation covered not only the meal preparation stage but also the other stages of the overall meal process.

Cooking skill was assessed by one question, '*I can prepare a lot of meals even without a recipe*' (Van der Horst et al., 2011) and it was answered by either 'yes' or 'no'. Finally, demographic information was self-reported by the participants. They included age, gender, education level, marital status, employment status/occupation, working status (full time, part-time) and average monthly income.

Frequency of fast-food consumption was measured by one item, '*How often do you eat fast food such as French fries, burgers, fried chicken, fried rice, and pizza from a fast-food restaurant?*' and was answered on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 ('1-5 times each six months') to 5 ('every day or almost every day').

3.3.3 *Statistical analysis*

Out of the 425 questionnaires administered, 419 were retrieved of which 19 were discarded because not more than 30% of the questions had been answered. Therefore, in total, 400 valid ones with no missing values were used for data analyses. Data analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20). Initial data analysis included descriptive statistics and reliability and factor analysis. Categorical variables were summarised by frequencies and percentages, and quantitative variables were summarised by mean and standard deviation. Frequency of fast-food consumption was dichotomised by distinguishing persons consuming fast food one or more times per week (frequenters) from those consuming fast food at most three times per month (non-frequenters: reference group). Fast-food restaurant frequenters are persons who eat from a fast-food restaurant one or more times a week (Satia et al., 2004). Spearman's correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the unadjusted associations of different demographic variables with convenience factors and frequency of fast-food intake. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine the multivariate relationships of fast-food intake with convenience orientation (inclination to save time, mental and physical efforts), perceived product convenience, cooking skills and demographic variables. Nagelkerke's R^2 was used to evaluate the proportion of variance explained by the model. Odds ratios (OR), P values and confidence intervals were reported for each level of the variables.

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Table 3.1 Factor analysis of perceived product convenience and convenience orientation measure in relation to fast-food consumption in 400 respondents

Construct and indicators	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Eigen value	% variance
Factor 1: Perceived convenience of fast food		.86	1.60	7.39
I eat fast food because it is easy to get	.58			
I eat fast food because it is quick to get	.54			
I eat fast food because it requires little effort to clear-up after eating	.90			
I eat fast food because it is easy to eat	.91			
Factor 2: Consumers' inclination to save time		.87	2.01	9.89
1 The less time I need to buy, prepare and eat a meal the better	.59			
2 I prefer foods that are quick to get	.91			
3 I prefer foods that can be prepared or eaten quickly	.88			
4 I prefer foods that are readily available	.67			
Factor 3: Consumers' inclination to save mental effort		.94	6.41	33.77
1 I don't want to think about what to buy, cook or eat for a long time	.85			
2 Cooking means mental effort, which I try to avoid if possible	.82			
3 After a busy day, I don't like to worry mentally about cooking or what to eat	.81			
4 The less I have to think about preparing a meal, the better	.80			
Factor 4: Consumers' inclination to save physical effort		.91	3.69	18.16
1 The less physical energy I need to prepare a meal, the better	.71			
2 After a busy day, I find it physically very exhausting to prepare a meal	.69			
3 Cooking and clearing up means physical effort that I try to avoid if possible	.94			
4 I try to minimise the physical effort required in meals preparation	.75			
5 I'm often physically tired hence I don't feel like preparing a meal	.87			

Only significant item loadings are shown here; items considered on a factor at loading score >0.35

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3.3.4 *Psychometric properties of convenience scale*

As shown in Table 3.1, factor analysis on the convenience scale yielded four distinct factors (i.e. Eigen value>1). Perceived convenience of fast food originally had five items however reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.34, which fell below the acceptable Cronbach's α of 0.7-0.8. Consequently, one item, *'I eat fast food because it is inexpensive'* was deleted because its Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for internal consistency was 0.86 as compared to the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.34.

After factor analysis, all the four items on the new perceived convenience of fast-food scale, namely, (1) I eat fast food because it is easy to get, (2) I eat fast food because it is quick to get, (3) I eat fast food because it requires little effort to clear-up after eating, (4) I eat fast food because it is easy to eat significantly loaded high on factor 1 yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.86 and mean=3.23±1.16. This means that each of the four items is highly correlated with this factor and is therefore a valid measure of the construct (factor).

Consumers' inclination to save time comprising of four items, namely, (1) the less time I need to buy, prepare and eat a meal the better, (2) I prefer foods that are quick to get, (3) I prefer foods that can be prepared or eaten quickly, and (4) I prefer foods that are readily available, demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.87 and mean=3.26±1.13. This means that all the four items loaded well on factor 2 and are therefore a reliable measure of this construct.

Consumers' inclination to save mental effort, originally comprising of five items had four final items, namely, (1) I don't want to think about what to buy, cook or eat for a long time, (2) cooking means mental effort, which I try to avoid if possible, (3) after a busy day, I don't like to worry mentally about cooking or what to eat, (4) the less I have to think about preparing a meal, the better. These items together demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.93 with mean=3.70±1.18. The fifth item on the consumers' inclination to save mental effort subscale (i.e. *I try to minimise the mental effort required in meals preparation*) was discarded because it loaded on two factors (i.e. factors 3 and 4).

Consumers' inclination to save physical effort, comprising of five items, namely, (1) the less physical energy I need to prepare a meal, the better, (2) after a busy day, I find it physically very exhausting to prepare a meal, (3) cooking and clearing up means physical effort that I try to avoid if possible, (4) I try to minimise the physical effort required in meals preparation, (5)
I'm often physically tired hence I don't feel like preparing a meal, demonstrated an internal consistency reliability of The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of 0.91 with mean=3.84±0.96. This implies that all the five items highly correlated with this factor and specific attribute for the construct. The means for items on each of the factors were calculated and each factor was treated as a separate scale for further analyses.

3.4 Results
3.3.1 *Sample description*
As shown Table 3.2, the mean age of the respondents was 25.9 ± 7.63 years, majority of respondents was youthful[12] (88.5%), male respondents constituted 61% of the sample, 84.5% were single, 60.0% had tertiary level degree (e.g., university, polytechnic), 49.0% were employed, and 41.3% were students mostly in tertiary education. More than half (65.8%) of the respondents reported eating fast food from a fast-food restaurant at least once a week and were thus classified as fast-food restaurant frequenters [based on Satia et al.'s (2004) classification]. The non-frequenters constituted 34.2% of the respondents. Clearly, the characteristics of respondents in this study are a reflection of the type of persons who largely visit fast-food restaurants in the Accra Metropolis. Details of these characteristics are presented in Table 3.2. showing that fast-food restaurants frequenters are mostly between 15-35 years, 61 % male, 84,5 % single, 60% with tertiary educational level, 49% employed and 41,3 % student having some monthly income and having certain cooking skills at their disposal.

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[12] The National Youth Policy of Ghana defines the youth as persons in the 15-35 years age range.

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Table 3.2 Characteristics of survey respondents (N = 400)

Characteristics of study population		No. of respondents	% of respondents
Age	15-35 years	354	88.5
	>35 years	46	11.5
Gender	Male	244	61.0
	Female	156	39.0
Marital status	Married	62	15.5
	Single	338	84.5
Education level	Tertiary	239	60.0
	Senior High School	146	36.5
	Basic	12	3.0
	None	2	.5
Occupation	Employed	196	49.0
	Student	165	41.3
	Unemployed	39	9.7
Work status (employed & students) (N=361)	Full time	220	61.0
	Part-time	141	39.0
Monthly income	<100 GHS	19	4.8
	100 – 500 GHS	115	28.7
	501 – 1,000 GHS	56	14.0
	1001 – 1,500 GHS	22	5.5
	1,501 – 2,000 GHS	12	3.0
	>2,000 GHS	12	3.0
	None	164	41.0
Cooking skill	Yes	275	68.8
	No	125	31.2
Gender cooking skill	Males with cooking skill	148 (n=244)	60.7
	Female with cooking skill	129 (n=156)	82.7
Frequency of fast-food intake	Daily	66	16.5
	2-4 times a week	153	38.3
	Once a week	44	11.0
	1-3 times a month	73	18.2
	1-5 times each six months	64	16.0

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3.3.2 *Correlates of fast-food consumption*

Table 3.3 shows the unadjusted associations of the different variables with fast-food consumption. Perceived convenience of fast food (r=0.654, p=0.000), consumers' inclination to save time (r=0.562, p=0.000), having income (r=0.141, p=0.005) and cooking skill (r=0.14, p=0.00) were found to be significantly associated with fast-food consumption, while the association with the rest of the variables were not statistically significant.

Consumers' inclination to save time had significant positive correlations with consumers' inclination to save mental effort (r=0.171, p=0.001), consumers' inclination to save physical effort (r=0.108, p=0.031), perceived product convenience (r=0.464, p=0.00), employment status (r=0.147, p=0.003) and working status (r=0.105, p=0.035). Consumers' inclination to save mental effort had significant positive association with consumers' inclination to save physical effort (r=0.423, p=0.000) and perceived product convenience (r=0.100, p=0.046).

Negative but non-significant correlations were found between frequency of fast-food intake and age, gender and working status while positive associations were found between frequency of fast-food consumption and marital status and employment status.

Table 3.3 Spearman rank correlations of demographics characteristics, perceived product convenience, consumers' inclination to save time and effort, and frequency of fast-food consumption.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Age	1.00												
Gender	-.20**	1.00											
Marital Status	-.47**	.02	1.00										
Educational level	.-.32**	.04	.03	1.00									
Employment Status	-.64**	.18**	.35**	.17**	1.00								
Work status	.03	-.14**	.05	.07	-.03	1.00							
Income	-.40**	14**	.17**	.20**	.64**	-.02	1.00						
Cooking skill	-.01	-.24**	.02	.02	.07	-.01	-.01	1.00					
TIME	-.06	-.03	.07	-.02	.15**	.11*	.07	.08	1.00				
MENTAL	-.03	.11*	.05	-.05	.06	-.08	-.05	.17**	1.00				
PHYSICAL	-.03	.08	.04	-.04	-.01	-.09	.02	-.06	.11*	.42**	1.00		
Perceived Con	.10*	-.07	.02	.04	.03	-.03	.13*	.08	.46**	.10*	.04	1.00	
Freq	-.01	-.02	.08	.01	.09	-.03	.14**	.01*	.56**	.10	.06	.65**	1.00

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) ** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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Table 3.4 Logistic regression: predictors of fast-food intake (reference = non-frequenters: fast-food intake 3 or less times per month) (n = 400)

Variable	Category	Odds ratio	95% CI	P value
Age	Older respondents	Ref		
	Youth	1.284	.405 – 4.066	.671
Gender	Female	Ref		
	Male	1.296	.669 – 2.513	.442
Marital Status	Single	Ref		
	Married	.632	.240 – 1.659	.351
Education Level	-	.929	.561 – 1.539	.776
Employment Status	Unemployed	Ref		
	Students	2.030	.548 –7.528	.289
	Employed	1.498	.394 – 5.706	.553
Working status	Part-time	Ref		
	Full time	.653	.247 –1.724	.390
Average monthly income	-	1.027	.743 – 1.421	.870
Cooking skill	No	Ref		
	Yes	1.024	.520 – 2.019	.945
Mental effort	-	.934	.668 – 1.268	.662
Physical effort	-	.989	.708 – 1.382	.949
Time	-	**2.541**	1.859 – 3.473	.000
Perceived convenience	-	**4.477**	3.223 – 6.217	.000

Boldface values indicate that odds ratio is significant at the 0.05 level.

CI = confidence interval. Ref = reference group

1.3.3. *Multivariate correlates of fast-food consumption*

The logistic regression model for frequency of fast-food consumption (Table 3.4) yielded Nagelkerke's R^2=0.614 implying that 61.40% of the variance was explained.

In the logistic model, perceived convenience of fast food (OR=4.477, p=0.00) and *consumers' inclination to save time* (OR=2.541, p=0.000) were found to be significant predictors of frequent fast-food intake, when adjusted for other variables in the model. Thus, for every one unit increase in the consumers' inclination to save time and perceived convenience of fast food (as measured on a 5-point Likert scale), the likelihood of eating fast food frequently increased by 2.541 and 4.477 times respectively, after controlling for the other factors in the model.

Income and *cooking skill* were positively associated with fast-food consumption in the correlations but they were not significant in the logistic model.

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3.5 Discussion

3.5.1 *Predictors of frequent fast-food consumption*

The first most interesting finding of the present study was the significant *association of perceived convenience of fast food with frequency of fast-food consumption*, which supports hypothesis 1. The finding suggests that the more consumers perceive fast food to be convenient (i.e. having convenience attributes) the more likely they are to eat it more frequently. Dave et al. (2009) also reported similar findings. Interestingly, in this present study, one of the three indicators of perceived product convenience used by earlier researchers, 'I eat fast food because it is inexpensive', was found not to be significant to the measurement of the construct. The probable reason being that fast food especially those obtained from restaurants in developing countries have been reported to be relatively more expensive (Olutayo & Akanle, 2009; Goyal & Singh, 2007) than in developed countries where the perceived convenience subscale was developed. It is very likely that the respondents in this study ate fast food more frequently not because it was cheap – which indeed was not the case - but due to the other indicators of perceived convenience and probably some added values such as style of food presentation and hygienic environments. In this light, the suggestion in some studies (e.g. Dave et al., 2009; Rapport et al., 1992; French et al., 1997) that price reductions for healthy foods along with price increases for fast food could be a successful public health strategy might not be successful in the Ghanaian context. This is because as discovered in Chapter two, most respondents indicated that fast food was more expensive than other foods yet the frequent consumers were more than the non-frequenters. In this light, for this strategy to be successful in Ghana, other indicators of the perceived product convenience (time and effort aspects) need to be integrated into the healthier foods. For example, low priced healthier foods should also be quick to get, easy to get, and should require little effort to clear-up after eating.

Secondly, the findings indicated that *consumers' inclination to save time* at various stages of the consumption process (a component of convenience orientation) was found to be significantly associated with frequency of fast-food consumption thus supporting hypothesis 2a. However, hypothesis 2b (consumers' inclination to save mental effort) and 2c (consumers' inclination to save physical effort) were not supported. Some researchers (e.g. Candel, 2001; Olsen et al., 2007) also found a positive relationship between convenience orientation and food consumption. However, the finding in this present study showed that it is the time component of convenience orientation that is significant in influencing fast-food consumption. Theoretically, the finding illustrates the relevance of examining convenience orientation in terms of its time and efforts components rather than treating it as one whole variable. By this, it has been possible to determine the relative significance of each of the components of convenience orientation, and in this case, the time component (i.e. inclination to save time) was the most significant in predicting fast-food consumption.

Other studies (e.g. Devine et al., 2009) also showed that parents who have demanding work conditions or limited time use specific food choice coping strategies such as the use of fast food. Relating this to my finding suggest that consumers who are inclined to save time (i.e. have preference for food that requires less time to purchase, prepare, or eat) are more likely to consume fast food more frequently. The implications are that: (1) interventions seeking

to decrease fast-food consumption should focus on strategies to increase convenience attributes (e.g., quick to get, easy to get, eat and clear-up) of healthy foods but with much emphasis on ways of reducing time spent at various stages of the overall meal process. As an example, vegetables and fruits on sale could be minimally processed (e.g., sorting, washing, peeling, chopping or cutting) to reduce preparation time and by this people may be encouraged to cook their own food more often. (2) For fast-food producers, while they integrate convenience attributes into their operations to attract convenience-oriented consumers, they must make special efforts to improve the healthiness of their food. As found in Chapter two, for example, cooking methods can impact nutritional or health importance of food. Therefore, fast-food producers can enhance the healthiness of their food by, for example, choosing for certain foods grilling in preference to frying.

Thirdly, the correlations showed a positive relationship between frequency of fast-food consumption and *income level* however the logistic model could not confirm the ability of income level to predict frequency of fast-food consumption. The possible explanation for the statistically non-significant result in the logistic model could stem from the fact that as many as 164 (41%) out of 400 respondents (see Table 3.2) indicated that they earned no income hence this might have influenced the overall effect of income on fast-food consumption. According to the Oxford Dictionary, income refers to money received, especially on a regular basis, for work or through investments. Hence, the non-income earners, most of who were students, might not be receiving any income yet by virtue of their status may be getting money from various sources such as parents, relatives, bursaries, and stipends. Future studies should therefore be cautious to differentiate between income and availability or possession of money.

Like the results of the correlations in this study, other studies also found a positive relationship between income level and frequency fast-food consumption, (e.g. Steyn et al., 2011; Van der Horst et al., 2011). The implication of this finding is that, it emphasises the point that fast food in Ghana is relatively expensive and therefore it is likely to be consumed frequently by people with appreciable level of income or money. This finding is important because Ghana is currently experiencing rapid urbanisation, economic development and income improvements therefore there is the tendency for urban dwellers to experience nutrition transition (characterised by higher intakes of energy-dense foods, refined sugar and meat products with lower intakes of fibre) and the adoption of global urban eating pattern such as the consumption of many Western-style foods including fast food (Popkin, 1994; Regmi & Dyck, 2001). Moreover, as economic activities increase many urban dwellers are increasingly becoming time-constraint and therefore are likely to resort to fast-food consumption as a coping strategy. In this light, interventions are critical to protect these consumers against adverse effects of fast food.

Fourthly, the study could not show that *youth, males, employed, students and singles had greater odds of eating fast food more frequently* as found in earlier studies (e.g. Ebbeling et al., 2002; Satia et al., 2004; Bowman et al., 2004; Dave et al., 2009; Kumanyika & Grier, 2006; Paeratakul et al., 2003). The failure of the findings in this study to be statistically significant might be due to differences in study locations (in terms of developed and developing countries), the types of respondents (who might have different socioeconomic

status and lifestyle in developed and developing countries) or other factors that must be investigated in future studies.

Finally, this study found a significant positive relationship between cooking skill and frequency of fast food consumption but could not confirm this in the regression model. The correlation results however contradicts earlier findings (e.g. Van der Horst et al., 2011), which showed that persons who spent time cooking, who like to cook, feel confident cooking and have the skills to cook a meal are less likely to consume fast food. Also, young adults who reported frequent food preparation reported less frequent fast-food consumption (Larson et al., 2006). In this present study, majority of the respondents (69%) reported having good cooking skills (see Table 3.1) therefore the *positive association of cooking skill with frequent fast-food consumption* might be due to various reasons that must be further investigated. In the meantime, this finding could imply that having cooking skill does not necessarily mean that a person will always cook his/her own food. In addition to cooking skill, other factors such as time available for cooking must be considered- a persons who has adequate cooking skill might be time-constraint and may not be able to cook and therefore will resort to eating fast food. Also, the traditional stereotypical gender roles in Ghana whereby men do not usually cook could deter people (single men in particular) who have good cooking skill from cooking and rather resort to out-of-home foods including fast food. Some studies have also demonstrated that a dislike of cooking was associated with a higher frequency of fast-food intake (Dave et al., 2009; Crawford et al., 2007).) Thus, integrating these findings into the findings in this present study will suggest that to decrease fast-food intake, interventions need to target the reduction of time spent in the overall meal process as well as making cooking attractive and enjoyable.

Furthermore, *time and effort components of convenience orientation were positively related* therefore interventions must also focus on reducing the mental and physical efforts in the meal process. For example, to reduce physical effort, government's interventions for households can focus on increasing the availability and affordability of easy-to-use fuel sources (e.g. liquefied petroleum gas rather than charcoal or firewood), pipe borne water and electricity (to supply power to food storage facilities such as refrigerators). Mental efforts can also be reduced by providing consumers with information about possible healthier food options, where they can be obtained and how they can be prepared quickly-recipe tips for healthier options could be provided. People should also be encouraged to develop menu guides as a way of reducing mental effort. In this way, the amount of thinking an individual has to do vis a vis what to eat, where to eat, what to cook and how to cook, can be reduced.

3.5.2 *Relationships among variables and their association with frequency of fast-food consumption*

First of all, the findings showed that all the three components of convenience orientation (i.e., consumers' inclination to save time, mental and physical efforts) had significant positive association with one another. This suggests that consumers who have positive inclination toward the saving of time are most likely to have a preference for meals that require less mental and physical efforts during their planning, purchasing, preparation, eating and clearing up. This implies that all the three components of convenience

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orientation are important in the meal process however, the time component as mentioned earlier was found to be the most significant.

Secondly, significant positive relationships were found between employment, working status and the inclination to save time. This implies that full-time employees and students, most of whom are likely to be time-constraint, are most likely to have a preference for meals that require less time to plan, prepare, purchase, eat and clear-up. Therefore, in designing nutrition intervention programmes, it is important to target these groups of persons. Interventions may include strategies to reduce the time and efforts required to get healthier meals particularly at work places and school campuses.

Thirdly, gender was found to relate positively with consumers' inclination to save mental energy implying that women are more oriented toward meals that require less mental energy to plan, prepare, purchase, eat and clear-up.

Fourthly, the finding showed significant positive relationships between perceived convenience of fast food and consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort. Similar results have been reported in earlier studies (Olsen et al., 2007) in relation to fish consumption. This result is important because it shows that a consumer who has preference for meals that require less time and mental effort is mostly likely to perceive fast food as convenient. This finding suggests that the relationship between perceived product convenience and fast-food consumption is enhanced by consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort. Theoretically, this finding demonstrates the interrelationship between perceived product convenience and convenience orientation and how either of them can mediate the predictive power of the other.

The fifth interesting finding is the significant positive associations found between age and perceived convenience of fast food and between income level and perceived convenience. Thus, as a person grows older, his/her perception of the convenience attributes of fast food becomes more positive. However, this did not result in a corresponding increase in the frequency of fast-food consumption. The high frequency of fast-food consumption among the youth could be also due to sociocultural factors such as the crave for newness and modern taste and the desire for elegance and pride and to associate with what is in vogue so as to boost one's self-esteem (Olutayo & Akanle 2009).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter sought to examine and explain how convenience as a social objective plays a role in the social practices of consuming fast food which include buying and eating fast food from a fast-food restaurant. The study was expected to identify strategies that may enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the Regenerative Health and Nutrition programme of the Ministry of Health in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana.

This study is unique because it explained simultaneously how perceived product convenience, convenience orientation, cooking skills and the demographic and lifestyle variables influence fast-food consumption. Moreover, unlike others, this study examined convenience orientation in terms of its three components namely, consumers' inclination to

save time, consumers' inclination to save mental effort, and consumers' inclination to save physical effort.

This study has shown some interesting findings. Firstly, the more consumers perceive fast food as convenient (i.e. having convenience attributes) the greater the odds of eating it more frequently. Secondly, all the three components of convenience orientation are important in influencing fast-food consumption but it is the time component that is most significant. Thirdly, the predictive power of income level and cooking skill on frequency of fast-food consumption could not be confirmed but the findings showed a positive association between them. The shortcoming of this chapter of not being able to predict the exact influence of the income level on the frequency of fast-food consumption calls for further investigations among different groups of respondents but taking in consideration – as this study has shown – that one needs to differentiate between having no income but still have access to or possession of money. Fourthly, unlike previous studies, the present findings could not confirm that youth, males, employed, students and singles had greater odds of eating fast food more frequently. Thus, this calls for further confirmatory investigations in the context of Ghana. Fifthly, although the logistic model could not confirm the finding that consumers who had adequate cooking skill have greater odds of eating fast food more frequently it contradicts earlier studies and my hypothesis. The statistical insignificance of this finding suggests the need for further investigations. Meanwhile, the findings could imply that having cooking skills does not necessarily mean that a person will always cook his/her own food because there could be other intervening factors that future studies must investigate. The intervening factors may include lack of time for cooking, stereotypical gender roles, dislike for cooking, and meals requiring too much physical and mental effort.

Another significant finding is that perceived convenience of fast food and consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort had positive associations. Theoretically, this finding demonstrates the interrelationship between perceived product convenience and convenience orientation and how either of them can mediate the predictive power of the other on frequency of fast-food consumption. In this study, consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort enhanced the predictive power of perceived product convenience on fast-food consumption. Furthermore, findings showed that as a person grows older, his/her perception of the convenience attributes of fast food becomes more positive. However, this did not result in a corresponding increase in the frequency of fast-food consumption implying that there could be other contexts and factors that influence fast-food choice as people advance in age. Thus, future studies can further investigate this.

The findings also indicated a high frequency of fast-food consumption among the youth, which some studies have attributed to sociocultural factors such as crave for newness and modern taste and the desire for elegance and pride. However, the effect of such factors on fast-food consumption in developing countries and Ghana in particular is largely understudied. Therefore, in chapter four of this thesis, I examined the extent to which sociocultural considerations such as identity are important in fast-food consumption.

This study contributes to the understanding of studying food from the material culture perspective. Some earlier researchers (e.g. Douglas & Isherwood, 1996) propose that

people choose material objects based on social objectives and that by understanding these social objectives we can better understand people's ideas and practices of, for example, eating (Gronow, 2004). Therefore, by examining convenience as a social objective of eating fast food, this study aims to contribute to this material culture approach. This study also contributes to the convenience literature in the field of marketing and behavioural sciences in the sense that whereas previous studies examined only one component of convenience (either, perceived product convenience or convenience orientation) this thesis examined both components simultaneously in order to comprehensively measure convenience. Furthermore, this study is unique because convenience orientation is examined in relation to saving time and mental and physical efforts in one or more of the stages of the overall meal process. Thus, it has become possible to determine the relative importance of time and mental and physical efforts in relation to fast-food consumption.

The policy implications of this chapter are that the research has clarified that most people in Ghana eat fast food because of their inclination to save time, mental and physical efforts as well as the inherent convenience attributes of fast food. Studies have shown that it is possible for restaurants to offer healthier (Rodriguez, 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Schroder & McEachern, 2005) and environmentally friendly (Suter, 2006) options. This may be facilitated by the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme and/or by other similar programmes that are being implemented in Ghana, which aims at reducing the incidences of non-communicable diet-related diseases by promoting healthy eating behaviours. These programs may encourage fast-food restaurants to provide healthier fast foods that are also packaged in environmentally friendly packages made from material such as paper. They may also influence the choice of cooking methods and thereby influence the nutritional and health impacts of the fast food. Depending on the food type, fast-food producers can enhance the healthiness of their food by, for example, choosing healthier cooking methods such as grilling and baking in preference to deep-frying method.

Apart from the possibility of supporting a more healthy and environmental friendly trajectory for fast-food consumption the RHN programme may also encourage the integration of convenience attributes (e.g. quick to get, easy to get, easy to prepare, eat and clear-up) into all the various social practices of consumption (e.g. purchasing, preparation, cooking eating, clearing-up) for consumers who would like to reduce fast-food consumption and prefer other food. As an example, the RHN could advocate that vegetables and fruits on sale should be minimally processed (e.g. sorted, washed, peeled, chopped, or cut) to reduce preparation time and by this people may be encouraged to cook their own food more often and visit the restaurant less often. Concerning those consumers who would like to adopt an exit strategy from the fast-food restaurants the RHN program can also try to implement the reduction of physical effort as required by many consumers by working with such households to, for example, increase the availability and affordability of easy-to-use fuel sources (e.g. liquefied petroleum gas rather than charcoal or firewood), pipe borne water and electricity (to supply power for food storage facilities such as refrigerators). Mental effort can also be reduced by providing consumers with information about possible healthier food options, where they can be obtained, and how they can be prepared quickly- recipe tips for healthier options could be provided. People should also be encouraged to develop menu guides as a way of reducing mental effort. This way, the amount of thinking an individual has to do vis a vis what to eat, where to eat, what to cook

and how to cook can be reduced. The high frequency of fast-food consumption among the youth, people in employment and students necessitates that RHN interventions must target these groups of people and develop strategies to reduce the time, physical and mental efforts they require to get healthy and environmental friendly meals at work places and school campuses.

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Chapter Four

Fast food's social identity: Content, contestation and influence on consumption[13]

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[13] This chapter has been submitted for publication as Omari et al. (2014b).

4.1 Introduction

Identity is a term that is widely used but can mean many different things to different people. Identity is sometimes used to refer to a sense of integration of the self, in which different aspects come together in a unified whole (Deux, 2001). Thus, the self has many different identities, which reflect the different positions that an individual holds or aspires to hold in a society as well as the different groups to which he or she belongs and/or aspires to belong to (Stets, 2006). Two broad categories of identity can be identified – (i) personal identity and (ii) group or social identity. Personal identity typically refers to characteristics of the self that one believes to be unique for to the self. Conversely, group or social identity is a statement about the categorical membership of the self whereby the identity is shared with a group of people who have (or are believed to have) some characteristics in common (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Brewer & Gardner, 1996). These common characteristics may be based for example on ethnicity, gender, or achieved status (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Deaux, 1996).

In this chapter, I examine the interrelationship between social identity and fast-food consumption whereby the term 'social identity' refers specifically to those aspects of a person that are defined in terms of his or her group memberships (Deaux, 2001). In this case, a fast-food restaurant-goer may define his or her self in relation to other people who are also fast-food restaurant-goers. Henceforth, social identity, group identity, fast food's social identity, and fast-food restaurant-goers will be used interchangeably. Sharing a social identity with others does not necessarily mean that the individual knows or interacts with every member of the group. Most importantly, it means that the individual believes that he or she shares numerous features with other members of the group and that to some extent, practices that are relevant to the group as a whole are also significant for the individual (Deaux, 2001). As an example, a person who defines herself as a member of the fast food's social identity is likely to know about the foods and services offered as well as behaviours commonly practised in the restaurants.

Social identity may be formed and/or expressed through consumption, for example, when a family is eating together, sharing food, and/or even taking communion in the church. Sharing food or the act of eating together has some magical properties in its ability to turn self-seeking individuals into a collaborative group (Belasco, 2008). People often develop feelings of connectedness with others when they participate in consumption activities together (Kleiber, 1999) and through participation, the group serves as a reference group for an individual to form or express his or her identity (Larson, 1994). Basically, through consumption people can display group identity at the same time as distinguishing the group from others (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

4.1.1 *Fast-food consumption and social identity*

Belasco (2008) observes that food sometimes construct and represents identity but it is not everything we eat that has a lot of meaning – some foods simply fill us up. Fast food is a typical object that delivers both utilitarian and representational functions. Yan (2005) notes that the popularity of fast food in developing countries is partly due to the conversion of

fast-food restaurants from eating places to social spaces. Thus, the fast-food phenomenon has become a new cultural construct, which comprises both food and non-food elements such as eating manners and patterns of social interaction. Omari et al. (2013) (also Chapter two of this thesis) found that although fast food in Ghana has undergone a mixture of various material and cultural changes leading to a renewed Ghanaian fast-food culture, most informants largely still linked fast food with aspects of American and Asian (particularly Chinese) culture. Therefore, eating fast food means for them that they identify themselves with what they perceive as 'new' and 'different' – something different from the 'usual'. Findings in Chapter two and Chapter three of this thesis show, for example, that although most respondents perceived fast food as more expensive than other foods, about 66% of the respondents reported that they still eat fast food from a fast-food restaurant frequently (at least once a week). For most of these consumers, the relatively high cost of fast food was not perceived as an obstacle for consumption in a fast-food restaurant, which represents a new dining experience. Olutayo and Akanle (2009) found similar results in Nigeria attributing the fast-food restaurant consumption to sociocultural factors such as crave for newness and modern taste, and the desire for elegance and pride. In general, consumption in a fast-food restaurant was associated with what is in vogue and which boosted self-esteem. Also, other authors (e.g. Van Zyl et al., 2010; Yan, 2005) indicate that consumption in fast-food restaurant in developing countries has a lot to do with social status and material affluence. What is common in all these studies is that they have all dealt with aspects of identity but have neither explicitly examined identity nor phrased their projects in terms of identity questions. Therefore, in this chapter, I explicitly examine the interrelationship between social identity and fast-food consumption with the purpose of achieving conceptual clarity in treating identity as a variable that influences food consumption.

This study takes inspiration from material culture approach whereby consumption of objects contributes to establish and/or challenge one's place in society, facilitates one's relationship with other individuals or groups, and indicates one's social affinities (Miller & Deustch, 2009; Woodward, 2007; Jackson, 2005; Dant, 1999). Material objects need to be analysed carefully to understand the various social and cultural meanings and perceptions people have about them (Waugh, 2004). However, this cannot be done in a vacuum because identity issues are dynamic in space and time and people everywhere look at the world through their own cultural lenses (Hall & Neitz, 1993; Featherstone, 1990). Therefore, it is important to hear the voice of the objects users to understand the various multiple practices, manipulations, and interpretations of the objects (Woodward, 2007).

Most of the earlier researchers such as Bourdieu (1984), Baudrillard (1998) and Fetherstone (1991) suggested that it is through consumption of commodities that people form or express their identity. Bourdieu emphasised that consumption is a set of social and cultural practices which act as a way of establishing differences between social groups. His work focused on the role taste plays in the formation of social classes and he argued that taste is not individual or natural but largely determined by class. He distinguishes between economic capital (e.g. income, occupation), cultural capital (e.g. tastes, values, beliefs) and educational capital (e.g. qualifications, background), which are potentials that people have and that from a combination of these potentials a system of classification develops whereby people learn what is tasteful, or what consumption is appropriate, good or bad, from within

their social group. Baudrillard indicates that the consumption of signs and symbols do not express an already pre-existing set of meanings and that meanings are generated with the system of signs and symbols. He indicates that the notion of people creating a sense of who they are through what they consumed has been forced upon us by the capitalist system. Featherstone also notes that modern individuals are made conscious that they speak with their clothes, homes, furnishings, cars, and other activities, which are to be interpreted and classified as the presence or absence of taste. For him, consumption is founded on a lack or desire for something absent hence our purchases reflect our innermost desires.

Combining insights from these researchers, none of whom focused on food, this study sought to examine the interrelationship between social identity and fast-food consumption. This study assumes that as people consume in a fast-food restaurant they express who they are and what they have, or acquire what they lack or what they desire for and by this they become members of the fast food's social group. Unlike Baudrillard who indicates that identity formation through commodity consumption has been forced upon us by the capitalist system, I am of the view that people also have options when it comes to consumption decisions. Consumption-related identity also differs from many forms of social identity such as family, ethnic, an age-group or gender where people do not have much choice about their membership. I argue that, individuals choose to become members of the fast food's social identity for various social, cultural, and behavioural reasons. Identifying the main determinants behind food consumption is essential because it allows us to better define the most effective tools for influencing behaviour (European Commission, 2012). This is particularly essential for fast-food consumption because of the various health effects that have been attributed to it. Most of the earlier researchers (e.g. Albala, 2012; Miller & Deutsch, 2009; Belasco, 2008) who considered food as an object focused on food as a product-in-itself. In this study, the various meanings and interpretations consumers ascribe to fast-food consumption are examined as well as how these meanings and their interpretations influence fast-food consumption pattern. This study focuses on two material objects (fast food and fast-food restaurants), the people who consume the fast food, and the buying and eating-out in fast-food restaurants – an area that has often been overlooked in material culture studies (De Solier, 2013).

To achieve this, I make reference to Abdelal et al. (2009, 2006) who indicate that the basis for a person to adopt, join, or express a particular identity depends on the identity content and the degree of its contestation. The identity *content* describes the meaning of a social identity (i.e. the group's norms and goals, their views and beliefs about other identities, and the group's understandings of their material conditions and interests) while *contestation* refers to the degree of agreement within a group over the content of the shared identity. Abdelal et al. (2009) have proposed four types of identity content, namely, (1) *constitutive norms*, which refer to the formal and informal rules that define group membership, (2) *social purposes*, which refer to the goals that are shared by members of a group, (3) *relational comparisons*, which refer to defining a group by the actor's interaction and relationship with others, and (4) *cognitive models*, which refer to the worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interests that are shaped by a particular identity.

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Abdelal et al. (2009) propose that among other things, their analytical framework could be used to understand how identity affects the behaviour of the identity holders. They argue that identity content and contestations can be used to predict people's behaviour. From this premise, I sought to adapt this analytical framework, which is further elaborated in the next section, to achieve two objectives in this study: (1) to describe the sociocultural meanings consumers ascribe to fast food's social identity and how these meanings are contested, and to explain how the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food consumption (or maintenance of fast-food social identity) in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana and (2) to operationalise the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009) and thereby assess its applicability in food studies referring to the gathered empirical data. The following research question has been formulated to guide the study:

> *What sociocultural meanings do fast-food consumers ascribe to fast food, how are the meanings contested and how do the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food social identity and consumption in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana?*

This study delivers insights relevant particularly for the health sector in Ghana. Specifically, the study will provide input for the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme being implemented in Ghana, which aims at promoting healthy dietary practices and personal and environmental hygiene to reduce the incidence of preventable diseases such as diabetes, and obesity – the same problems for which fast food has been criticised. Some studies (e.g. Lupton, 1995; Lang et al., 2009; Caraher & Landon, 2006) have shown that most health promotion programmes that have targeted fast food have not been successful because these programmes only target its negative aspects. Therefore, to contribute to the effectiveness of the RHN and other similar programmes in Ghana, this study has sought to find the sociocultural reasons behind fast-food consumption to possibly identify strategies that will enhance the implementation and effectiveness of RHN programme and tourism development – I will reflect on the policy impacts of the findings at the end of this chapter.

4.2 Analytical framework

Abdelal (2009, 2006) acknowledged that most identity researchers have examined identity mostly implicitly and therefore developed a more rigorous and precisely defined analytical framework for use in identity research to:

        (i)   Enable researchers to compare different types of identities,

        (ii)   To promote coordination across identity scholarship while providing a conceptualisation that is flexible enough to allow researchers to tailor it to their own particular needs, and

        (iii) To understand how identity affects the behaviour of the identity holders

Consequently, they propose an analytical framework in which social identity is viewed as a social category that varies along two dimensions – *content* and *contestation*.

The content describes the meaning of a social identity (i.e. the meanings the members of a group ascribe to its identity), while contestation refers to the degree of agreement or

disagreement within a group over the content of the shared identity. Abdelal (2009, 2006) further argues that every social identity includes four types of meanings (or content).

Firstly, there are *constitutive norms* or *normative content of a social identity,* which specify the practices that define that identity and leads others to recognise it. These norms can be unwritten rules or codified rules so long as they appear to fix the meanings and set collective expectations and individual obligations for members of the group. Constitutive norms also help to define the boundaries and distinct practices of a group.

Secondly, there are the *social purposes* or *purposive content* that helps to define the group's interests, goals, or preferences. The social purposes of a group create obligations to engage in practices that make it more likely that the group will achieve a set of goals. The purposive content is analytically similar to the notion that what groups want depends on who they think they are.

Thirdly, there are *relational comparisons or relational content*, which implies that group identities are fundamentally social and relational and are defined by the actor's interaction with others. Essentially, these relational comparisons indicate (1) the extent to which a group identity excludes the holding of another group identity, (2) the relative status of a group identity compared to others and (3) the existence or level of hostility among various identities. In most cases, action by group members is apparently conditioned by its relation to other different group identities.

Fourthly, there is the *cognitive model* or *cognitive content* of a social identity, which allows members of a group to make sense of the social, political, economic, or material conditions. The model may consist of 'ways of reasoning' that are specific to particular group identities. This cognitive model allows us to examine both how a group identity affects the ways people understand the world and consequently, how their material or social incentives for particular actions will be influenced by their identities. Essentially, it is the meanings that groups ultimately attach to themselves that make up the content of their social identity (Abdelal et al., 2009).

Contestation of identity content refers to the degree of agreement or disagreement within a group over the content of a shared identity. Abdelal et al. (2009) argue that the meaning or content of a social identity is not fixed or predetermined but it is the outcome of a process of contestation within the group. This implies that individuals are continuously proposing and shaping the meanings of the group to which they belong. The interpretations of the meaning of a group identity are sometimes widely shared or less widely shared among members of a group. The less widely shared the interpretations of a social identity are the more that identity will be fragmented into conflicting and potentially inconsistent understandings of what the group's purposes or relations should be.

In summary, to understand a group or social identity, one needs to assess the members' consensus and disagreement about the constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive models of their social identity. Although Abdelal's (2009) framework was developed for studying identity in the field of political science it is possible to apply its concepts in an interdisciplinary field of food studies to examine explicitly the interrelationship between group identity and fast-food consumption in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana.

4.3 Methodological approach

The research was conducted by using multi-method qualitative research techniques, including focus group discussions, participant observation, key informants interviews, in-depth interviews, and informal interviews. This qualitative research strategy, emphasising verbal accounts (Bryman, 2004), was found particularly useful. These qualitative techniques allowed the researchers to get close to the data and to study social interactions in their natural settings (Clarke, 2001). Twenty systematically sampled fast-food restaurants located in the Accra Metropolitan Area in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana have been used as the study sites.

Observations were made at different times of the day including the nights and different days of the week so as to identify variations that may exist across these periods. Public holidays and festive seasons were particularly targeted to capture the possible associated elements of fast-food consumption in the study area. Participant observation was done covertly such that it did not interfere with the natural setting, which may have implications for the data gathered. During observations, 35 informal interviews were also conducted to elicit first-hand information and participants' points of view and to better understand certain issues and behaviours. Also, willing participants were selected for focus group discussions. In total, three focus groups (made up of 12 persons each) were held with students in tertiary education (one for males and one for females) and persons in employment. These categories of persons were selected because they were largely found in the restaurants. Interviews were also conducted with three purposively selected key informants (managers of leading fast-food restaurants in the AMA) who had the capacity to give authentic information on the issue being researched.

The focus group discussions, interviews, and observations were meant to elicit from participants the various meanings they ascribe to fast food and its consumption. Essentially, questions were asked to address the content and contestations of the fast-food social identity. The focus group and informal interviews and observational field notes were read carefully until the researchers became familiar with the contents. The data were sorted, analysed and reported using ethnographic summaries. Specifically, discourse analysis was used to interpret the meanings of statements made by informants (Hodges et al., 2008).

4.4 Findings and discussion

4.4.1 *Demographic characteristics of fast-food consumers*

The findings indicated that the fast-food social identity or social group identity was found to be mainly made up of the youth, males, singles, and the educated, who eat or buy food in the fast-food restaurant at frequencies ranging from 'regularly' to 'occasionally'. It became evident that fast-food restaurants were mostly visited by the youth, males, singles and the educated. This supports earlier studies that fast-food consumption and the use of the fast-food restaurant in developing countries are phenomena common among middle class professionals, trendy yuppies and well educated youths including bachelors (Fantasia, 1995; Nielson et al., 2002; Olutayo & Akanle 2009; Van Zyl et al., 2010; Yan, 2005). The low presence of older and married consumers suggests that as consumers get married or pass the youthful age (15-35 yrs.), they tend to use the restaurant less often for their food

consumption. This implies that there may be also other contexts and factors that may influence fast-food choice as people advance in age. Some of the factors could be marriage and/or a shift in the importance of life values, such as having good health (Van der Horst, 2011).

4.4.2 *Content and contestations of fast food's social identity*
The content of the fast-food social identity was analysed in relation to the *constitutive rules, social purpose*, *relational comparison*, and *cognitive model* of the social identity to understand the meanings fast-food restaurant-goers ascribe to the fast-food consumption and the ways in which the meanings are contested among this identity holders.

Constitutive norms of fast-food social identity and their contestations
C*onstitutive norms are* basically the rules and norms that identify the 'proper' or 'appropriate' behaviour for a social identity. The findings showed that the norms of the fast-food social identity prescribe a *formal serving and eating environment* with limited self-service and more table services whereby customers often remained seated while waiting to be served. This is typically how Ghanaians want to be served in a restaurant *as a sign of respect* for them. To corroborate this, a lady (27 years, single, employed) remarked during an informal interview that she felt like a queen whenever she was being served at a table in the fast-food restaurant. This finding shows that in Ghana the norms in fast-food restaurant departs from the original fast-food concept that sought to provide mainly self- and drive-through services for people on the move.

A more contested issue is the way in which food needs to be eaten in a fast-food restaurant. The research has shown that food is mostly *eaten with cutlery instead of the 'natural fork' or fingers*, a practice which some informants contested and expressed worry. Their concern was that restaurateurs often compel consumers to eat with cutlery in restaurants also because they made no provisions for hand washing. By this, the consumers indicated that they are denied the unique and desirable taste they derive when eating with fingers – according to these consumers, fingers add some unique taste to the food. Another group of informants thought that eating with cutlery was more decent, safer, and modern and that they felt more confident and proud every time they had to eat with cutlery. This change in the code of etiquette has also been *contested* differently in various developed and developing countries. For example, Fantasia (1995) found that most youth in France found fast-food restaurants appealing, full of fun, and different because there were no 'rules', tables were not set, and there were no cutlery so one could only eat with the hand. Conversely, the youth in Northern Thailand were found to often eat fast food with cutlery and that made eating easier and more decent for them unlike traditional foods that they often ate with the hands in a messy manner (Seubsman et al., 2009). These findings show that the type of utensils one uses to eat fast food can be influenced by the type of food in question as well as by culture and traditional codes of etiquette, and the dispositions of the consumers.

One implication is that it is important to ensure that whichever utensils (cutlery or fingers) one uses to eat that these utensils are clean and comfortable to use. For example, Ohnuki-Tierney (1997) reported on how McDonald's was changing traditional table manners and

food etiquettes in Japan, where there are traditional rules regarding table manners. He indicated that in Japan, it is a taboo to eat with the hand (except in few cases) because it is considered dirty. However, the fast-food restaurants serve foods such as hamburgers, French fries, pizza and fried chicken, which are 'finger foods'. To avoid violating traditional Japanese etiquette, restaurants provide wet towels, which customers use to clean hands and still eat their hamburgers in a paper wrapping in such a way that their hands do not directly touch the food (Traphagan & Brown, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997; 1999).

The findings also indicated that in the fast-food restaurant, the consumers ate individually from separate plates and not from a communal bowl as prescribed by the Ghanaian codes of etiquette. *This practice was also contested* among some informants. Some persons viewed this practice as promoting individualism rather than commensalism, which is embedded in the Ghanaian culture and fosters unity. An opposing view was that eating from a communal bowl was unhygienic because there is the possibility of germs being introduced into the food and spreading to all those eating the food.

Another interesting finding was that the service style in fast-food restaurants is so formal that there is no room for consumers to make requests for price reductions, bonus or extra side dishes. Basically, price and service standards are so high that there is limited flexibility making the restaurant environment quite uncomfortable as was expressed by mainly female informants.

The findings showed that the group identity is polarised in terms of contestation on constitutive rules where, for example, a majority indicated that public display of behaviours such as showing affection and/or smoking in the restaurant were not appropriate behaviours while a few thought these behaviours should be the norm. Those who disagreed with these norms thought such behaviours could interfere with eating and set a bad example for children who might be in the restaurants. Recently (after this data had been collected), the Public Health Act that criminalises smoking in public places was passed implying that holders of the fast food's social identity would no longer need to contest this behaviour. It also shows that lawmakers, regulatory institutions, and other stakeholders may be able to set and enforce relevant rules and standards that will guide behaviours and practices in fast-food restaurants. It is also important for fast-food businesses to encourage positive sociocultural behaviours and discourage negative ones in their restaurants. For example, restaurateurs can put 'no smoking' signs at vantage points in the restaurants or demarcate special smoking areas or 'lovers corners' (Yan, 2005) in the restaurants for those who may need them.

Unlike most typical Ghanaian homes, where talking is prohibited or kept to the minimal during eating, in fast-food restaurant it was the norm to find people eating and talking - a practice that some informants still frowned upon. This emerging practice also contradicts the Ghanaian proverb that says 'when the food is good, the people are silent' (Osseo-Asare, 2005). Contrary to the Ghanaian codes of etiquette, food was served and eaten in fast-food restaurants at late hours. It was also common to find people drinking before or during meals. Informants confirmed that it has become a norm to take a drink (usually carbonated soft drink or other non-alcoholic beverages such as malted drink) before eating. This behaviour is supported by their statement that 'eating hamburger and drinking a coke' is a

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way to live like an American and allows one to live the American atmosphere. It represents an American experience of friendliness (Fantasia, 1995). This behaviour was also supported by other studies in which it was confirmed that fast food is often served with carbonated soft drinks thus compounding health problems associated with this behaviour (e.g. Prentice & Jebb, 2003; Ebbeling et al., 2002; Schlosser, 2001).

It has also become a norm to serve most consumers with food accompanied by a big chunk or several small pieces of meat or fish. Most participants viewed this norm as beneficial because it offered them an opportunity to eat more protein, which is usually lacking in most traditional Ghanaian dishes. These findings imply on the one hand that those informants, who were displeased with most of the constitutive norms of the fast food social identity, are less likely to be fast-food restaurant frequenters. On the other hand, those informants who endorsed most of the constitutive rules have greater tendency of remaining loyal to the fast-food social identity.

Social purposes of fast-food social identity and their contestations

The social purpose of a group identity helps to define the interests, goals, or preferences of a group and creates obligations for its members to engage in practices that make it likely that the group achieves its goals. The empirical research has indicated that the social purposes of the social identity of the fast-food restaurants consumers are numerous and that the group members primarily seek to satisfy their desire for *newness*, *social interaction*, and *sensory* and *health values*.

In relation to the *desire for newness*, some fast-food restaurant consumers are curious and eager to eat something different (something not normally eaten at home), to have an exposure to a new experience, to feel modern, and to learn about other food cultures. The core foods eaten by the holders of the fast-food social identity, in order of popularity, include 'new foods' such as fried rice (with its accompaniments i.e. fried or grilled chicken, black pepper sauce, and coleslaw), French fries, pizzas, and burgers. These foods are relatively new to the Ghanaian food culture because they were introduced into the country and have become prominent in restaurants since about a decade ago. Some fast-food restaurants also serve common home prepared Ghanaian 'heavy' and boiled foods such as *banku*, *fufu* and *kenkey*. However most informants doubted their authenticity and contested these practices. To them, the most authentic typical Ghanaian food can only be obtained from traditional eateries. For them, one of the purposes of their visit to the fast-food restaurants is exactly to eat what they perceive as new and different.

In terms of the *desire for social interaction*, findings indicated that eating in a fast-food restaurant is a way that consumers express pleasantness and pride and thereby boost their self-esteem in relation to others. Despite the formalness of the restaurant environment (as indicated by most informants) some informants (mostly men) found it to be a suitable place to socialize, hang-out with relations and have fun – the atmosphere is ideal for 'doing their own thing'. Social interaction often occurs among family members, friends, colleagues, business partners, and loved ones who eat together (although from separate plates), have fun and/or discuss important matters. It is a way of strengthening existing relationships and making new ones. For example, an informant said that he often went to the restaurant when he wanted to make his 'woman' happy. Evidently, not being part of the fast-food social

identity can pose identity loss, stigmatise individuals, upset social relations, and threaten family and group cohesion (Walker, 2005). What is intriguing about these findings is that they contradict the original concept of fast food which aimed to provide food in a short time for people on the move, which explains why self-service and drive-through were introduced. This original fast-food concept also promoted individualism rather than commensality, which in Ghana has become evidently an important characteristic of the social identity of the fast-food restaurant consumers. It shows how the original fast-food concept has been recontextualised and that a renewed social identity has been formed in which an association with fast-food appeared.

Expressing pleasantness about the fast-food restaurant consumption was found to be an important characteristic of the group identity. This often occurred when the group members were happy and in a joyous mood especially when they came together on special occasions such as birthdays and other anniversaries. Some fast-food restaurant-goers indicated that they are also in joyous moods when, for example, they had extra money to spend, for example, at month-endings or after being paid for rendering some services. The research has shown that associating with the fast-food social identity is essentially a way to interact with group members, make new acquaintances, exchange pleasantries, express pleasantness and pride, and derive some pleasure.

Desire for sensory value refers to things that appeal to at least some of the five senses, namely, sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound, which were found to be an interest of fast-food restaurant-goers. The findings showed that some consumers joined the fast-food social group to satisfy their sensory desires when they were tempted by the taste, aroma, appearance, style of food presentation, attractiveness of the food, and even background music in the restaurant. The findings also showed that fast-food consumers often visited the restaurant because they wanted a nice place to eat – a place that befits their statuses and where they can enjoy food which is cooked and served by professionals dressed in attractive uniforms. Some fast-food consumers also joined the group of fast-food restaurant-goers because they perceived fast-food restaurants as the most 'decent' and hygienic places to eat which becomes an important aspect particularly when there is limited availability of other 'decent' options. This shows that mostly, all five senses are present during the eating process, with each sense contributing different physiological and emotional reactions to the food being consumed, which affects consumers' ultimate sensory experience. This finding implies that fast-food consumers in the AMA are placing significant value on the hedonistic benefits of foods, and are looking for particular attributes that engage all their senses. These hedonistic benefits include personalised emotive benefits and deeper sensory stimulation that are derived from consumption in the fast-food restaurant.

Another goal that fast-food restaurant-goers ascribe to their identity was the *desire for health value*, which refers to the health importance of fast-food consumption and how it relates to their body image. The perceived health benefits of fast food on the body were contested among the fast-food consumers. Some of them indicated the usefulness of fast-food consumption in providing energy, protein, and some micronutrients for the body, which also depends on the type of food being consumed. In contrast, some other consumers indicated that fast food can increase body size and can negatively affect the body and self-

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image. The perceptions of fast-food restaurant-goers that fast-food restaurants were decent and hygienic may also have had positive health implications in terms of reducing the incidences of foodborne illnesses among the consumers. However, regulatory Authorities need to ascertain this perception by regular inspections and monitoring to ensure that fast-food restaurants really comply with hygienic standards.

These findings are interesting because with exception of the health value (i.e. decency and health implications), all the other social purposes of the fast food's social identity were rarely contested among the AMA consumers which give the impression that most fast-food consumers as holders of the fast-food social identity had quite similar social-cultural characteristics. This also implies that this social identity content may be considered as 'natural' goals and preferences for the group (Abdelal et al., 2009).

Relational comparisons of fast food's social identity and their contestations

The *relational comparisons* of the fast food's social identity refer to views and beliefs shared by members of the group about other identities. The findings showed the influence of relational comparisons on the expression of fast food social identity in several ways. A typical example of one social identity of a person excluding the holding of another social identity can be seen in the following comments made by an informant:

> *By my status, I cannot go to a 'chop bar' (traditional eatery) even though there is one near to my place of work. I visited there once and was embarrassed by the comment passed by an acquaintance- 'eh do you also come here? I thought this place was for the small ones.' Because of that comment I can't go to that 'chop bar' even if I yearn for something local (Male, 34yrs, single, employed as a Banker).*

The reason for this comment was that this traditional eatery was perceived as 'indecent' and 'cheap' and therefore meant for people of the lower class. Obviously, this informant's freedom of association with others (out-group) was being curtailed by his status in society therefore he has been compelled to adopt and limit himself to maintain the fast-food social identity, which is perceived to befit his status as a banker. The choice for becoming a member of the fast-food social identity group also depends on one's purchasing power, which influences whether one can become a frequenter or non-frequenter of a fast-food restaurant. In relation to the presence of these perceptions about one's purchasing power a student said, 'I go to the restaurant once in a while just to prove to some of my mates that I can also afford it'.

Various meanings that fast-food restaurant-goers ascribe to fast-food consumption in terms of relational comparisons are also demonstrated in the following comments:

> *I can't do certain things at home e.g. public display of affection, smoking- I don't smoke anyway- but in the restaurant I have the freedom, it is one-on-one (Male, 25yrs, single, and university graduate).*

I can't have my party at home because my neighbours might complain of too much noise so I choose to have it in the restaurant. (Informant 2 (female, 22yrs, student, single)

I simply can't eat anywhere else because I don't like what I see at other eateries, for example, the people selling the food- their manner of dressing and appearance in general, and where the food is being sold. The people are usually not neat. I think I've grown past that kind of life and I must move on (Female, 39yrs., married, employed)

The above statements demonstrate how actions by the holders of an assumed fast-food social identity seem to be conditioned by the existence of 'others' who are different and who do not associate themselves with that identity. The findings show that some people join the fast-food social identity because others might frown on them when they practised certain behaviours at home or generally outside the restaurant. The informants simply consider these others as being different from themselves and therefore recognise that the others might not accept some of their behaviours. As a result, they would want to hang-out with those (the in-group) who will endorse their behaviours in places such as the restaurant where they can freely practise any behaviour of their choice. These findings suggest that the more characteristics one has in common with other members of the fast-food social identity or the more attractive one finds the group, the greater the desire to identify with that social identity group (Fisher, 1998). One feels a strong attachment toward the group and sees his/her participation in the group's activities as justified.

The findings also imply that the fast-food social identity of a person can also be influenced by his/her other social identities such as his/her relation to health, nutrition, nation, religion, moral, and economic identities. For example, some informants who were health workers were of the view that fast-food consumption should not become a frequent practice while a few who appeared to be more religious or moralists contested the phenomenon of 'displaying affection publicly' which should not become a normative behaviour in restaurants. To avoid or reduce such contestations an individual tends to adapt his/her behaviour to a non-frequenter fast-food consumer and thereby visits the restaurant less often. Similarly, some informants have adopted the frequenter identity because they have adequate disposable income and are seeking avenues to express their status of wealth. The frequenter identity was also adopted by informants who discovered that they have a lot in common with the fast-food social identity such as being youthful, middle class professionals, or students in tertiary education. The reverse is also true. For example, most married informants indicated that they were different from most restaurant frequenters (usually singles) in many ways. As a result, they tend to adopt a more non-frequenters' identity and would prefer to visit the restaurants accompanied by their partners.

In summary, the holding of fast-food social identity or participation in its behaviours is dynamic and contested and can be influenced by (1) the other social identities that a person has such as health identity, religious identity, and economic identity, and professional identity; and (2) the existence of 'others' who are different and contest the behaviour of the fast-food restaurant-goers.

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<u>Cognitive models of the fast-food social identity and their contestation</u>
In terms of the cognitive models, which indicate the way people think about fast food and which behaviours they associate with fast food, findings showed that most male informants think that their presence in the fast-food social group is conditioned by the stereotypical gender roles in Ghana, whereby men do not usually cook. Some male informants made statements such as 'we are guys so we do not cook' and 'I do not have a wife so I often eat in the restaurant'. The implication of this cognitive model is that even though Ghana is urbanising and 'Westernising', people still maintain the typical (Ghanaian) male attitude to cooking.

4.5 Conclusion

This study explains how the constitution (shaping) of social identity among fast-food consumers plays a role in their fast-food consumption. Drawing inspiration from material culture, this study focused on buying and eating fast food in fast-food restaurants. Also, using the framework of Abdelal et al. (2009), the chapter sought to answer the research questions as follows:

> *What sociocultural meanings do fast-food consumers ascribe to fast food, how are the meanings contested and how do the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food social identity and consumption?*

The findings indicated that the fast-food social identity was mainly constituted by the youth, males, singles, and the educated, who eat or buy food in the fast-food restaurant at frequencies ranging from 'regularly' to 'occasionally'. The *content* of the fast-food social identity was analysed in relation to the *constitutive rules, social purposes*, *relational comparisons*, and *cognitive models* based on Abdelal et al. (2009) framework.

In terms of the *constitutive norms and their contestations,* the findings showed that the norms, practices, and behaviours of the fast food's social group in the AMA include limited self-service but more table services whereby consumers feel respected when being served. Food is often eaten with cutlery instead of the 'natural fork' or fingers – a practice that some consumers are not happy about, which was contested. The constitutive norms also referred to behaviours such as smoking, 'public display of affection', eating at late hours, drinking before or during meals, talking while eating, and eating individually from separate plates and not from a communal bowl, which was perceived as being too traditional. These norms were at the same time highly contested by members of the fast food's social group, indicating that the expression of the fast food's identity is a dynamic and contested process.

In terms of *social purposes and their contestation*, the study indicated that fast food's social identity is associated with what (i) is new and unique, (ii) encourages social interaction, and (iii) has sensory and health values. In relation to newness and uniqueness, findings showed that fast-food restaurant-goers are curious and eager to eat something different, to have an exposure to a new experience, and are looking forward for a new and different eating environment while learning about other food cultures. The fast-food social group also referred to social objectives such as gaining an opportunity for social interaction, exchange of pleasantries, and expression of pleasantness, and pride. In relation to sensory value, the findings showed that mostly, all the five senses (i.e. touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound)

are used while eating in the restaurants to provide different physiological and emotional reactions to the restaurant, the services, and the food being consumed. Even background music, appearances of cooking and serving staff, and decency and cleanliness of the environment were all a source of sensory satisfaction for fast-food consumers.

The implication of this is that consumers are continually demanding deeper sensory pleasures from products and services, and this greatly affects purchase and consumption decisions therefore, fast-food restaurants in the AMA may incorporate sensory appeals specific to its product and services to stimulate most of the senses of the consumers. It was interesting to observe that all these social purposes of this identity were the least contested among the AMA consumers. This gives the impression that most fast-food consumers had quite similar social purposes. Nevertheless, some aspects of fast-food restaurant consumption were also contested along the lines of its health impact - on the one hand fast food and fast-food restaurants were perceived as hygienic and 'decent' and have some inherent nutritional and health benefits. On the other hand, fast food was perceived to have properties that could negatively affect health and body image in particular. It is true that these contested social objectives of consumption in fast-food restaurants may also be applied to consumption in non-fast-food restaurants. However, the scientific and socially important contribution of this present study to the scientific debate on fast consumption patterns is the fact that these social purposes of fast food were not part of the original purpose of fast food, which was basically to provide, in good time, cheap filling food to people on the move. The emphasis then was on speed, low cost, and satiety. Findings from these studies, however, have shown how these original purposes have evolved over time in different sociocultural settings to encompass many more social objectives.

In terms of *relational comparisons and their contestations*, findings showed that the holding of fast-food social identity or the participant in its behaviours could be influenced by (1) the other social identities that a person contains such as health identity, religious identity, and environmental identity and (2) the existence of 'others' (who are different) with other identities which may also contest the fast-food restaurant consumption identity. In terms of the *cognitive model*, the research finds that even though Ghana is urbanising and 'Westernising' people still think that most men who are holders of fast-food social identity maintain their membership because of the stereotypical gender roles in Ghana whereby men do not usually cook.

These findings imply on the one hand that informants, who were uncomfortable, displeased, or in disagreement with most of the identity content (constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparison, and cognitive models) of the fast-food social identity are less likely to be fast-food restaurant frequenters. In other words, these informants may not take pride in expressing their association with fast-food social identity through frequent visit to the fast-food restaurant. On the other hand, those informants who endorsed most of the identity content are more likely to show their loyalty to the fast-food social identity by frequently visiting the restaurant. For example, when people understand and appreciate the social objectives of fast-food consumption they tend to have the desire to identify with the group identity and participate in its constitutive norms. Thus, the more a consumer identifies with the (new) social-cultural characteristics of fast-food consumption, the more he/she becomes a holder of fast-food social identity and the greater the tendency to affirm his/her

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membership and getting a sense of belonging, which means he/she will frequently visit the fast-food restaurant.

It is worthy of note that an individual who agreed with most of the identity content may become a non-frequenter for various reasons such as low purchasing power. It is also possible that an individual who disagreed with most of the fast food's social identity content may continue eating fast food in restaurants frequently due to limited availability of better alternatives choices – this is because food is a basic necessity of life, which we cannot do without. This implies that the most highly contested identity content such as health effects, of fast food consumption need to be amended to make them more acceptable to all consumers. Achieving this requires inputs from a number of actors in the fast-food network. These actors include fast-food producers, food regulators, food, nutrition, health, and environmental researchers, and consumers among others. For example, restaurateurs can put 'no smoking' signs at vantage points in the restaurants or demarcate special smoking areas or 'lovers corners' in the restaurants to satisfy both those who endorse these behaviour and those who frown on them. Lawmakers, regulatory institutions, and other stakeholders may be able to set and enforce relevant rules and standards that will guide behaviours and practices in fast-food restaurants. Also, for fast-food consumers to realise the health objective of fast food and hence reduce the contestation of this social objective, restaurateurs, for example, can improve on the material properties of fast food to reduce their negative impact on body size and body image. Essentially, the actors need to increase their commitments to ensure that the contestation of the content of the fast food's social identity is reduced to the minimum.

The findings have also shown that the identity content is not only contested among members of the fast food's social group but also among 'others' who are different and who do not associate themselves with that identity. It has also shown the power of both the in-group and out-group in influencing fast-food consumption. Whereas the in-group or peers who endorse most of the identity content may influence frequent fast-food consumption, the out-group who frowns upon most of the identity content may influence fast-food consumers to reduce their restaurant visits. In this case, the out-group may comprise parents and health professionals.

Theoretical implications and new research lines

The research contributes to scientific debates on fast food and fast-food restaurant as material culture objects by showing that social status (Bourdieu, 1994), creation of meanings (Baudrillard, 1998), and the desire for new 'taste' (Featherstone, 1991) are all associated with fast-food consumption and fast-food social identity.

Secondly, this research contributes to an improved conceptualisation of the relationship between social identity and food consumption. Due to this research it has become possible to show the applicability of the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009) with empirical evidence on fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants. Some aspects of the fast-food social identity were found to be highly contested (as 'good' or 'bad') but the analytical framework could not explain how consumers form a responsible self through their participation in the behaviours of the fast-food social identity. Specifically, it was not possible to determine how consumers' decisions to participate in the group behaviours are

influenced by their other identities such as health and religion. Therefore, the framework should be improved to enable future studies to examine in a more extensive manner how people's various social identities interact and how they deal with such conflicting identities in the domain of fast-food consumption. For example, it will be interesting to examine how health and nutrition identities (e.g. being health conscious) and craving for newness together can impact fast-food consumption and how these can be influenced by interventions from important 'others' such as the parents, peers, health professionals, and civil society. These issues have been partly addressed in the Chapter five of this thesis using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. However, future research may consider ways of combining aspects of the Abdelal's (2009) framework with behavioural models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour to better examine how consumers use personal responsibility to reconcile the negative aspects of fast food with its benefits such as identity expression.

Policy implications

The findings may also have some implications for policy programs. Firstly, the findings have shown that people are preferably eating fast food in fast-food restaurants due to various sociocultural characteristics. Policy programs should take these characteristics into consideration whenever they plan interventions. For example, it is unlikely that health campaign messages that aim at discouraging fast-food consumption among consumers in the AMA would be successful without the integration of these sociocultural issues. Therefore, the Regenerative Health and Nutrition programme being implemented in Ghana should also emphasise and facilitate increased physical activity and encourage fast-food restaurateurs to provide healthier food options to particularly minimise the effects of fast food on body size and body image. In line with this, the RHN programme, which is yet to commence the implementation of the second phase, has already developed and printed guidelines for physical activity in 2013. Thus, targeting fast-food consumers as one of the main users of these guidelines may help reduce the health effects of fast food and enhance the overall effectiveness of the RHN programme.

Secondly, findings showed that fast-food restaurant-goers perceived fast-food restaurants as decent and hygienic, which implies that these eateries are less to likely to be implicated in the occurrence of foodborne disease incidences among consumers. This perception might have been facilitated by the government's policy introduced in 2011 where restaurants that satisfied the *guidelines for code of hygienic practice for foodservice establishment* as well as *guidelines for licensing of foodservice establishments* are issued with the *Food Hygiene Permit,* which is renewable annually. The findings suggest that the AMA fast-food consumers want to eat from outlets that look clean hence the onus lies with the regulatory and enforcement authorities to ensure that restaurants comply with these hygienic standards. This will also enhance the attractiveness of the restaurants to international tourists for whom cleanliness and hygiene are important considerations in their choice of eating outlets.

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Chapter Five

Predictors of loyalty and exit strategies as forms of responsible consumer behaviours in fast-food consumption in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana[14]

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[14] Submitted for publication as Omari et al. (2014a).

5.1 Introduction

Fast food is a paradoxical material object that gives pleasure as well as invokes anxieties. The main reasons for which fast food has been criticised worldwide are its negative effects on the health of consumes (Gill, 2006; Mahna et al., 2004), environmental problems (Kweon et al., 2004), its tendency to undermine local food cultures (Yan, 2005; Miele & Murdoch, 2003; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1997), and ethical issues, such as animal welfare. In relation to health, fast food has been reported to be a risk factor for obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes among others. Environmental issues may involve littering of the environment particularly public spaces with non-biodegradable materials such as polythene. Empirical findings in Chapter two of this thesis also indicate that health and environmental problems are sources of anxieties for most fast-food consumers in the Accra Metropolitan Area in Ghana. Asiedu et al. (1998) also found this paradox that fast food in Ghana has some properties that make them nutritionally beneficial but at the same time contains properties that provide health anxieties to consumers.

Earlier researchers who considered food as a material-cultural object (e.g. De Solier, 2013; Miller, 2001) have examined anxieties associated with fast-food consumption and how morality of the self can shape people's consumption. De Solier (2013) who conducted her studies in Australia considered anxieties such as overspending money when dining-out in expensive restaurants and indicated that her informants reconcile this anxiety with their taste for such expensive restaurants by restricting the frequency of their consumption. Miller (2001, 1998) conducted his studies in the UK where he paid attention to shopping in a supermarket. He argued that his informants' shopping was governed by morality of thrift in which saving money rather than spending money is the right way to shop. Miller indicated that his informants exercised their morality by, for example, looking for items on reduced prices. This study focuses on two social practices of *buying* and *eating in fast-food restaurants* in the Accra Metropolitan Area in Ghana where socioeconomic and cultural contexts are different from those in Australia and UK. The study also examines two types of anxieties associated with fast-food consumption i.e.(1) *health anxiety* caused by the material property of the food and (2) *environmental anxiety* caused by the non-food materials that are used in buying, transporting, and eating fast food (these include packaging materials, eating utensils, carrier bags etc.). The health anxieties, which may directly affect fast-food consumers, include obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. The environmental anxieties include littering of the environment with plastic and polythene materials, which may 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-biodegradable plastic materials are properly disposed of they still significantly impact on the rate of depletion of landfill sites and can affect the growth of plants and animals.

What is also different between this study and earlier ones is that the other studies used morality approach of reconciling anxieties with benefits (i.e. reducing frequency of consumption in expensive restaurants as shown by De Solier, and saving money during shopping as Miller indicates). This study applies the *personal responsibility* approach in which it specifically examines the health and environmental anxieties that might come along with the social practices of fast-food consumption in Ghanaian restaurants and what strategies the (reflective) consumers adopt to deal with the anxieties. Thus, the task in this

study is to explain how consumers reconcile health and environmental anxieties with their quest for convenience and social identity formation as they consume fast food.

Bourdieu (1984) has argued that the choice to eat wrong food symbolises the irresponsibility of consumers, that is, the lack of personal responsibility denies these consumers the status of being good self-governing citizen. This implies that personal responsibility is important when reconciling anxieties in relation to fast-food consumption in the AMA with such benefits as convenience and the expression of social identity. The issue of consumers' personal responsibility has become relevant, because people are now more aware and concerned about health, environmental, and ethical issues associated with consumption (Oosterveer, 2005). This increase in awareness is largely due to an increasing flow of information especially the 'pooling of knowledge' via internet and social media (Giddens, 1990). Often, consumers are faced with the task of choosing between benefits and risks associated with fast-food consumption and consequently they tend to exercise personal responsibility by adopting certain *responsible consumer behaviours* or strategies to minimise their anxieties. Ozcarglar-Toulouse (2007) has noted that these behaviours could be in the form of *loyalty* or *exit strategies*.

The *loyalty strategy* is a situation where a person performs an act of consumption while trying to minimise the negative consequences of the consumption and/or attempting to extract maximum benefit from the product/service. In this case, the consumer remains faithful to consumption and focuses on his/her ability to improve its functioning or reducing its negative effects as a consumer. Examples of loyalty strategy include eating healthy options of fast food, eating fast food and exercising regularly, and recycling used fast-food packages. In the *exit strategy*, the responsible consumer decides to renounce the act of consumption and the pleasure associated with it, with the objective of dissociating him/herself from the negative consequences of consuming the product. Examples of exit strategy include situations where the consumer stops fast-food consumption or reduces frequency of consumption to the non-frequenters status (i.e. eating fast food not more than three times a month as indicated by Satia et al., 2004).

It is worthy of note that the adoption of these strategies does not only depend on efforts of the consumer but it is also facilitated by other institutions such as those of the government and civil society as well as fast-food companies. Most often, governments, civil society, and other organisations initiate and implement interventions to minimise the health and environmental anxieties associated with food consumption. For example, the government of Ghana is currently implementing the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme with the aims of changing people's dietary, hygienic and lifestyle behaviours so as to reduce the incidences of preventable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cholera, and obesity, which have all been linked with fast-food consumption. Notably, civil society organisations such as the Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)[15] has advocated for the discontinuous use of trans-fats in the fast-food industries and the sale of fast food to children. Also fast-food companies are responding to public concerns about

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[15]CSPI is a leading North American non-governmental consumer advocacy organization fighting for improvements in diet and health. CSPI was founded in 1971 and is based in Washington, D.C., with offices in Dallas, Texas, and Ottawa, Canada.

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fast-food consumption and are therefore modifying their products and services to reduce the assumed negative societal impacts of their products. For example, a number of fast-food companies have reviewed the fat and sugar contents of their products and reconsidered the portion sizes they offer. Moreover healthy options (e.g. fruits, salads, low-fat ice cream and plain, broiled or grilled chicken) can now be purchased alongside traditional burger and fried chicken meals (Schroder & McEachern, 2005; Rodriguez, 2004). Similarly, fast-food companies such as McDonalds and Burger King switched from plastic wares to paper hamburger wrappers, moulded fibre food trays, and service ware made from recovered newspaper (Suter, 2006).

This study examines how consumers in the AMA use personal responsibility to reconcile health and environmental anxieties of fast-food consumption with the benefits of fast-food consumption such as convenience and identity. Specifically, the study would examine which factors determine whether a consumer would adopt responsible consumer behaviours such as loyalty or exit strategy toward fast-food consumption. To do this, I adapt the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1991), which is a useful and commonly accepted theory for explaining behavioural intentions of consumers. The theory posits that the intention to perform a particular behaviour is jointly predicted by three factors, namely, *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour*, and *perceived behavioural control*. Some studies have also shown that personal responsibility behaviours or strategies (i.e. loyalty and exit strategies) can also be influenced by the *awareness of negative consequences* associated with consumption (Roubanis, 2008; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007; Tanner & Kast, 2003; Schahn & Holzer, 1990; Antil, 1984). Therefore, in addition to the three factors in the theory of planned behaviour (i.e. *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour*, and *perceived behavioural control*), the inclusion of a fourth factor, *awareness of negative consequences of behaviour,* is being proposed to possibly increase the predictive power of the model of the theory of planned behaviour.

The objective of this chapter is to understand how health and environmental considerations relate to responsible fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal decisions. This objective will be achieved by answering the following questions:
1. Which factors determine whether a consumer will engage in loyalty or exit strategy to reduce the negative health consequences of fast food?
2. Which factors determine whether a consumer will engage in loyalty or exit strategy to reduce the negative environmental consequences of fast food?

Although there is not a perfect relationship between behavioural intention and actual behaviour, still intention can be used as a proximal measure of actual behaviour (Francis et al., 2004). Therefore, in this study, the intention to engage in responsible consumer behaviours such as loyalty and exit strategies are examined. he four factors in the proposed model may be used to determine the effectiveness of implementing interventions such as the RHN programme in Ghana even if there is not a readily available measure of the actual behaviour (in this case, healthy and environmentally friendly fast-food packaging, consumption and disposal behaviour).

5.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

One theory that has received much attention in the literature with regard to predicting behavioural outcomes, including ecological and healthy eating, is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). The TRA suggests that an individual's *intention* to perform a particular behaviour is the single most important predictor of actual behaviour. Intentions are indications of how hard people are willing to try, how much effort they are planning to exert, to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Basically, intentions capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour and they are in turn thought to be influenced by *attitudes toward the particular behaviour*, and *subjective norms*, or the attitudes of important reference people, towards the behaviour. Attitude toward behaviour is a person's overall evaluation of the behaviour or favourable or unfavourable evaluations about the behaviour while subjective norms are a person's own estimate of the social pressure to perform or not perform the target behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; 1980). Essentially, subjective norms involves beliefs about how other people, who may be in some way important to the person, would like them to behave and the positive or negative judgements about each belief (Francis et al., 2004).

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was extended into the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to address the original model's limitations in dealing with behaviours over which people have incomplete volitional control. Thus, Ajzen (1991) proposed the construct of *perceived behavioural control* (PBC), which represents individual's perceptions about the existence of behavioural constraints and facilitators that might affect their ability to engage in behaviour. Perceived behavioural control pertains to the extent to which a person thinks his or her own actions will have an impact on the situation as a whole. PBC involves individual's perceptions of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest. Essentially, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) postulates that a person is more likely to engage in behaviour when (a) his or her intention to perform the behaviour and perceptions of control are strong, and (b) when the individual holds a positive attitude, favourable subjective norm, and high perceptions of control.

Studies have found a relationship between consumer knowledge and the purchasing of products. For example, in relation to health, French et al. (2001) found a significant inverse relationship between the awareness of health consequences of fast food and frequency of its consumption although Dave et al. (2009) found this inverse relationship to be statistically non-significant. Thus, on the one hand, when a consumer is aware of negative consequences it is expected that he/she would adopt an exit strategy by stopping or reducing fast-food consumption to the non-frequenters status. On the other hand, with increasing availability of healthy options, it is expected that consumers may tend to adopt loyalty strategy by choosing these healthier fast foods when they visit the restaurant. Similarly, Tanner and Kast (2003) discovered that having adequate knowledge to distinguish between environmentally friendly and environmentally harmful food products, was a factor which was highly associated with the extent of a consumer's responsible food purchases. Furthermore, in a study by Zanoli and Naspetti (2002), it was shown that consumers who purchased organic food products more than once per week had greater product knowledge compared to infrequent organic food consumers. Van Birgelen et al.

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(2009) also found that consumers most likely to purchase beverages packaged in environmentally preferable containers also have a high level of environmental awareness. Considering these evidences that *awareness of negative consequences* is a factor that influences the intention to consume as well as actual consumption behaviour, it is possible that incorporating this factor into the TBP model can enhance the predictive power of the model. This is done in this study.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) has been a well-used framework for investigating a range of eating behaviours including the consumption of low-fat diets (Armitage & Conner, 1999), the use of dietary supplements (Conner et al., 2001), fruit and vegetable consumption (Sjoberg et al., 2003; Lien et al., 2002), food choice (Kassem et al., 2003), and healthy eating (e.g. Conner et al., 2002). The contradictory findings regarding the usefulness of the TPB in predicting eating behaviours – that are obvious when comparing the literature reviews by Godin and Kok (1996) and Conner and Sparks (1996) – may well be due to the different ways that eating behaviours have been defined and studied in the literature. These contradictions might also be due to the weak predictive power of the TPB model. Therefore, to possibly increase the predictive power of healthy eating behaviours, this present study proposes the inclusion of a fourth factor, *awareness of consequences* to three factors of the TPB model. Furthermore, although the TPB has previously been used as a framework to investigate healthy eating behaviours, the theoretical model has not been used in any known study to examine the predictors of *healthy fast-food eating behaviours* even though healthy options of fast food are now being offered in some fast-food restaurants. The TPB has been used to predict fast-food consumption among Iranian High School Students but from the point of view of an unhealthy food (e.g. Gholamreza et al., 2013). This theory has successfully predicted intention and behaviour in eating and has recently received great attention in determining the norms and beliefs related to fast-food and snacks consumption (Branscum & Sharma, 2013; Dunn et al., 2011; Dunn et al., 2008).

Similarly, the TPB has been successfully applied in the context of predicting pro-environmental behaviour (e.g. Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Cheung et al., 1999). Studies have shown that environmental buying behaviour of consumers is not only influenced by a person's awareness, attitudes, and social pressure, but also perceived behavioural control, which is individual's view on the personal opportunity for contributing toward a solution of a certain ecological issue (Bech-Larsen, 1996; Ölander & Thogersen, 1995). However, none of these studies has been conducted on fast-food packages and their disposal. Moreover, such studies did not examine behavioural intentions in terms of exit and loyalty strategies.

Based on these theoretical and empirical discussions, the following four hypotheses have been formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy, and awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy food, will predict *loyalty strategy*.

Hypothesis 2: Attitude toward environmental responsibility, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of negative environmental consequences will predict *loyalty strategy*.

Hypothesis 3: Attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy food, awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy food will predict *exit strategy*.

Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward environmental responsibility, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of negative environmental consequences will predict *exit strategy*

The conceptual model is shown in Figure 5.1. This chapter (1) contributes to debates on the theory of planned behaviour and specifically on the use of the theory to predict loyalty and exit strategies as forms of responsible consumer behaviours; (2) provides insight into behaviours or strategies that consumers adopt to minimise health and environmental consequences of fast food; (3) identifies behaviours or strategies that need to be promoted or discouraged among consumers; and (4) the research can help in developing better communication and other strategies that can reduce health and environmental impacts of fast-food production and consumption.
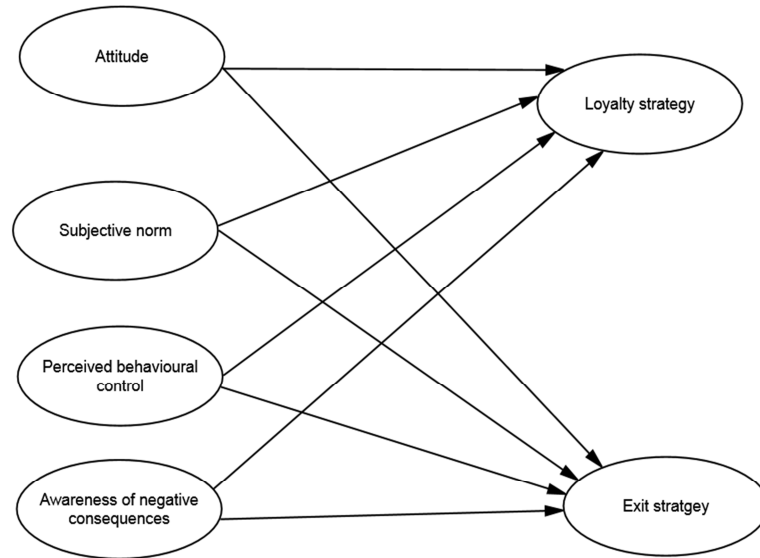
Fig. 5.1 Conceptual framework showing adapted TPB model, with attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and awareness of negative consequences related to loyalty and exit strategies.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 *Study Participants and Procedure*

A cross-sectional consumer survey was conducted in 20 systematically sampled fast-food restaurants in the Accra Metropolitan Area using the same study participants and procedure as described in Chapter two (section 2.5) of this thesis.

5.3.2 *Measures*

Items used for the questionnaire were generated with reference to literature; particularly, I have adapted items from earlier researchers such as Gholamreza et al. (2013), Dunn et al. (2011, 2008) and Branscum and Sharma (2013) for measures related to healthy eating while items related to environmentally responsible consumption were adapted from van Birgelen et al. (2009). All the items are presented in Appendices 1 and 2.

- *Attitude toward healthy food* and *attitude toward environmental* responsibility were measured on basis of three and six items respectively. For example, the expression as 'unhealthy fast food has serious negative consequences for my health'; and 'improper disposal of fast-food plastic packages has very serious negative consequences for the environment'.
- *Subjective norms about healthy fast-food consumption* and *subjective norms about environmental responsibility towards fast food* were measured by four and six items respectively, for example, 'people in my circle of friends highly value the healthfulness of fast food'; and 'my family highly values the environmental friendliness of fast-food packaging'.
- *Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food* and *perceived behavioural control of purchasing and disposal decisions of packaged fast food*

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were measured by four and six items respectively, examples are, 'when I buy healthy (fast) food, I feel that I have done something positive for my health'; 'I believe that my decisions in the packaging choices of fast food have a direct influence on the environment as a whole'.

- *Consumers' awareness of health consequences* was measured by seven items adapted from Gholamreza et al. (2013); Dave et al. (2009); and Dutta-Bergman (2005). For example, 'I am aware that fast food can make me excessively fat'.
- *Consumer's awareness of environmental consequences* was measured by five items adapted from van Birgelen et al. (2009). The items include 'I am aware that plastic menace will affect future generations'; 'I am aware that most FFRs use plastic packages'.

Loyalty and exit strategies were adapted from the study of Webb et al. (2008). In addition, three focus group discussions (one each with students in tertiary education, males and females in employment) were conducted to generate additional items to measure loyalty and exit strategies. *Loyalty strategy* implies the intentions to remain loyal to a (fast food) product while making efforts to minimise its health and environmental consequences. *Exit strategy* refers to the intentions to avoid purchasing or consumption so as to prevent exposure to health and environment consequences of fast food.

- *Loyalty strategy toward healthy fast food* and *loyalty strategy toward purchase of environmentally safe food and proper disposal of fast-food packages* were measured by five and four items respectively. The items include 'I always choose the healthier option of fast food'; 'I often buy take-away fast food so I make every attempt to join environmental clean-up activities'.
- *Exit strategy toward unhealthy fast-food purchase and consumption* and *Exit strategy toward environmentally harmful fast food* were measured by five items each. These include 'I avoid eating fried fast foods'; 'I avoid buying fast food in plastic packages'; 'I avoid eating fast food that will make me put on weight'.

In total, two TPB models are being adapted – the first TPB model (i.e. *health responsible TPB model*), which predicts loyalty and exit strategies in relation to health considerations, had 23 items (see Appendix 1) – the second TPB model (i.e. *environmentally responsible TPB model*), which predicts loyalty and exit strategies in relation of environmental considerations had 32 items (see Appendix 2). Each item was answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree').

5.3.3 *Statistical Analysis*

Out of the 425 questionnaires administered, 419 were retrieved of which 19 were discarded because not more than 30% of the questions had been answered. Therefore, in total, 400 valid ones with no missing values were used for data analyses. Data analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20). Initial data analyses included descriptive statistics, reliability, and factor analysis. Categorical variables were summarised by frequencies and percentages while quantitative variables were summarised by means and standard deviations. Spearman's correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the unadjusted associations of all the variables. Multivariate regression analysis was performed with loyalty and exit strategies as dependent variables

and attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and awareness of consequences as independent variables.

5.3.4 *Psychometric properties of the measures*

Factor analysis on the health responsible and environmentally responsible TPB models yielded six distinct factors (see Table 5.1, Table 5.3, and Appendices 1 and 2). Attitude toward healthy food and attitude toward environmental responsibility comprising three and six items respectively, demonstrated an internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's $\alpha=.86$, and $\alpha=.91$. Subjective norms about healthy fast-food consumption and subjective norms about environmental responsibility toward fast food had four and six items respectively and yielded internal consistencies of Cronbach's $\alpha=.91$, and $\alpha=.94$. Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food and perceived behavioural control of purchasing and disposal decisions of packaged fast food, measured by four and six items respectively yielded internal consistencies of Cronbach's $\alpha=.87$ each. Consumers' awareness of health and environmental consequences of fast food, comprising of seven and five items respectively, demonstrated an internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's $\alpha=.94$ and $\alpha=.92$. Loyalty strategies toward healthy eating and environmentally responsible fast food measured by five and four items respectively yielded internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's $\alpha=.90$ and $.87$ respectively. Exit strategies toward avoidance of unhealthy and environmentally harmful fast food measured by five items each gave internal consistency reliability of Cronbach's $\alpha=.89$ and $.86$ respectively. No item was discarded because they all loaded well (i.e. loading $>.35$) on any of the six factors. The means for items on each of the factors were calculated and each factor was treated as a separate scale for further analyses.

5.4 Results and discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify factors that determine a consumer's decision to adopt loyalty or exit strategies, which are ways of minimising the negative health and environmental impacts of fast-food consumption. This was done using an adapted 'theory of planned behaviour' (TPB) model that refer to four factors (i.e. predictors), namely, *attitudes toward behaviour* (i.e. healthy eating and environmental responsibility), *subjective norms about behaviour* (i.e. healthy eating and environmentally responsible), *perceived behavioural control of behaviour* (i.e. healthy eating and environmental responsibility), and *awareness of consequences of eating unhealthy and environmentally harmful fast food*. The study assessed the predictive power of these four factors on the adoption of loyalty and exit strategies in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal. The findings and discussions are presented in two sub-sections – in Sub-section 5.4.1, the findings on the predictors of the intention to adopt *loyalty strategy* in relation to health and environmental considerations in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal are presented and discussed, while in Sub-section 5.4.2, findings on the predictors of the intention to adopt *exit strategy* in relation health and environmental considerations are presented and discussed. At the end of this section a comparison is made between how the TPB factor influence the prediction of loyalty and exit strategies as forms of responsible consumer behaviours

5.4.1 *Predictors of intention to adopt* loyalty strategy *as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal*

The *first hypothesis* being tested in this study states that 'attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy, and awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy food, will predict *loyalty strategy*'. The findings regarding the *prediction of loyalty strategy as a form of health responsible consumer behaviour* in fast-food consumption are presented in Table 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5. Firstly, Table 5.1 shows the correlations among the factors of the adapted TPB model in relation to health considerations in fast-food consumption. The findings showed that consumers attitude toward healthy fast food (r = .25, *p*<.001), subjective norm about healthy fast food (r = .36, *p*<.001), perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food (r = .12, *p*<.005), and awareness of health consequences of unhealthy fast food (r = .63, *p*<.001) were found to have significant positive associations with loyalty strategy. This implies that consumers would adopt loyalty strategy when they (i) had positive attitude toward healthy fast food, (ii) were influenced by people who have positive attitude toward healthy eating, (iii) perceived themselves as being capable of controlling their healthy eating behaviours, and (iv) were aware of the negative health consequences of consuming unhealthy fast food.

Table 5.1 Correlations, means, standard deviation, internal consistency, Eigen value and variance explained for *health responsible* TPB model

Variable		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Attitude toward healthy fast food						
2	Subjective Norm	.09					
3	Perceived Behavioural Control	.29**	.12*				
4	Awareness of health consequences	.17**	.18**	.18**			
5	Behavioural intention (Loyalty strategy)	.25**	.36**	.12*	.63**		
6	Behavioural intention (Exit strategy)	.11*	.18**	.35**	.05	.03	
Mean		3.79	2.91	3.72	2.80	2.72	3.75
SD		.94	1.13	.78	1.36	1.06	.79
Internal consistency		.86	.91	.87	.94	.90	.89
Eigen value		2.39	6.91	4.40	3.97	5.15	2.31
Variance explained		5.68	16.45	10.47	9.46	12.27	5.50

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)   ** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Secondly, the results of the multivariate regression analysis for the adoption of loyalty strategy in relation to health considerations in fast-food consumption is presented in Table 5.2 while the summary of the results showing the supported hypotheses is also presented in Table 5.5. All the four factors, namely, awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food (β = 1.49, $p<.01$), subjective norm about healthy fast food (β =.36, $p<.01$), perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food (β = .25, $p<.01$), and attitude toward healthy fast food (β = .14, $p<.01$) were found to be significant positive predictors of the intention to adopt loyalty strategy as a responsible way of reducing the health impact of fast food. These findings have confirmed the positive correlations that were found between each of these four factors and the adoption of loyalty strategy in relation to health consideration in fast-food consumption. These findings indicated that hypothesis 1 has been fully supported as shown in Table 5.5.

The findings show that the newly introduced factor, *awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food*, was the best single predictor of *loyalty strategy* in relation to health considerations in fast-food consumption. This finding is interesting because it shows that although consumers are aware of the negative consequences of eating unhealthy fast food, they would preferably adopt loyalty strategies, in which case the consumer remains faithful to consumption and focuses on his/her ability to improve its functioning or reducing its negative effects.

Table 5.2 Multivariate regression analysis for predicting intention to adopt *loyalty strategy* in relation to *health considerations* in fast-food consumption

Factors	β	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			lower	upper
Attitude toward healthy fast food	.141	.002	.054	.228
Subjective norm about healthy fast-food consumption	.360	.001	.232	.442
Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food	.246	.003	.104	.321
Awareness of health consequences of fast food	1.49	.000	1.231	1.952

R^2 =.427; adjusted R^2=.422 for predicting loyalty strategy as responsible behavioural intention

Other interesting findings show that the *second best single predictor of loyalty strategy* in relation to health consideration in fast-food consumption was *subjective norm about healthy eating* followed by *perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food* and then *attitude toward healthy fast food* was the least. It is worthy of note that loyalty strategies are adopted when there are ways of minimising the effects of exposure to fast-food consumption. In this case, the consumer still continues to eat fast food (either frequently or occasionally) but tries to find ways of minimising its negative health effects, for example by choosing healthier options and exercising regularly. Other studies that used the TPB to

predict fast-food consumption also found that attitude and subjective norms predicted the intention to consume fast food, while perceived behavioural control had a negative predictive effect (Gholamreza et al., 2013). Some studies (e.g. Dunn et al., 2011, 2008) suggest that subjective norms are better predictors of intention to remain loyal an consume fast food than attitude but in this present study, the newly introduced variable – awareness of health consequences –was the strongest predictor of loyalty strategy followed by subjective norms with attitude being the weakest. This demonstrates the significant impact of the newly introduced factor on the predictive strength of the TPB model. The differences in this and previous findings might be due to the fact that this present study regarded behavioural intention (i.e. loyalty strategy) as the intention to eat healthy fast food while these previous studies examined the intention to eat (unhealthy) fast food. Also subjective norms in these previous studies refer to influences from important people who have positive attitude toward fast-food consumption but in this present study, subjective norms refer to influences from important people who have positive attitude toward healthy (fast) food. These important people could be peers, parents, health professionals, and journalists among others.

Table 5.3 Correlations, means, standard deviation, internal consistency, Eigen value and variance explained for *environmentally responsible* TPB model

Factors and behavioural intentions	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Attitude toward environmental responsibility						
2 Subjective norm about environmental responsibility	$.42^{**}$					
3 Perceived behavioural control	.06	.10				
4 Awareness of environmental consequences	.04	$.10^{*}$	$.65^{**}$			
5 Behavioural intention (Loyalty strategy)	$.11^{*}$	$.17^{**}$	$.56^{**}$	$.46^{**}$		
6 Behavioural intention (Exit strategy)	$.41^{**}$	.07	$.54^{**}$	$.83^{**}$	$.34^{**}$	
Mean	3.84	3.70	3.21	3.23	3.26	3.27
SD	.96	1.07	1.35	1.16	1.13	1.41
Internal consistency	.91	.94	.87	.92	.87	.86
Eigen value	3.69	6.41	4.40	3.91	2.01	1.60
Variance explained	18.16	33.77	10.47	9.10	9.89	7.39

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) ** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The *second hypothesis* being tested in this study states that 'attitude toward environmental responsibility, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of negative environmental consequences will predict *loyalty strategy*'. The findings regarding the *prediction of loyalty strategy as a form of environmentally responsible consumer behaviour* in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal are presented in Table 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5. Firstly, findings in Table 5.3 show that consumers in the AMA are loyal towards fast-food

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consumption when their attitude toward environmental responsibility (r = .11, $p<.005$), subjective norm about environmental responsibility (r = .17, $p<.001$), perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible (r = .56, $p<.001$), and awareness of negative environmental consequences of fast food (r = .46, $p<.001$) had significant positive associations with loyalty strategy. This implies consumers would adopt loyalty strategy when they (i) had positive attitude toward environmental responsibility in fast food, (ii) were influenced by people who have positive attitude toward environmental responsibility, (iii) when perceived themselves as being capable of controlling their environmentally responsible behaviours, and (iv) were aware of the negative environmental consequences of fast food.

Secondly, results of the multivariate regression analysis, which is presented in Table 5.4, show that perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible (β = .40, $p<.01$), subjective norm about environmental responsibility (β = .12, $p<.01$), and awareness of environmental consequences (β = .12, $p<.01$) significantly and positively predicted loyalty strategy. These findings have confirmed the positive correlations that were found between each of these three factors and the adoption of loyalty strategy as shown in Table 5.3. The findings however indicated that *attitude toward environmental responsibility* was not significant in predicting loyalty strategy. This suggests that although subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of environmental consequences predicted loyalty strategy hypothesis 2 has only been partially supported (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.4 Multivariate regression analysis for predicting intention to adopt *loyalty strategy* toward fast-food consumption based on *environmental considerations*

Factor	β	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			lower	upper
Attitude toward environmental responsibility	.046	.392	-.059	.150
Subjective norm about environmental responsibility	.122	.001	.027	.217
Perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible	.398	.000	.308	.487
Awareness of environmental consequences	.115	.000	.011	.220

R^2 =.359; adjusted R^2=.352 for loyalty strategy

The *strongest predictor* of *loyalty strategy* as a form of environmentally responsible behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal was *perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible* followed by *subjective norm about environmental responsibility*. Findings from the correlations also showed that awareness of environmental consequences of fast food was positively associated with subjective norm about environmental responsibility and perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible. This implies that greater awareness of environmental

consequences of fast-food consumption by consumers increases their belief in the environmental attitudes of important reference people and this consequently increases their perception of being able to take actions to protect the environment. Examples of loyalty strategy toward environmental friendliness include making special effort to buy fast food in environmentally friendly packaging, always trying to dump used plastic packages in appropriate waste containers for recycling, and making every attempt to join environmental clean-up activities. Here, a consumer continues to eat fast food but tries to limit its environmental impact by his/her her environmentally responsible actions. The finding also implies that having a positive attitude toward environmental responsibility is not enough to determine the adoption of loyalty strategy as a form of environmentally responsible fast-food consumption behaviour. It suggests that other factors, namely, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, awareness of environmental consequences are more important in this regard.

Table 5.5 Summary of results of hypothesis testing on prediction of *loyalty strategy* in health and environmentally responsible fast-food purchase and consumption

Hypothesis	Result
Hypothesis 1: Attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and awareness regarding **healthy eating** will predict loyalty strategy.	Fully supported
a. Attitudes toward healthy eating will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
b. Subjective norms about healthy eating will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
c. Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy food will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
d. Awareness of consequences of eating unhealthy food will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
Hypothesis 2: Attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and awareness regarding **environmental responsibility** will predict loyalty strategy.	Partially Supported
a. Attitude toward environmental responsibility will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Not supported
b. Subjective norm about environmental responsibility will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
c. Perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported
d. Awareness of environmental consequences of fast food will predict **loyalty** strategy.	Supported

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5.4.2 *Predictors of intention to adopt* exit strategy *as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal*

The *third hypothesis* being tested in this study states that 'attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy, and awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy food, will predict *exit strategy*'. The findings regarding the *prediction of exit strategy as a form of health responsible consumer behaviour* in fast-food consumption are presented in Table 5.1, 5.6 and 5.8. Firstly, findings in Table 5.1 show that consumers in the AMA may stop or reduce the frequency of fast-food consumption to the 'non-frequenters' level (i.e. not more than 3 times a month) when their *attitude toward healthy fast food* (r = .11, $p<.005$), *subjective norm about healthy food* (r = .18, $p<.001$), *perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food* (r = .35 $p<.001$) had a significant positive association with *exit strategy*. The relationship between awareness of health consequences (r = .05, $p>.001$) and exit strategy was however not significant.

Table 5.6 Multivariate regression analysis for predicting intention to adopt *exit strategy* based on *health considerations* in fast-food consumption

Predictor variable	β	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			lower	upper
Attitude toward healthy fast food	.238	.003	.116	.341
Subjective norm about healthy fast food consumption	.188	.001	.102	.253
Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food	.377	.000	.281	.473
Awareness of health consequences of fast food	.048	.081	.013	.101

R^2= .155; adjusted R^2=.147 for exit strategy

Secondly, the multivariate analysis shown in Table 5.6 shows that all the three original factors in the TPB model, that is, *perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food* (β = .38, $p<.01$), *attitude toward healthy fast food* (β = .24, $p<.01$), and *subjective norm about healthy fast food* (β =.19, $p<.01$) were found to be significant positive predictors of the intention to adopt exit strategy. Interestingly, just as the results of the correlation have shown, the study could not confirm the predictive power of awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food (β = .05, $p>.01$) on exit strategy. This implies that hypothesis 3 has only been partially supported (see summary of results presented in Table 5.8). This also implies that the newly introduced factor (i.e. awareness of negative health consequences of unhealthy fast food) did not enhance the predictive power of the TPB model on the adoption of exit strategy in health responsible fast-food consumption as expected.

The findings also showed that *perceived behavioural control* is the best predictor of exit strategy followed by *attitude*, and *subjective norms*. It should be noted that exit strategies are employed to avoid or reduce one's exposure to unhealthy fast food. Therefore, basically, the consumer engaging in exit strategy intends to stop or reduce fast-food consumption to the non-frequenters level. This finding is consistent with Gholamreza et al. (2013) who concluded that interventions to increase consumers' motivation for reducing the frequency of fast-food consumption may need to focus on creating more positive attitudes regarding healthy eating, social norms (subjective norms), and increasing perceived behavioural control. Essentially, the outcome of a consumer engaging in loyalty or exit strategy is healthy eating or minimal exposure to the effects of unhealthy eating. Therefore, the findings are also consistent with Povey et al. (2000), Bebetsos et al. (2002), and Øygard and Rise (1996) who found that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control were all significant predictors of intentions to eat healthy food. However, Povey et al. (2000) found attitude as the strongest predictor while this present study showed perceived behavioural control as the strongest predictor of exit strategy. This implies that the ability of an individual to take action towards healthy eating strongly influences the adoption of exit strategy in fast-food consumption.

Other interesting findings as presented in the correlations in Table 5.1 indicate that awareness of health consequences had significant positive associations with attitude toward healthy fast food (r = .17, *p*<.001), subjective norm about healthy fast food (r = .18, *p*<.001), and perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food (r = .18, *p*<.001). These findings imply that a consumer who is aware of the consequences of unhealthy eating also has high positive attitude toward healthy eating, values the importance of social influence about healthy eating (subjective norm), and has a strong perception of his/her ability to engage in healthy eating. However, as found in this study, a consumer with these attributes is more likely to adopt loyalty than exit strategy since awareness of negative health consequences has no significant influence on the adoption of exit strategy. Also, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy food was strongly associated with attitude and subjective norms. Thus, an individual's perception of his/her ability to control fast-food consumption behaviour is increased when he/she has high positive attitude toward healthy eating and a strong social influence. Here, a fast-food consumer with these attributes is more likely to adopt exit strategy than loyalty strategy because the findings have shown that perceived behavioural control (which relates to strong will-power) has the strongest influence on the adoption of exit strategy.

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Table 5.7 Multivariate regression analysis for predicting intention to adopt *exit strategy* toward fast-food consumption based on *environmental considerations*

Predictor variable	β	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
			lower	upper
Attitude toward environmental responsibility	.927	.001	.853	1.113
Subjective norm about environmental responsibility	.004	.924	-.081	.074
Perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible	.523	.000	.498	.599
Awareness of environmental consequences	1.04	.000	.954	1.124

R^2= .724; adjusted R^2=.722 for exit strategy

The *fourth hypothesis* being tested in this study states that 'attitude toward environmental responsibility, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of negative environmental consequences will predict *exit strategy*'. The findings regarding the *prediction of exit strategy as a form of environmentally responsible consumer behaviour* in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal are presented in Table 5.3, 5.7 and 5.8. First of all, findings in Table 5.3 show that with the exception of subjective norm about environmental responsibility, all the other three factors had significant positive associations with exit strategy. Secondly, the multivariate regression analysis presented in Table 5.7 shows that exit strategy was positively predicted by awareness of environmental consequences (β =1.04, p<.01), attitude toward environmental responsibility (β =.93, p<.01), and perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible (β =.53, p<.01). Subjective norm about environmental responsibility (β = .04, p>.01) was not a significant predictor of exit strategy. This implies that hypothesis 4 has only been partially supported. This also implies that the adoption of exit strategy in environmentally responsible fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal is not determined by the influence from important people who have positive attitude toward environmental responsibility but rather other factors, namely, attitude toward environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of environmental consequences of fast-food consumption.

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Table 5.8 Summary of results of hypothesis testing on prediction of *exit strategies* in health and environmentally health responsible fast-food purchase and consumption

Hypothesis	Result
Hypothesis 3: Attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and awareness regarding healthy eating will predict *exit strategy*	
a. Attitudes toward healthy eating will predict intention to engage in **exit** strategy	Supported
b. Subjective norms about healthy eating will predict **exit** strategy	Supported
c. Perceived behavioural control of eating healthy food will predict **exit** strategy	Supported
d. Awareness of consequences of eating unhealthy food will predict **exit** strategy	Not supported
Hypothesis 4: Attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and awareness regarding environmental responsibility will predict exit strategy	
a. Attitude toward environmental responsibility will predict **exit** strategy	Supported
b. Subjective norm about environmental responsibility will predict **exit** strategy	Not supported
c. Perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible will predict **exit** strategy	Supported
d. Awareness of environmental consequences will predict **exit** strategy	Supported

The strongest predictor of *exit strategy* was awareness of environmental consequences followed by attitude and perceived behavioural control. This finding is consistent with van Birgelen et al. (2009) who found that environmental purchase and disposal decisions predominantly depend on the environmental awareness, attitude toward an eco-friendliness, and the opinion of reference persons. However, in this present study, the opinion of reference persons (subjective norm) was not significant in predicting exit intention but rather loyalty strategy as discussed in the previous section. Exit strategies in this case include avoiding buying fast food in plastic packages, deciding to stop buying take-away fast food, and avoiding buying fast food in packages that pollute the environment. Other studies also found that environmentally responsible consumption and purchase decisions were influenced by a person's awareness, attitudes, social pressure, and perceived behavioural control (e.g. Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006; Cheung et al., 1999; Bech-Larsen, 1996; Ölander & Thogersen, 1995).

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Furthermore, the findings from the correlations shown in Table 5.3 show that awareness of environmental consequences had significant positive association with subjective norm about environmental responsibility ($r = .10$, $p<.005$) and perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible ($r = .65$, $p<.001$). This implies that a fast-food consumer who is aware of the environmental consequences of fast food is likely to have high regard for important references or people who have positive attitude toward environmentally responsible consumption and will also likely perceive him or herself as being able to exert a strong will-power in adopting environmentally responsible behaviours. However, a person with these attributes is most likely to adopt loyalty strategy since important references (i.e. subjective norm) had no significant influence on exit strategy.

5.4.3 *Comparison between the prediction of loyalty and exit strategies as forms of responsible consumer behaviours*

In terms of the prediction of the intention to adopt *loyalty or exit strategies* based on *health considerations,* the empirical findings show that (i) the four factors in the regression model together yielded coefficient of determination (R^2) of .42 and .15 for loyalty and exit strategies respectively meaning that 42% and 15% of the variances have been explained. This implies that the adapted health responsible TPB model was stronger in predicting loyalty strategy (where 42% of the variance was explained) than exit strategy as a form of responsible fast-food consumption in relation to health considerations; (ii) all the four factors in the adapted health responsible TPB model could predict loyalty strategy while only three factors (except awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy food) could predict exit strategy in other consumers; (iii) Awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food, which could not predict exit strategy, turned out to be the best single predictor of the adoption of loyalty strategy. The realisation that the TBP model had a stronger predictive power on loyalty strategy than exit strategy could be due to the influence of the newly introduced factor (i.e. awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy food). This implies that 'awareness of negative health consequences of unhealthy fast food' might have enhanced the predictive power of the TPB model on the adoption of loyalty strategy in health responsible fast-food consumption indicating an important contribution to the theory of planned behaviour. This finding is interesting also because it shows that although consumers are aware of the negative consequences of eating unhealthy fast food, they would preferably adopt loyalty strategies.

In terms of the prediction of the intention to adopt *loyalty or exit strategies* based on *environmental considerations,* the empirical findings show that (i) both perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible and awareness of environmental consequences of fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal predicted the adoption of both loyalty strategy and exit strategies. However, these two factors were stronger in predicting exit strategy implying that when consumers are aware of the environmental consequences of fast-food consumption they also perceive themselves as being capable of taking actions by themselves to reduce the environmental effects. Hence, these consumers would preferably adopt exit strategy such as avoiding takeaway purchases in packages that are not environmentally friendly; (ii) the factors in the regression model for environmentally responsible fast-food consumption together yielded coefficient of

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determination (R^2) of .35 and .72 for loyalty and exit strategies respectively meaning that 35% and 72% of the variances have been explained. This suggests that the adapted TPB model was stronger in predicting exit strategy (where 72% of the variance was explained) than loyalty strategy. The stronger influence of the environmentally responsible TPB model on exit strategy could as well be due to the high influence of the newly introduced factor, 'awareness of environmental consequences', which also happened to be the best predictor of exit strategy.

5.5 Conclusion

This study sought to identifying factors that determine consumers' intention to adopt loyalty or exit strategies as ways of exercising responsible consumer behaviours to minimise health and environmental anxieties associated with fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana. This was done using two adapted theory of planned behaviour (TPB) models – (i) the health responsible TPB model had four factors namely, attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of healthy eating, and awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy fast food; (ii) the environmentally responsible TPB model also had four factors namely, attitude toward environmental responsibility, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of environmental consequences of fast food purchase, consumption and waste disposal.

In terms of the prediction of the intention to adopt loyalty strategy as a form of responsible fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal behaviour, firstly, the findings shows that a loyalty strategy towards fast-food consumption is built upon an individual's attitudes toward healthy eating, subjective norms about healthy eating, perceived behavioural control of healthy eating, and awareness of negative consequences of eating unhealthy fast food. This showed that hypothesis 1 has been fully supported. Secondly, three out of four factors of the environmentally responsible TPB model, that is, subjective norm about environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of environmental consequences predicted the adoption loyalty strategy. Thus hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Thirdly, attitude toward behaviour was significant in predicting loyalty strategy as a form of health responsible behaviour (although it was the weakest predictor) but it was not significant in predicting loyalty strategy as a form of environmentally responsible behaviour. Fourthly, awareness of negative consequences was the best significant predictor of loyalty strategy as a form of *health responsible behaviour* but this factor turned out to be the least significant predictor of loyalty strategy as a form of *environmentally responsible behaviour* in fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal. These findings suggest that the factors in the TPB model influence people differently depending on the type of anxieties that they are dealing with. This means that in planning interventions that aim at reducing the anxieties associated with fast-food consumption each anxiety may need to be addressed differently.

In terms of the prediction of the intention to adopt exit strategy as a form of responsible fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal behaviour, firstly, exit strategy was predicted by three of the four factors in the health responsible TPB model hence hypotheses

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3 was partially were supported. In this case, 'awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food', could not predict exit strategy as a form of responsible consumer behaviour. Secondly, three out of four factors, namely, attitude toward environmental responsibility, perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, and awareness of environmental consequences of fast food predicted *exit strategy*. This implies that the adoption of exit strategy in environmentally responsible fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal is not determined by subjective norms (or the influence from important people who have positive attitude toward environmental responsibility) meaning that hypothesis 4 has been partially supported. Thirdly, *awareness of negative consequences* was not significant in predicting the adoption of exit strategy as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in relation to health considerations but this factor turned out to be the strongest predictor of exit strategy as a form of environmentally responsible behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal. This suggests that the newly introduced factor, *awareness of negative consequences,* enhanced the predictive power of the TPB model in relation to environmental considerations but not in relation to health considerations. Again, as mentioned earlier, these findings have shown that the factors in the TPB model influence people differently depending on the type of anxieties that they are dealing with and must be integrated with caution when planning interventions. These findings also suggest when a consumer is aware of negative environmental consequences of fast food it is easier to adopt exit strategy than when consumer is aware of negative health consequences of fast food. This could be due to the fact that unlike exit strategy in health responsible consumption where an individual stops or reduces fast-food consumption, adoption of exit strategy in environmentally responsible consumption does not necessarily mean that the individual will quit or reduce fast-food consumption. What it means essentially is that the consumer will not buy, eat, or transport fast food only if it is served or packaged in eco-harmful materials. Therefore, it is possible that a consumer who adopts exit strategy in environmentally responsible consumption will also adopt loyalty strategy as a way of being health responsible. This also emphasises the earlier point that the adoption of exit strategy as a way of avoiding negative health impacts is highly influenced by an individual's will-power (i.e. perceived behavioural control of healthy eating) rather than awareness of negative health consequences.

Fourthly, findings showed that perceived behavioural control was the strongest predictor of exit strategy, which implies that the ability of an individual to take action towards healthy eating strongly influences the adoption of exit strategy in fast-food consumption. This also suggests that the adoption of exit strategy requires a stronger will-power at the individual level hence in most cases only very determined persons can adopt exit strategy in fast-food consumption.

In *comparing factors that predict the intention to adopt loyalty and exit strategies*, findings show that (1) a consumer who is aware of the consequences of unhealthy eating, has high positive attitude toward healthy eating, values the importance of social influence about healthy eating, and has a strong perception of his/her ability to engage in healthy eating is more likely to *adopt loyalty* than *exit strategy* since awareness of negative health consequences has no significant influence on the adoption of exit strategy; (2) a consumer whose perception of his/her ability to control fast-food consumption behaviour is increased when he/she has high positive attitude toward healthy eating and a strong social influence is

more likely to adopt *exit strategy* than *loyalty strategy* because perceived behavioural control (which relates to strong will-power) has the strongest influence on the adoption of exit strategy; (3) a fast-food consumer who is aware of the environmental consequences of fast food, has high regard for important references people, and perceives him or herself as being able to exert a strong will-power in adopting environmentally responsible behaviours is most likely to adopt *loyalty strategy* since important references (i.e. subjective norm) had no significant influence on exit strategy; (4) the *health responsible TPB model* as a whole was stronger in predicting *loyalty strategy* than *exit strategy* in fast-food consumption. These findings could be due to the influence of the newly introduced factor (i.e. awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food) indicating an enhancement of the predictive strength of the TPB model on loyalty strategy.

The finding also suggest that although consumers are aware of negative consequences of unhealthy eating they are less likely to engage in exit behaviours but rather more likely to adopt loyalty strategies probably due to the irresistible benefits these consumers get from fast food or the low perceived behavioural control (or will-power) to adopt exit strategy. It is also important to note that the adoption of loyalty strategies depends on the availability of healthier or alternative options, which some fast-food companies are now offering in their restaurants. In essence, consumers' awareness of the availability of healthier and alternative options (e.g. gyms for exercising) may motivate the adoption of loyalty strategy in fast-food consumption; (5) the *environmentally responsible TPB model* was stronger in predicting *exit strategy* than *loyalty strategy*, which suggests that the newly introduced factor in the TPB model, 'awareness of environmental consequences of fast food' (which is also the best predictor of exit strategy) could have enhanced the predictive power of the TPB model on exit strategy.

Finally, these findings indicate that health interventions aimed at promoting loyalty strategy should, in order of importance, focus on (1) increasing awareness about the consequences of unhealthy eating, (2) encouraging the involvement of important social influence about healthy eating, (3) facilitating people's ability to engage in healthy eating, and (4) motivating the development of a positive attitude toward healthy eating. Moreover, the adoption of loyalty strategies depends on the availability of healthier, environmentally friendly, and alternative options. The findings suggests that health interventions that aim at promoting exit strategy should, in order of relevance, focus on (1) facilitating people's ability to engage in healthy eating, (2) motivating the development of a positive attitude toward healthy eating, and (3) encouraging the involvement of social influence about healthy eating.

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Chapter Six

General Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined fast food and fast-food restaurants as material-cultural objects and assessed their prevalence, characteristics and relevance in the Accra Metropolitan Area of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It has assessed how the elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions, namely, convenience, identity, and responsibility, influence fast-food consumption and has identified some strategies that might help enhance the relevance of fast food for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development in the AMA. The following research trajectory has been employed.

Firstly, various theoretical frameworks have been presented with the common objective of developing insights into the practices of fast-food consumption. This thesis emphasises that researchers have tended to evaluate fast food on the basis of just one or two specific (static) characteristics, mostly perceived from a Western point of view. In addition to those analyses, this thesis assumes that practices associated with fast food are constantly being *recontextualised* and *changed in time and space*. Therefore, it has been argued that an *empirical analysis* is needed to deliver insights into the characteristics of fast food and the social practices of its consumption in Ghana, for which it was decided to investigate particularly the buying and eating in Ghanaian fast-food restaurants, a domain which is under-investigated.

This analysis has been inspired by *material culture studies* leading to an effort to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants as material-culture objects, particularly by elaborating the *cuisine concept* and searching for additional characteristics which may illustrate the recontextualisation of fast-food consumption in restaurants in the AMA. The assumption of a recontextualisation is further investigated through a profound analysis of three elements of the *culinary triangle of contradictions* (convenience, identity and responsibility) from an interdisciplinary angle and by also referring to the theory of planned behaviour in the case study on responsible consumption behaviour.

Secondly, alongside this scientific motivation and positioning, this research has been characterised by its effort to make a contribution to *reduction of the health, environmental and cultural problems* that are often attached to fast-food consumption but – as this thesis investigates – may also be changeable in a situation of fast-food recontextualisation. Indeed, this thesis also aims to come up with some (modest) *recommendations for interventions* about a new (possible) role that fast food may play in the Ghanaian urban context. In this sense, the thesis is also related to and reflects on the goals of the government of Ghana to ensure food, health and environmental security of her citizens and to develop the tourism sector – meaning that restaurant operations, which the Ghana Tourism Authority regards as tourism enterprises, have an important role to play in achieving these goals.

Although globally, fast food has been extensively criticised for its link with health problems, environmental pollution and the tendency to undermine traditional food cultures, the governmental measures related to fast-food restaurants stimulate further investigation of assumptions about whether and in which ways the recontextualised fast-food situation in Ghana may become increasingly relevant for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development. So, this research is carried out from within this juncture of scientific and developmental perspectives, focussing on the following problem statement:

How do the fast-food consumption determinants such as convenience, identity and responsibility influence fast-food consumption in Accra Metropolitan Area and which strategies can be identified that fast-food restaurateurs, governments and consumers may implement to enhance the relevance of fast food to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development?

This research problem is subdivided into the following four research questions, which were separately dealt with in Chapters 2 to 5, as follows:

1. What is the prevalence and characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) of Ghana and what is their relevancy to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development?
2. How do the components of convenience (perceived product convenience and convenience orientation) together with demographic and lifestyle variables, such as age and cooking skills, influence fast-food consumption in the AMA?
3. What sociocultural meanings do fast-food consumers ascribe to fast food, how are the meanings contested and how do the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food consumption (or maintenance of fast-food social identity)?
4. Which factors determine the intentions of a consumer to adopt loyalty or exit strategies as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in order to reduce the negative health and environmental consequences of fast food?

In this chapter, I bring together the findings from the different chapters of the thesis, and discuss the cross-cutting issues and overall theoretical and practical implications for fast-food production and consumption in Ghana's urban centres. The chapter is divided into the following sections.

First, Section 6.2 provides a brief summary of the main findings addressing the research questions. Then, Section 6.3 presents the contributions that this study has made to scientific theory, and Section 6.4 provides not only the policy and practical implications of the study, but also strategies for enhancing the relevance of fast food for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development in the AMA. In Section 6.5, I reflect critically on my study and indicate some limitations and present an outlook for further research, followed by some final remarks in Section 6.6.

6.2 Overview of the main findings

The main empirical findings are specific to the four chapters in which the four research questions have been addressed. In Chapter 2, the prevalence and characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the AMA have been presented, as well as their relevancy to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development.

The findings showed the *prevalence* of fast-food restaurants in the AMA at 68% of the restaurants surveyed. It was also remarkable that 80 out of the 90 restaurants surveyed were established between 1990 and 2009, indicating that the spread of restaurants has been quite a recent phenomenon and which could have been facilitated by the growing, urban middle-class population and the quest of Ghana to develop the tourism sector. Furthermore, it came to light that fast food could be obtained from other outlets, such as supermarkets and street

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vending sites, indicating that the overall prevalence of fast food in the AMA could be higher than that found in this study.

The *characteristics* of fast food in Ghanaian restaurants were studied by applying the cuisine concept of Farb & Armelagos (1980) and Rozin (1982), with attention being paid to four cuisine characteristics: the *basic or core foods*, *distinct flavour principles*, *distinct techniques of preparing food and codes of etiquette* that are associated with fast food and fast-food restaurants in the AMA. The cuisine concept is an analytical framework that posits the idea that the selection of food as a *basic* or *core food* depends on factors such as availability, nutritional costs and benefits, culture and customs, palatability and affordability. The *distinct techniques of preparing food* depends on factors such as skill, energy, technology, personnel and time available, while the *distinct flavour principle* depends on culture, availability, familiarity and culture. The *codes of etiquette* involve factors such as the number of meals to be eaten per day and when, where, with what utensils, with whom, and under what social circumstances food is eaten.

In terms of (1) *basic or core foods*, the finding indicated that the core foods available in the fast-food restaurants comprise **f**oods **g**enerally **r**ecognised **a**s **f**ast **f**ood (FGRAFF), which include French fries, burgers, fried chicken, pizzas and fried rice. Other core foods offered in the fast-food restaurants were typical Ghanaian foods, such as *banku* with pepper and tilapia, *kelewele*, *waakye* and *jollof* rice. Some of these foods, such as French fries, burgers, pizza and fried rice have been imported into the country, transformed in various ways and become part of urban diet. The fast-food restaurant menu item most eaten by consumers was found to be fried rice (with its accompaniments), followed by French fries and fried chicken, in that order.

The findings also showed that even some restaurants not classified as fast-food restaurants also offer these FGRAFFs, further illustrating their popularity in AMA restaurants. The popularity of the FGRAFFs is an indication that dietary patterns are changing in urban Ghana, but it is also noteworthy that typical Ghanaian foods, such as *banku* and tilapia, have become popular in fast-food restaurants since about a decade ago and are, in fact, among the most expensive foods in many restaurants where they are offered. One reason for their popularity is the desire of consumers to shift from the intake of oily fried foods and meat to less oily foods and fish, which have been publicised by nutritionists and health professionals as healthier. Although *banku* is a meal commonly prepared at home, its accompaniment, grilled tilapia, tends not to be prepared in most homes, because the fresh fish is expensive and its preparation requires specialised skills and sometimes equipment.

The implication of these findings is that most restaurants are undergoing various transformations. For example, on the one hand, some restaurants that previously offered only typical Ghanaian meals 'modernised' their operations, such as by incorporating modern restaurant design, new styles of food preparation and service and introducing the FGRAFFs into their menus. This way, restaurateurs could appeal to international customers, meet the demands of local modern consumers and still be competitive in the market. On the other hand, some restaurants that previously offered only the FGRAFFs have begun to adapt their operations to suit local contexts.

In terms of (2) *techniques of food preparation*, precooking technology was found to be commonly used in preparing most popular foods, such as fried rice, French fries and chicken. Thus, most fast-food restaurants used pre-fried potatoes or precooked rice or chicken, all of which could be quickly fried for customers upon request. This precooking technology is necessary for mass and quick production of food and has also been used worldwide to produce a number of convenience foods that require minimal cooking time. Cooking methods often impact the nutritional and health benefits of foods. The growing general health consciousness of consumers was confirmed here with the finding that the demand for and the sale of foods prepared by healthier cooking techniques, such as stir-frying, grilling, baking and steaming is increasing. With the exception of stir-frying, these cooking methods are also employed in most Ghanaian homes. The use of various kinds of cooking techniques has been made possible by the level of cooking skills the actors acquire from their training, as well as various technologies and equipment that have been developed for easy food preparation and cooking. The use of these different types of equipment has also been facilitated by the increased availability of various energy sources in the AMA, including electricity, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and charcoal.

In relation to (3) *the distinct flavour principles*, which concerns the types and quantities of seasonings and additives used in fast food, findings showed that the main sources of flavour in most AMA fast food are *shitor* (black pepper sauce), freshly ground pepper and hot spices, such as ginger. All these have been influenced by the Ghanaians' likeness for pepper and hot spices, which are believed to cool the body and clean it of impurities. Another finding was the alleged excessive use of artificial flavour enhancers, such as monosodium glutamates, that might have negative health implications. For some fast-food consumers, taste and aromatic experiences form part of the social objective for consuming fast food, so they feel satisfied when this social objective has been achieved. Consequently, fast-food providers make frantic efforts to enhance the sensory properties (taste and aroma) of the food to make it more appealing to consumers, but in the process some end up misusing certain food seasonings and flavour enhancers – a practice that can pose health risks for consumers.

In relation to (4) *the codes of etiquette*, which prescribes the number of meals to be eaten per day, when, where, with what utensils, with whom and under what social circumstances the food is eaten, the main findings were as follows: Most respondents would obtain fast food from restaurants where they either ate in or bought to take away. Eating in fast-food restaurants was found to be mainly conditioned in Ghana by the desire to sit, relax, interact and socialise with different categories of people including families, friends and business partners. These findings, which were clearly influenced by the commensality attitude of typical Ghanaians, contradicted the original concept of fast food as aimed at providing, in good time, food for people on the move – the main reason why the concepts of self-service and drive-through were introduced. Most respondents ate fast food at lunchtime, suppertime or between lunch and supper, and at these mealtimes, 'real food' was usually eaten, in conformity with the typical Ghanaian eating culture – starches and soups/stews (C+F+p) at lunch and supper and, in some cases, breakfast, to provide adequate satisfaction and energy. This explains why the most common fast foods found in the restaurants were 'real foods', or meals, rather than snacks. The findings also indicated that some consumers eat these

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'real foods' at late hours, up to about midnight, which can potentially lead to health problems.

Other significant findings of this study relate to six additional cuisine characteristics that I discovered. The characteristics are (1) distinct techniques of serving food, (2) distinct techniques of packaging, (3) environmental appropriateness, (4) geographical or cultural origin, (5) distinctive infrastructure by which food ingredients moves from farm to fork, and (6) the marketing system by which fast food is marketed or distributed. The '*techniques of serving food*' prescribes the way food providers or restaurant staff make food or services available to the consumer, for example, by self- or table-service. In connection with this, it came to light that serving food on the table for a Ghanaian consumer in the restaurant is important because it is seen as a way of showing respect to customers.

The '*techniques of packaging*' basically concerns the type of packaging materials used and their safety. It also relates to the '*environmental appropriateness*' of the packaging materials, which entails the ease with which they can be disposed of and their eco-friendliness. In this regard, the findings revealed that most consumers were concerned about the safety and extensive use of packages made of plastic and polythene materials because of their negative effects on the environment. The '*geographical or cultural origin*' relates to newness, uniqueness and, basically, food that is different from the 'usual'. The '*food chain*', by which food or ingredients moves from farm to fork, relates to the sources of raw materials and other ingredients used in fast-food preparation and how it impacts local food production, the economy and the environment. In this regard, most informants indicated that they would have been happier eating fast food prepared with locally produced raw materials, but they also acknowledged the 'poor quality' of some of the locally produced raw materials, such as rice. Finally, '*marketing system*' deals with the techniques that are used for proliferating fast food, either locally or internationally.

An understanding of these six additional characteristics is needed in order to evaluate fast food fairly in different social and cultural contexts. For urban food provision, *techniques of serving food* and of *packaging* and the *environmental appropriateness* of packaging materials and *marketing system* are important, while *geographical or cultural origin* of the food is relevant for tourism development. Concerning health improvement, *techniques of packaging* is very critical, as the use of wrong packaging material may compromise the safety of the food while *environmentally harmful packages* may pose both environmental and health risks for consumers and society as a whole.

This chapter has highlighted the prevalence and the paradoxical nature of fast food in terms of its tendency to provide both benefits and anxieties. In the next section, therefore, I present findings from the three studies that examined the benefits that motivate fast-food consumption and how consumers reconcile the benefits with the anxieties. These was carried out by applying the concept of the culinary triangle of contradictions, in which considerations such as convenience and identity are regarded as some benefits that consumers can derive from fast-food consumption, while responsibility is a means by which consumers can minimise their exposure to the anxieties associated with fast-food consumption.

6.2.1 *The influence of culinary triangle of contradictions on fast-food consumption*

Like most other material cultural objects, fast-food products have both benefits and costs. Therefore, there are also conflicting factors that influence its consumption. In examining the conflicting factors that influence fast-food consumption, I employed Belasco's (2008) culinary triangle of contradictions in which three competing considerations (*convenience, identity* and *responsibility*) have been proposed as influencing a consumer's decision to eat a particular food. In line with these, this section reviews the studies that looked into the three research questions as reported in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. The findings from each chapter are summarised and presented in the next three subsections where I also highlight some interrelationships and contradictions that were identified among the three chapters.

Convenience

Chapter 3 examined how the components of convenience (perceived product convenience and convenience orientation) together with demographic and lifestyle variables, such as age and cooking skill, influence fast-food consumption in the AMA. In this study, reference was made to Scholderer and Grunert (2005) and Olsen et al. (2007), who propose that convenience should be examined in relation to the *perceived product convenience* (a product attribute) and the *convenience orientation* (a psychosocial attribute of an individual). Also, other studies have shown that frequency of fast-food consumption, perceived product convenience and convenience orientation may be influenced by demographic and lifestyle variables, as well as by cooking skill. Therefore, the objective of this study was to explain how (i) the perceived convenience of fast food, (ii) convenience orientation, (iii) cooking skills, and (iv) demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level) influence fast-food consumption among consumers in the AMA and to assess the relative importance of these factors in fast-food consumption. I did not examine convenience orientation as a single variable, but rather in relation to *consumers' inclination to save* (a) *time*, (b) *mental effort,* and (c) *physical effort* in the social practices of food consumption so as to be able to assess their relative importance.

There were several interesting findings. First, the more consumers perceived fast food as having convenience attributes, the greater the odds of their eating it more frequently. Second, all the three components of convenience orientation – consumers' inclination to save time, mental effort and physical effort – were found to be important in influencing fast-food consumption. However, it was also noticed that the time component had the strongest influence. Third, the empirical findings of this study, unlike conclusions in many other studies, could not confirm (1) the predictive power of income level on the frequency of fast-food consumption, although a positive association was found between a higher income and more frequent fast-food consumption, but confirmed that (2) youth, males, employed, students and singles are more likely to eat fast food more frequently than older, female, unemployed and married people, and that (3) consumers who have adequate cooking skills are likely to eat fast food less frequently, as found in some previous studies conducted in developed countries. Further studies are needed in a developing country such as Ghana to investigate the relationship between frequency of fast-food consumption and income level, the demographic variables related to these and cooking skill.

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Another significant finding was that perceived convenience of fast food and consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort had positive associations with fast-food restaurant consumption. This study showed that consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort enhanced the predictive power of perceived product convenience for fast-food consumption. Furthermore, findings showed that as a person grows older, his/her perception of the convenience attributes of fast food becomes more positive. However, this did not result in a corresponding increase in the frequency of fast-food consumption, implying that there could be other contexts and factors that influence fast-food choice as people advance in age, which need further investigations. To conclude: (1) Fast-food consumption in restaurants in Ghana is strongly determined by its convenience attributes and consumers' inclination to save time and mental effort in the overall meal process; and (2) this study could not confirm a relationship between (a) income level and frequency of fast-food consumption, between (b) demographic variables such as age, gender and employment/occupation and marital status and frequency of fast-food consumption, or between (c) cooking skill and frequency of fast-food consumption. Further studies are needed in this regard.

Identity

The fourth chapter dealt with the relationship between social identity and fast-food consumption. It examined the sociocultural meanings that fast-food consumers ascribe to fast-food consumption, how the meanings are contested, and how the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food consumption (or maintenance of fast food's social identity). This study was conducted by adapting the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009), who indicate that the basis for a person to adopt, join or express a particular identity depends on (a) *the identity content* (the meaning of a social identity, including a group's norms and goals, its views and beliefs about other identities and understandings of its material conditions and interests) and (b) *the degree of its contestation*. They further proposed that there are four types of identity content, namely, (1) *constitutive norms*, which refers to the formal and informal rules that define group membership, (2) *social purposes*, which refers to the goals that are shared by members of a group, (3) *relational comparisons*, which refers to defining a group by the actor's interaction and relationship with others, and (4) *cognitive models*, which refers to the worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interests that are shaped by a particular identity.

The findings here indicated that the fast-food social identity in the AMA was mainly constituted by the youth, males, singles and the educated, who eat or buy food in the fast-food restaurant at frequencies ranging from 'regularly' to 'occasionally'. The content of the fast-food social identity was analysed in relation to the *constitutive rules*, *social purpose*, *relational comparison* and *cognitive model* based on Abdelal et al.'s (2009) framework. In terms of the *constitutive norms,* the findings showed that the norms, practices and behaviours of the AMA fast food social group include some self-service but more counter and table services and eating with cutlery instead of the 'natural fork' or fingers. The constitutive norms also referred to behaviours such as smoking, 'public display of affection', eating at late hours, drinking before or during meals and eating individually from separate plates and not from a communal bowl, which was perceived as being too traditional. These 'new' norms were at the same time highly contested by members of the

fast food's social group, indicating that the formation and expression of the fast-food social identity is a dynamic and contested process.

In terms of *social purposes*, the study indicated that fast food's social identity is associated with what (i) is new and unique, (ii) encourages social interaction, and (iii) has sensory and health values. In relation to newness and uniqueness, findings showed that fast-food restaurant-goers are curious and eager to eat something different, be exposed to a new experience and looking for a new and different eating environment while learning about other food cultures. The fast-food social group also referred to social objectives such as gaining an opportunity for social interaction, exchange of pleasantries and expression of pleasantness and pride. In relation to sensory value, the findings showed that generally, all the five senses (touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound) are used while eating in the restaurants to provide different physiological and emotional reactions to the restaurant, the services and the food being consumed. The background music, appearance of cooking and serving staff and decency and cleanliness of the environment were all a source of sensory and emotional satisfaction for fast-food consumers.

It was interesting to observe that these were the least contested among the AMA consumers, giving the impression that most fast-food consumers had quite similar social purposes. Nevertheless, some social-purpose aspects of fast-food restaurant consumption were contested, mostly along the lines of its health impact. On the one hand, fast food and fast-food restaurants were perceived as hygienic and 'decent' and as having some inherent nutritional and health benefits; on the other hand, fast food was perceived to have properties that could negatively affect health and body and self-image. It is true that these contested social objectives of consumption in fast-food restaurants may also be applied to consumption in non-fast-food restaurants. However, the socially important contribution of this present study to the scientific debate on fast consumption patterns is the fact that these social purposes of fast food were not part of its original purpose, which was basically to provide, in good time, cheap filling food to people on the move. The emphasis then was on speed, low cost and satiety; findings from this study have shown that these original purposes have evolved over time in different sociocultural settings to encompass a greater range of social objectives.

In terms of *relational comparisons*, findings showed that the holding of fast-food social identity or participation in its behaviours could be influenced by (1) other social identities that a person has, such as health, religious and economic identities, and (2) the existence of 'others' (who are different) and may also contest the fast-food social identity. In terms of the *cognitive model*, it was interesting to find that even though Ghana is urbanising and 'Westernising', people still think that most men who are holders of the fast-food social identity maintain their membership because of the stereotypical gender roles in Ghana, whereby men do not usually cook.

To conclude, this study has shown that the most contested aspects of the fast-food social identity are its behaviours, such as public display of affection, smoking and eating at late hours while the most accepted aspects are its newness and uniqueness, its association with social interaction, exchange of pleasantries and expression of pleasantness and pride, and its sensory and positive health values. Because some aspects of the fast-food social identity

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were highly contested as 'good' or 'bad' (see also Chapter 2 on health and environmental issues), it is important to examine how reflective consumers are in their decisions to remain holders of this identity. Therefore, in Chapter 5, I next examined how behavioural characteristics of the self and important 'others' (subjective norms), such as parents, peers and health professionals, who are not members of the fast-food social group, influence consumers' health and environmentally responsible fast-food consumption decisions.

Responsibility

The issue of factors determining the intentions of a consumer to adopt a loyalty or exit strategy as a form of responsible consumer behaviour to reduce the negative health and environmental consequences of fast food was approached by adapting the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). This originally had three factors – *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour* and *perceived behavioural control* – that jointly predicted the intention to perform a particular behaviour. Two models – the health responsible TPB model and environmentally responsible TPB model – were also adapted and a fourth factor – *awareness of negative consequences* of fast-food consumption – was introduced. Thus, the factors in the adapted health responsible TPB model were *attitude toward healthy fast food*, *subjective norms about healthy fast food*, *perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food* and *awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food.* The environmentally responsible TPB model also had four factors namely, *attitude toward environmental responsibilit*y, *subjective norm about environmental responsibilit*y, *perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible* and *awareness of environmental consequences* The study assessed the predictive power of these factors for the adoption of loyalty and exit strategies as forms of responsible consumer behaviours in fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal.

In terms of the prediction of the intention to adopt loyalty strategy as a form of responsible fast-food purchase, consumption, and waste disposal behaviour, the findings show that loyalty strategy in relation to health considerations was predicted by all the four factors in the health responsible TPB model. Awareness of the health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food had the greatest influence on the adoption of loyalty strategy, followed by subjective norms about healthy fast food, perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food and attitude toward healthy fast food. Secondly, loyalty strategy in relation environmental considerations was predicted by three factors of the environmentally responsible TPB model: in order of importance, the perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible, subjective norm about environmental responsibility and awareness of environmental consequences. Thirdly, awareness of negative consequences was the best significant predictor of loyalty strategy as a form of health responsible behaviour but was the least significant predictor of loyalty strategy as a form of environmentally responsible behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal. These findings suggest that the factors in the TPB model influence people differently depending on the type of anxieties that they are dealing with. It means that in planning interventions aimed at reducing the anxieties associated with fast-food consumption, each anxiety may need to be addressed differently.

In terms of *prediction of the intention to adopt exit strategy* as a form of responsible fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal behaviour in relation to health

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considerations all the three original factors in the TPB model were found to be relevant, namely, *perceived behavioural control of eating*, *attitude toward* and *subjective norms about healthy fast food*, in that order. The newly introduced factor (awareness of the negative health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food) was not a significant predictor of exit strategy, implying that it did not enhance the predictive power of the TPB model on the adoption of exit strategy in health responsible fast-food consumption as expected. The finding that perceived behavioural control of eating healthy fast food was the strongest predictor of exit strategy implies that the ability of an individual to take action towards healthy eating strongly influences the adoption of exit strategy in fast-food consumption. This also suggests that the adoption of an exit strategy requires a greater will-power at the individual level and only very determined people can adopt this exit strategy in fast-food consumption.

Secondly, exit strategies in relation to environmental considerations were predicted by three of the four factors, in order of importance, awareness of environmental consequences, attitude toward environmental responsibility and perceived behavioural control of being environmentally responsible. Thirdly, *awareness of negative consequences* was not significant in predicting the adoption of exit strategy as a form of responsible consumer behaviour in relation to health considerations, but this factor turned out to be the strongest predictor of exit strategy as a form of environmentally responsible behaviour in fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal. This suggests that the newly introduced factor of awareness of negative consequences enhanced the predictive power of the TPB model in relation to environmental considerations but not in relation to health considerations.

Again, as mentioned earlier, these findings have shown that the TPB model factors influence people differently depending on the type of anxieties that they are dealing with and so need to be integrated with caution when planning interventions. These findings also suggest that it is easier to adopt an exit strategy when a consumer is aware of negative environmental consequences of fast food than when he/she is aware of its negative health consequences. This could be due to the fact that unlike the exit strategy in health responsible consumption, where an individual stops or reduces fast-food consumption, adoption of an exit strategy in environmentally responsible consumption does not necessarily mean that the individual will quit or even reduce fast-food consumption. What it essentially means is that the consumer will not buy, eat or carry fast food only if it is served or packaged in eco-harmful materials. Therefore, it is possible that a consumer who adopts an exit strategy in environmentally responsible consumption will also adopt a loyalty strategy as a way of being health responsible. This underscores the earlier point that the adoption of exit strategy as a way of avoiding negative health impacts is highly influenced by an individual's will-power (i.e. perceived behavioural control of healthy eating) rather than awareness of negative health consequences.

In *comparing factors that predict the intention to adopt loyalty and exit strategies*, the findings show that (1) a consumer who is aware of the consequences of unhealthy eating, has a high positive attitude toward healthy eating, values the importance of social influence about healthy eating and has a strong perception of his/her ability to engage in healthy eating is more likely to adopt a loyalty than exit strateg*y*, since awareness of negative health consequences was found to have no significant influence on this; (2) a consumer whose

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perception of his/her ability to control fast-food consumption behaviour is increased when he/she has high positive attitude toward healthy eating and a strong social influence is more likely to adopt an exit than loyalty strategy, because perceived behavioural control (which relates to strong will-power) had the strongest influence on the adoption of exit strategy; (3) a fast-food consumer who is aware of the environmental consequences of fast food, has high regard for important references people, and perceives him or herself as being able to exert a strong will-power in adopting environmentally responsible behaviours is most likely to adopt a loyalty strategy, since important references (subjective norm) had no significant influence on exit strategy; (4) the health responsible TPB model as a whole was stronger in predicting loyalty strategy than exit strategy in fast-food consumption.

These findings could be influenced by the newly introduced factor (awareness of health consequences of eating unhealthy fast food), indicating an enhancement of the predictive strength of the TPB model on loyalty strategy. The finding also suggest that although consumers are aware of the negative consequences of unhealthy eating, they are less likely to engage in exit behaviours and more likely to adopt loyalty strategies, probably due to the benefits these consumers get from fast food or the low perceived behavioural control (or will-power) to adopt exit strategy. It is also important to note that the adoption of loyalty strategies depends on the availability of healthier or alternative options, which some fast-food companies are now offering in their restaurants. In essence, consumers' awareness of the availability of healthier and alternative options (e.g. gyms for exercising) may motivate the adoption of loyalty strategy in fast-food consumption; (5) the environmentally responsible TPB model was stronger in predicting exit than loyalty strategy, which suggests that the newly introduced factor in the TPB model – awareness of environmental consequences of fast food', which was the best predictor of exit strategy – could have enhanced the overall predictive power of the TPB model on exit strategy.

6.2.2 *Reflections on the interrelationships and contradictions among the elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions*

By assessing the characteristics of fast food in the AMA, this study has identified that fast food has some characteristics that motivate its consumption while at the same time having other characteristics that are a source of concern to its consumers. Informed by the prevalence of fast-food restaurants in the AMA coupled with the extent of its consumption among consumers, the study employed the culinary triangle of contradictions to examine how the elements of the triangle, namely, convenience, identity, and responsibility, influences fast-food consumption. Although these issues were examined separately in different chapters, some interrelationships and contradictions have been identified among them.

Firstly, fast-food consumers in the AMA are motivated by the desire for *convenience* (saving, time, mental and physical efforts) in the overall meal process, while at the same time they take delight in forming and expressing *social identity*, which is characterised by social interaction that involves spending more time in the restaurants. The implication of this is that for these consumers, while spending time they also save the mental and physical efforts in procuring and preparing food. In this sense, the mental and physical efforts components of convenience may be more relevant than the time component for consumers

who seek to express social identity in the fast-food restaurant. 'Fast food' may really mean 'easy food' in a convivial (social) setting. Also, while seeking convenience, there is the tendency to choose fast food because of its inherent convenience attributes however this may compromise local food cultures or Ghanaian identity. Thus, within the consideration of identity, there is a conflict between traditional culture and 'foreign' culture. But the findings have shown that this conflict may be addressed by the incorporation of various forms of the Ghanaian culture into restaurant operations.

Secondly, as found in Chapter two, most time-constrained consumers would purchase take-away fast food and by doing so they may have to give up some aspects of the fast-foods social identity such as social interaction. In dealing with this trade-off between *convenience and identity*, there is the tendency of purchasing fast food in environmentally harmful packages. Furthermore, if consumers want to be environmentally responsible then the possible options will be to avoid purchasing fast food in environmentally harmful packages or preferably eating in the restaurants. However, because the consumers are time-constrained but also have to eat fast food, which is food after all, the trade-off between *convenience and environmental responsibility* may have to be addressed with appropriate interventions and input from government and fast food restaurateurs to improve the environmental appropriateness of the food.

Thirdly, the finding showed that satisfying the sensory desire is an important social purpose for consuming fast food in a restaurant; for this reason, fast food restaurateurs make frantic efforts to enhance, for example, the taste of their food, and in the process end up misusing some flavour enhancers and other substances, which becomes a source of concern for consumers. Again, in relation to social identity, fast-food consumers in the AMA are motivated by the health benefits of fast food, which include the provision of energy, protein and micronutrients, as well as perceived hygienic food; at the same time, however, the consumers are concerned about possible negative health effects, particularly on body size and body image. These findings expose the contradictions between *identity and responsibility*. To deal with this conflict, one option will be for consumers to eat responsibly, that is, curtailing fast-food consumption (exit strategy), which implies that most the benefits derived from fast food consumption may be forgone, or to adopt loyalty strategy, which also implies that alternative options such as healthier options need to be available for consumers to choose from.

Fourthly, it is possible that the interventions that address the conflicts may result in price hikes and possibly exclusion of some consumers who may not be able to afford. However, this study has shown that consumers are unlikely to curtail fast-food consumption under such situations because price is not a deterrent to fast-food consumption – it is rather a means by which people show off their wealth. This suggests that it is worthwhile for regulatory agencies (government) to invest time and resources to set up nutrition, health and environmental guidelines for fast food restaurateurs, sensitise them on the guidelines and ensure that they abide by them while restaurateurs invest in providing healthier and environmentally friendly fast food. Also, it is possible that while exercising responsibility some aspects of identity such sensory value may be traded-off, for example, the crispiness of fried chicken, which signifies a sense of touch, may be lost when grilled chicken is

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chosen instead. These trade-offs are necessary to ensure that the anxieties associated with fast food consumption are reduced.

These findings have shown that the culinary triangle of contradictions (Belasco, 2008) is indeed not equilateral. Consumers' fast-food consumption decisions are based on a rough negotiation between the dictates of convenience and identity and guidance from the considerations of responsibility. Consumers therefore have to make trade-offs by choosing options that are most desirable. Belasco (2008) indicated that responsibility has the least influence on consumers' consumption decisions, but as this study has shown, the influence of responsibility can be increased when relevant actors in the fast-food network make appropriate inputs and interventions. The consumer's responsible consumption behaviour is facilitated to a large extent by inputs or interventions from these actors.

6.3 Contribution to theory

This interdisciplinary research makes several contributions to the scientific debate on fast food and fast-food restaurants in various disciplines. First of all, it contributes an understanding of the use of a material culture approach to the study of food and food-related items as objects. The few earlier researchers (e.g. Albala, 2012; Miller & Deutsch, 2009; Belasco, 2008) who considered food as an object focused on food alone. However, I examined fast food as material-cultural objects and fast-food restaurants as non-food material cultural objects, as well the social practices of consuming material culture, such as buying and eating-out in a fast-food restaurant – an area that has been overlooked in material culture studies (de Solier, 2013).

This research also combined the views of earlier researchers of material culture consumption who focused on non-food material objects, such as Bourdieu (1984), Baudrillard (1998) and Featherstone (1991). The findings have shown that social status (Bourdieu), creation of meanings (Baudrillard) and the desire for new 'taste' or lifestyle (Featherstone) are all associated with fast-food consumption in the AMA. In addition, although the capitalist system has a tendency to impose certain consumption practices on us (Baudrillard, 1998), this study has shown that consumers, as agents, do, of course, also have options to decide whether to consume certain food products or not. This has been clearly demonstrated, for example, by the contestations of some of the meanings that fast-food consumers associate with fast-food consumption.

This study contributes to debates on consumption of material-cultural objects where researchers such as de Solier (2013) and Miller (2001, 1998) examined anxieties associated with food consumption and shopping. In Australia, de Solier (2013) considered anxieties such as overspending money when dining-out in expensive restaurants and indicated that her informants reconcile this anxiety with their expensive taste by restricting the frequency of their consumption. In the UK, Miller (2001, 1998) paid attention to shopping in a supermarket, arguing that his informants' shopping was governed by a morality of thrift in which saving rather than spending money is the right way to shop. Miller indicated that his informants exercised their morality by, for example, looking for items on reduced prices.

The unique contributions this study makes to the study of material culture consumption are, firstly, that (i) the study focused on buying and eating in fast-food restaurants in a

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developing country (Ghana) where socioeconomic and cultural contexts are different from those in the West (Australia, UK); (ii) it focused on two types of anxieties associated with fast-food consumption – (a) health anxiety caused by the material property of fast food and (b) environmental anxiety caused by the non-food materials (packaging, utensils, carrier bags, etc.) used for buying, transporting and eating the food; (iii) the study considered personal responsibility behaviours in terms of exit and loyalty strategies as ways in which fast-food consumers reconcile health and environmental anxieties with the benefits of fast-food consumption; (iv) it incorporated the theory of planned behaviour to predict the personal responsibility behaviours that fast-food consumers are likely to adopt. This study has also, therefore, introduced quantitative methods of studying how consumers reconcile benefits, such as pleasure, with anxieties, such as health problems, associated with the consumption of material culture.

Secondly, this thesis contributes to theoretical debates on fast-food consumption in the field of food studies and social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, behavioural sciences and marketing. To evaluate fast food fairly and thus be able to expose its material cultural content in the AMA, it was important to find ways of comprehensively and simultaneously examining its various characteristics there. This was made possible by using the four cuisine characteristics of the cuisine concept (Farb & Armelagos, 1980; Rozin, 1982), as an analytical framework and applying an inductive approach to data collection and analysis. In spite of its usefulness in analysing a cuisine and thereby understanding its expressive and normative functions, the application of the cuisine concept in the field of food studies until now has been limited. The six additional cuisine characteristics identified in Chapter 2 indicate further characteristics that need to be incorporated in order to evaluate it fairly in different social and cultural contexts. The findings imply that when fast food is analysed along these six, plus the original four cuisine characteristics, one is better placed to identify similarities, differences and hybridisations in the fast-food phenomenon and what it means to people in different sociocultural contexts and generations. Future research should incorporate these six additions into the cuisine concept when studying food as a material cultural object to identify not only the cultural attributes of food, but also the social and behavioural attributes.

Thirdly, the thesis contributes to the convenience literature in the field of marketing in the sense that whereas previous studies examined only one component of convenience (perceived product convenience or else convenience orientation), this thesis examined both components simultaneously in order to measure convenience more comprehensively. Furthermore, this study is unique because convenience orientation was examined in relation to saving time and mental and physical efforts in one or more of the stages of the overall meal process. Thus, it was possible to determine the relative importance of time and mental and physical efforts in relation to fast-food consumption.

Fourthly, this research provides conceptual clarity in treating identity as a variable that influences food consumption. It was possible to show the applicability of the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009) with empirical evidence. Although some aspects of the fast-food identity were found to be highly contested as 'good' or 'bad', it was not possible to use the Abdelal et al. framework to assess how reflective people are in their decision-making to maintain a hold on the fast-food social identity in the midst of these

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contestations. Furthermore, the framework could not be used to explain how consumers form a responsible self through their participation in the behaviours of the fast-food social identity and how their decisions to participate are influenced by important 'others' who are not members of the fast-food social identity. These issues had to be dealt with independently, for which the theory of planned behaviour was employed. Therefore, future research may consider ways of combining aspects of the Abdelal et al. (2009) framework with the TPB model to better examine how issues of responsible consumption relate to identity formation through consumption.

Finally, the research has shown the possibility of enhancing the predictive power of the TPB model by the introduction of the factor of 'awareness of negative consequences' of consumption. This factor was found to enhance the predictive power of both the health responsible TPB model on loyalty strategy and environmentally responsible TPB model on exit strategy. This implies that future studies might similarly incorporate this factor into their studies.

6.4 Implications for policy and practice

As intended as a research objective, this study has produced some policy implications. Firstly, it is the goal of the government of Ghana to ensure the food, health and environmental security of its citizens, to which end the Ministry of Health piloted a Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programme (2006-10), with the objective of reducing the incidence of sanitation-related diseases and preventable non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, type II diabetes and obesity. An assessment of the impact of the first (pilot) phase of the programme on people's behaviour has shown that the prevalence of some negative lifestyle and behaviours, like smoking, has decreased, while others, like unhealthy dietary practices, have increased (Tagoe & Dake, 2011). The conclusion from these authors was that there is also the need for intervention programmes to target barriers in the urban environment that work against the adoption of healthy lifestyles. In other words we need to identify factors that support the adoption of healthy behaviours and incorporate these into intervention programmes such as the RHN. In 2013, as part of the second phase of the programme, which is yet to be rolled out, training manuals on health and nutrition as well as guidelines for dietary and physical activity were developed.

This thesis has provided empirical evidence to show that fast food contributes to health and sanitation problems, which are the focus of the RHN programme, and hence that there is a need for interventions to target fast-food production and consumption. However, some studies (e.g. Lang et al., 2009; Caraher & Landon, 2006; Lupton, 1995) have shown that most health promotion programmes that have targeted fast food have not been successful, because these programmes only targeted its negative aspects and did not take into consideration the social, cultural and behavioural aspects. These aspects have been dealt with in this study where I examined the role of the culinary triangle of contradictions (convenience, identity, and responsibility) in fast-food consumption. The findings here have shown that convenience and identity are, indeed, determinants of fast-food purchase and consumption, but also that consumers are usually reflective on anxieties associated with their fast-food consumption choices and would therefore adopt loyalty or exit strategies as

ways of minimising the effects of these. The implications of these findings for the RHN programme and other similar programmes, therefore, are as follows:

Findings from the study that examined the relationship of convenience with fast-food consumption showed that most people eat fast food because of their inclination to save time and mental and physical effort, as well as because of the inherent convenience attributes of fast food; also, people consume fast food because of its role in identity formation and expression. Thus, to these consumers, eating in a fast-food restaurant is a way to be connected with what is new and unique, pleasurable and associated with social interaction. The main implication of this is that people want eating outlets that suit their status and serve their social purposes – aspirations that fast-food restaurants appear to meet. Therefore, the following points are suggested:

- The RHN programme should encourage fast-food restaurants to provide healthier fast foods and package them in environmentally friendly packages (e.g. made from materials such as paper). As found in Chapter 2, for example, the choice of cooking methods impacts on the nutritional or health importance of the fast food. Therefore, fast-food producers can enhance the healthiness of their food by, for example, grilling as opposed to frying certain foods.

- The high frequency of fast-food consumption among the youth, people in employment and students necessitates that RHN interventions must target these groups of people and develop strategies to reduce the time, physical and mental effort they require to get healthy and environmental friendly meals at work places and school campuses.

- The fact that some consumers indicate their intention to adopt a loyalty strategy implies that health and nutrition educational messages should not only emphasise exit behaviours (e.g. stop eating fast food) as is usual, but should also highlight loyalty strategies (e.g. choose grilled or baked chicken). These imply that opportunities need to be created for these behaviours to be adopted. The findings also suggest that health interventions aimed at promoting loyalty strategy should, in order of importance, focus on increasing awareness of the consequences of unhealthy eating, encouraging the involvement of social influence on healthy eating, facilitating people's abilities to engage in healthy eating and motivating the development of a positive attitude toward healthy eating. Parallel to the first point (above), it should be noted, the adoption of loyalty strategies depends on the availability of healthier, environmentally friendly and alternative options. The findings also suggests that health interventions aimed at promoting an exit strategy should focus, in order of relevance, on facilitating people's ability to engage in healthy eating, motivating the development of a positive attitude toward healthy eating and encouraging the involvement of social influence on healthy eating.

- The RGN programme should also encourage the integration of convenience attributes (e.g., quick to get, easy to get, easy to prepare, eat and clear-up) into the overall meal process in the home (purchasing, preparation, cooking, eating, clearing-up) for consumers who would adopt this exit strategy rationale. As an example, the RHN could advocate that vegetables and fruits on sale should be minimally processed (e.g., sorted and washed, peeled and chopped) to reduce preparation time, as a result of which people may be encouraged to cook their own food more often and visit the restaurant less often. To reduce physical effort

required by consumers who would adopt this exit strategy rationale, RGN can work with such households to, for example, increase the availability and affordability of easy-to-use fuel sources (e.g. liquefied petroleum gas rather than charcoal or firewood), pipe-born water and electricity (to supply power for food storage facilities such as refrigerators). Mental effort can also be reduced by providing consumers with information about possible healthier food options, where they can be obtained and how they can be prepared quickly – recipe tips for healthier options could be provided. People should also be encouraged to develop menu guides as a way of reducing mental effort. This way, the amount of thinking an individual has to do vis-à-vis what to eat, where to eat, what to cook and how to cook can be reduced.

Implementing these interventions would require inputs from a number of actors in the fast-food network. Therefore, essentially, each of the actors needs to increase their commitment to ensure delivery and consumption of products and services with minimal health and environmental anxieties. These actors include fast-food producers, food regulators, food and nutrition, health and environmental researchers, as well as consumers. The combined effort of these actors is important as indicated by a study conducted in the UK that showed that consumers would be willing to adopt responsible consumption behaviours but only if other significant influences in government and industry also play their role (Defra, 2007).

In addition to its health concerns as addressed by the RHN programme, the government of Ghana has the goal of developing the tourism sector and to project Ghanaian culture through tourism. Fast-food restaurants, which are tourism enterprises in Ghana, therefore have an important role to play in terms providing food to tourists while portraying aspects of Ghanaian culture. Focusing on the material and cultural aspects of fast-food restaurants, this research has the following implications for tourism development:

- The government's policy of developing the tourism sector has led to the establishment of various training institutions that provide relevant human resources for the tourism sector, including fast-food restaurants. The presence of a combination of FGRAFFs and typical Ghanaian foods in most of these fast-food restaurants could be the result of interventions by the National Commission on Culture and the Ghana Tourism Authority, which encourage restaurateurs to portray features of Ghanaian culture in their restaurants. Essentially, the government of Ghana supports the integration of foreign and traditional cultures; therefore, fast-food restaurants as tourism enterprises can be used as an important avenue for showcasing Ghanaian food culture.
- Findings in Chapter 2 have shown that the main food items present in fast-food restaurants are imported menu items such as fried rice, burgers, pizzas and French fries. However, these imported foods have been transformed in several ways, mainly by the incorporation of aspects of the Ghanaian food culture and the menu has been expanded with the addition of some common Ghanaian foods, such as *banku* and *kelewele*. Therefore, for international tourists, especially those from the Western countries who may both seek new food and dining experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006) and need a certain degree of familiarity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004) and will therefore prefer their 'core' food (Chang et al., 2010), fast-food restaurants in

the AMA may seek to emphasise the combination of desired newness and familiarity by further developing a blend of the two (global-local) to these tourists.

- Findings in Chapter 4 showed that people buy and eat fast food in fast-food restaurants because they perceive them as 'decent' and hygienic and they suit their status. This implies that for most tourists who are likely to eat traditional foods during their visits but would want to do so under hygienic conditions (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Amuquandoh, 2004), fast-food restaurants appear to be better placed to serve their needs. This is because most traditional eateries including street foods, which offer mostly traditional Ghanaian food have been found to be operating under unhygienic conditions (Mensah et al., 2002; Rheinlander et al., 2008; Addo et al., 2007; Feglo et al., 2004) – an aspect that most international tourists who visit Ghana abhor (Amuquandoh, 2004). In other words, this research confirms the relevance of fast-food to tourism, thus underscoring the importance of the points made above.

Taking a social agency approach to the considerations listed, we may note that insofar as consumer protection is the primary goal of any state food-consumption intervention, then consumers, who are important actors within the fast-food network, have to be involved in the implementation of any policy. Under the RHN programme, consumers can be educated and provided with relevant information that will enable them adopt healthy lifestyles. The educational messages need to focus on the consequences of eating unhealthy foods, benefits of physical activity and how to identify fast-food outlets that have been certified as selling safe, healthy and environmentally friendly products. Stone (2002) suggests that this type of persuasion provides information that enlightens and liberates the consumer. A reward package could be instituted for consumers and the criteria for the reward could include reduction of fast-food consumption to 'not more than three times a month' (non-frequenters status), regular exercise and loss of excess weight by a predetermined amount. Reward for a complying consumer could include sponsorship for a gym membership or a food, nutrition and health conference a supply of healthy food products or cash, and recognition as a role model or an ambassador for the youth.

Implementing these interventions in Ghana, however, will imply that legislators, standards and regulatory bodies will need to make official rules and guidelines to prescribe or prohibit certain actions by fast-food restaurants. For example, legislation and guidelines can be designed to fix maximum acceptable fat levels, prohibit of the use of animal fats (e.g. lard), ban on the use of plastic packaging, require the labelling of food to indicate nutrient and energy values, require the inclusion of a fruit in every dish, stipulate a maximum serving size per person, prevent unauthorised food additives and enforce general food hygiene requirements. Fast-food restaurants will need to comply with these and the parallel norms determined by society. In situations where restaurants have difficulties in meeting the requirements, avenues should be created for them to negotiate with government to soften the standards or help them with some resources to enable them comply. Government can, for example, give restaurants operators relevant training, technical and logistics assistance to enable them meet the required standards.

Finally, although consumers have the right to be protected, these rights are normative and hence come with responsibilities. For example, it is the responsibility of consumers to be

more alert and curious about the quality, nutritional value and health implications of the food they eat, to assert themselves and act to ensure that they get a fair deal, to be aware of the impact of unhealthy consumption habits and to organise and form consumers associations to develop the strength and influence to promote and protect the interests of all consumers.

6.5 Limitations and outlook for further research

In this section, I present some limitations and formulate recommendations for further research. Emphasising a positive, forward-looking perspective (rather than merely retrospective self-critique), nine points are listed, as follows:

i. The findings on the various characteristics of fast food call for the need to re-examine the previous definitions of fast food as well as its characteristics and the criticisms levelled against it. The findings have also shown that fast food is a broad term that constitutes various types of food, each with its unique material properties. Therefore, a proposal is made for future studies and analysts to examine the individual fast-food items separately to identify the relevance or otherwise of each item rather than lumping them all together as one whole.

ii. Over the years, most nutrition research in Ghana has focussed on under-nutrition (micronutrient deficiencies and protein-energy malnutrition such as marasmus and kwashiorkor), particularly among children and pregnant women, while most food science research has focused on raw and processed foods. However, as findings from this thesis have indicated, there is high prevalence and consumption of fast food in the AMA, indicating a shift in urban dietary patterns. Therefore, nutrition and food science researchers and others, such as sociologists, should also focus their studies on the ready-to-eat urban food sector to improve our understanding of fast food's contribution to food security and its link with health, culture and the environment.

iii. By using the cuisine concept (Farb and Armelagos 1980; Rozin 1982) as an analytical framework and applying an inductive approach to data collection and analysis, it was possible to assess the characteristics of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the AMA. To the four characteristics of the cuisine concept, six additional cuisine characteristics were identified, namely, techniques of serving, techniques of packaging, environmental appropriateness, geographical or cultural origin, food chain and marketing system. These may need to be further explored. Since the cuisine concept has been useful for understanding the similarities, differences and hybridisations in the fast-food phenomenon in the context of Ghana, future research in other locations may also employ these ten cuisine characteristics when studying food as a material cultural object, so as to identify not only the cultural attributes of food (including but not limited to fast food), but also its material, social and behavioural attributes.

iv. This study could not confirm some findings from some similar studies previously conducted in developed countries. Hence, further confirmatory studies are indicated in order to provide better insights into some issues. These focus on the following items:

   • Contexts and factors that influence fast-food choice as people advance in age;

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- Relationship between income level and frequency of fast-food consumption among different groups of respondents (but with researchers being careful to differentiate between income and access to money);
- Relationship between demographic variables such as age, gender, employment status/occupation, marital status with frequency of fast-food consumption;
- Relationships between cooking skills and frequency of fast-food consumption, as well as other intervening factors that influence the act of personal cooking.

v. The study was able to provide empirical evidence of the applicability of the analytical framework of Abdelal et al. (2009). However, although some aspects of the fast-food identity were found to be highly contested as 'good' or 'bad', it was not possible to use the framework to assess how reflective people are in their decisions to maintain a fast-food social identity in the midst of the contestations. Furthermore, the framework could not be used to explain how consumers form a responsible self through their participation in the behaviours of the fast-food social identity or how their decisions to participate are influenced by their other identities, such as health and religion, and important others, those who are not members of the fast-food social group. These issues were partly dealt with independently in Chapter 5 using the theory of planned behaviour, but future research may consider ways of combining aspects of the Abdelal's (2009) framework with TPB model to better examine how issues of responsible consumption relate to identity formation through consumption.

vi. This study considered only two contested issues, that is, health (which also relates to body image) and environmental anxieties. Therefore, the newly proposed TPB model (with four factors) can be used in future studies to examine other forms of anxieties identified as associated with the consumption of fast food and other material cultural objects.

vii. The addition of the new variable (awareness of negative consequences) to the theory of planned behaviour model had a stronger influence on loyalty strategy in health responsible fast-food consumption and on exit strategy in environmentally responsible fast-food purchase, indicating the importance of consumer education. This demonstrates the importance of raising consumers' awareness about both the negative and positive aspects of fast food, which include its material, cultural, social and behavioural attributes, and making consumers aware of all the options available to them. This finding therefore implies the need for researchers, particularly in the field of communication and media, to develop effective information, education and communication materials that take into consideration the material, cultural, social and behavioural attributes of fast food.

viii. One limitation of the study was the inability to assess the availability of healthy and environmentally friendly fast-food options in all the fast-food restaurants surveyed and hence a lack of data on the actual consumption of these options; the study was only designed to examine only behavioural intentions (loyalty and exit strategies). Therefore, future research should assess how these behavioural intentions together with the four factors of the TPB model influence the actual consumption (which entails social practices such as purchasing, eating and waste disposal) of healthy and environmental friendly fast food. This implies that future

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research should also employ both objective and subjective studies to, for example, assess the nutritional values and environmental friendliness of fast foods so as to identify options that have minimal health and environmental anxieties.

ix.   The study focused only on consumers who purchase and consume fast food in fast-food restaurants, so the findings may not be generalisable to all urban fast-food consumers. This is because fast food could also be obtained from other outlets such as supermarkets and informal street food outlets, which may be perceived differently by different consumers. Future studies ought to consider how the different fast-food outlets influence the types of consumers who visit the outlets, as well as the meanings consumers ascribe to these outlets.

6.6 Final remarks

Overall, by employing an interdisciplinary approach, this thesis has provided insights into what constitutes fast food in the context of Ghana, its prevalence, characteristics and relevance for urban food provision, health promotion and tourism development. Specifically, the study has provided insights into the dynamic nature of the material, social, cultural and behavioural attributes of not only fast food, but also of fast-food restaurants, as well as the people who consume these objects. The study has shown empirically that fast food plays an important role in providing food for an urban, youthful and middle class population and that the food could also be suitable for international tourists. Additionally, the study has shown that fast food can provide important nutrients, such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins and micronutrients for the body and possibly contribute to nutrition and health improvement. Despite the criticism, fast food is, after all, food.

The study has shown that fast food does also present some health anxieties for consumers and the society at large, related to its linkage to predisposing individuals to conditions such as heart diseases, diabetes and obesity. It also presents environmental anxieties related to the use and disposal of plastics at various stages of the food provision and consumption process. Nevertheless, the study has also shown that where fast food is found to be nutritionally inadequate, there is the possibility of (i) improving its nutritional properties and (ii) introducing other healthier foods to the menu. Similarly, there is the possibility of improving the environmental appropriateness of the material objects used for preparing, serving, transporting and eating fast food.

Another significant finding was that fast-food consumers do not only eat fast food for its convenience and to express social identity, but that they are also reflective about the health and environmental anxieties that may accompany its consumption. On that basis, fast-food consumers can choose to adopt a loyalty or exit strategy. The fact that consumers opt for loyalty strategies implies that fast food provides certain material, social, cultural and behavioural benefits for them, and hence that they may not quit fast-food consumption. This, in turn, impacts on state strategies, suggesting the starting point of fast-food consumption as a given, with an acknowledgement of the attractiveness of fast-food in developing different policy approaches to try to regulate it. Therefore, this study provides evidence to show that for nutrition and health intervention programmes to be effective, there is the need to adopt more holistic approaches by incorporating material, social, cultural and behavioural aspects of food into the programmes.

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Appendix 1 Measurement items for *health* responsible TPB model

Item	Factor loading
Attitude toward healthiness of fast food	
In my opinion, unhealthy fast food has serious negative consequences for my health	.77
A major cause of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension is excessive fast-food consumption	.85
I believe that unhealthy fast food is a very important health issue	.86
Subjective norms about healthy fast-food consumption	
People in my circle of friends highly value the healthfulness of fast food	.95
My family highly values the healthfulness of fast food	.83
The healthfulness of other foods (non-fast food) has a significant importance in my community	.85
Most people who are important for me think that I should eat unhealthy fast food less often	.77
Perceived behavioural control towards healthy fast food	
When I buy healthy (fast) food, I feel that I have done something positive for my health	.78
I believe that my decisions in healthy food choices have a direct influence on my overall health status	.73
My healthy food choices have a direct impact on my health	.87
It would be possible for me not to eat unhealthy fast food regularly during the next month	.80
Consumers' awareness of negative health impacts	
I am aware that fast food can make me excessively fat	.65
I am aware that not all fast food are nutritious	.52
I am aware that fast food can make me ill	.51
I am aware that fast food often contains too much salt	.73
I am aware that fast food often contains excess fat or calories	.62
I am aware that fast food can increase my chances of developing cancer, diabetes, hypertension or kidney diseases	.68
I consider myself to be well informed about fast food-related health problems	.58
Loyalty intentions (strategies) based on health impact	
I often exercise so I do not avoid eating high calories fast food	.81
I always choose the healthier option of fast food	.84
I try to eat fast food that is nutritious	.80
I try to eat fast food that contains vegetables	.85
I try to buy/eat from hygienic FFRs	.86
Exit (intentions) strategy based on health impact	
I avoid eating food that will make me ill	.52
I avoid eating fried fast foods	.61
I eat fast food occasionally	.57
I avoid eating fast food that will make me put on weight	.57
I have reduced my frequency of fast food intake	.57

Appendix 2 Measurement items for *environmentally* responsible TPB model

Constructs and indicators	Factor loadings
Attitude toward environmental appropriateness of fast food	
In my opinion, fast-food polythene packages have serious negative consequences for the environment	.71
One of the major causes of environmental harm is fast-food plastic and polythene packaging materials	.69
I believe that fast-food plastic waste is a very important environmental issue	.94
Improper disposal of fast-food plastic packages has very serious negative consequences for the environment	.75
One of the major causes of environmental harm is the improper disposal of fast-food plastic packages	.87
I believe that plastic waste disposal is a very important environmental issue	.79
Subjective norms about eating environmentally friendly fast food	
People in my circle of friends highly value the environmental friendliness of fast-food packaging decisions	.87
My family highly values the environmental friendliness of fast-food packaging decisions	.82
The environmental friendliness of fast-food packaging alternatives has a significant importance in my community	.81
People in my circle of friends highly value the proper disposal of used fast-food packages	.82
My family highly values the proper disposal of used fast-food packages	.76
The proper disposal of fast-food packages has a significant importance in my community	.85
Perceived behavioural control of eating environmental friendly fast food	
When I buy fast food with ecological packaging, I feel that I have done something positive for environment	.76
I believe my decisions in the packaging choices of fast food have a direct influence on the environment as a whole	.59
My packaging choices have a direct impact on the environment	.65
When I properly dispose of used fast-food packages, I feel I have done something positive for the environment	.86
I believe my decisions in the disposal choices of used fast-food packages have a direct influence on the environment as a whole	.87
My disposal choices have a direct impact on the environment	.81
Consumers' awareness of negative environmental impacts	
I am aware that most FFRs use plastic packages	.51
I am aware that plastic packages are not disposed of properly	.75
I am aware that plastic menace will affect future generations.	.90
I am aware that indiscriminate damping of plastic packages accounts for most of the sanitation-related diseases such as malaria and cholera	.91
I am aware that plastic packages add to the filth in the environment	.59
Behavioural intentions (Loyalty strategies) based on environmental impact	
I make special effort to buy fast food in environmentally friendly packaging	.91
I often buy take-away fast food so I strongly support plastic waste collection and recycling activities	.88
I often buy take-away fast food so I make every attempt to join environmental clean-up activities	.67
I always try to dump used plastic packages in appropriate waste containers for recycling	.59
Behavioural intentions (Exit strategy) based on environment impact	
I avoid buying fast food in plastic packages	.86
I have decided to stop buying take-away fast food for environmental reasons.	.72
I avoid buying fast food in packages that pollute the environment	.84
I have decided to stop buying food in plastic packages and support a ban on their use of in FFRs	.82
I dislike the use of plastic packages and therefore advocate for the use of biodegradable packages in FFRs	.85

Fast food in Ghana's restaurants

Summary in English

This thesis has used various theoretical frameworks with the objective of developing insights into the practices of fast-food consumption in Ghana. It emphasised how researchers have tended to evaluate fast food on the basis of just one or two specific (static) characteristics, mostly perceived from a Western point of view, and it assumes that practices associated with fast food are constantly being recontextualised and changed in time and space. Therefore, this thesis argued that an empirical analysis was needed to deliver insights into the characteristics of fast food and the social practices of its consumption in Ghana. For this purpose, it was decided to investigate particularly purchase and consumption in Ghana's fast-food restaurants, a domain which is under-investigated. In so doing, the analysis was inspired by the material culture approach, leading to an effort to analyse fast food and fast-food restaurants as material culture objects, particularly by elaborating on the cuisine concept and searching for additional characteristics that may illustrate the recontextualisation of fast-food consumption in restaurants in the Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana (AMA). The assumption of a recontextualisation is further investigated through a profound analysis of three elements of the culinary triangle of contradictions (convenience, identity and responsibility) from an interdisciplinary angle.

Alongside this scientific motivation and positioning, this research was also characterised by an attempt to make a contribution to reducing the health, environmental and cultural problems that are often attached to fast-food consumption but – as this thesis investigates – may also be changeable in a situation of fast-food recontextualisation. Indeed, this thesis also aimed to develop some (modest) recommendations for interventions about a new (possible) role that fast food may play in the Ghanaian urban context. In this sense, the thesis was also related to and reflected on the goals of the government of Ghana to ensure the food, health and environmental security of her citizens and to develop the tourism sector. Restaurant operations, which the Ghana Tourism Authority regards as tourism enterprises, clearly have an important role to play in achieving these goals.

Although fast food has been extensively criticised globally for its links to health problems, environmental pollution and tendency to undermine traditional food cultures, the governmental measures related to fast-food restaurants stimulate further investigation of whether and in which ways the recontextualised fast-food situation in Ghana may become increasingly relevant for urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development. This research was thus carried out from within this juncture of scientific and developmental perspectives and was, in short, focussed on examining *how determinants such as convenience, identity and responsibility influence fast-food consumption in Accra Metropolitan Area and which strategies can be identified that fast-food restaurateurs, governments and consumers may implement to enhance the relevance of fast food to urban food provision, health improvement and tourism development.*

As part of the methodology, first, a restaurant survey using semi-structured questionnaires was conducted in 90 restaurants in the AMA to understand the practices of the restaurant enterprises, their products and services, and to identify and select restaurants that could be classified as fast-food restaurants where the consumer study would subsequently be conducted. From this study, and with reference to the existing literature, a fast-food

restaurant was defined as *a restaurant that offers at least one food generally recognised as fast food worldwide, both take-away and table services, and has no fixed mealtimes.* The foods generally recognised as fast food (FGRAFF) include French fries, burgers, fried chicken, pizzas, and fried rice. On the whole, based on the definition of fast-food restaurant, 68% of the restaurants surveyed in the AMA could be classified as fast-food restaurants.

The second phase of the research was a consumer study to understand the characteristics and functions of fast food and fast-food restaurants in the lives of the people who use them. Hence, the study focused on people who have consumed fast food in a fast-food restaurant at least once in their lifetime. To ensure this, participants were drawn from 20 of the 68% of fast-food restaurants identified in the restaurant survey. The consumer survey was also complemented with (i) in-depth interviews with three purposively selected key informants, who were managers of fast-food restaurants, (ii) 35 informal interviews with consumers, (iii) balanced participant observation, (iv) three focus groups (12 people each), two with students in tertiary education (one each for males and females) and one for people in employment, (v) in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of relevant government institutions and other informants who have developed insights into typical Ghanaian food culture, and (vi) secondary data sources.

To explore the characteristics and relevance of fast-food for AMA consumers (**Chapter 2**), the cuisine concept was employed as the analytical framework where fast food, fast-food restaurants and fast-food consumption were examined in relation to four cuisine characteristics, namely, (i) *the prioritization cuisine as basic or core foods*, (ii) *the distinct techniques of preparing food*, (iii) *the distinct 'flavour principle' of the food*, and (iv) *a set of manners and codes of etiquette that determine the way food should be eaten.*

To explain how convenience influences fast-food consumption (**Chapter 3**), *convenience* was examined in relation to two dimensions, namely, *perceived product convenience* (a product attribute) and *convenience orientation* (a psychosocial attribute of individuals). Furthermore, convenience orientation was not examined as a single variable, but rather in relation to *consumers' inclination to save* (i) *time*, (ii) *mental effort*, and (iii) *physical effort* in the social practices of food consumption in order to be able to assess their relative importance. Frequency of fast-food consumption, perceived product convenience and convenience orientation could be influenced by demographic and lifestyle variables as well as cooking skill. Therefore, this chapter sought to explain how (i) perceived convenience of fast food, (ii) convenience orientation, (iii) cooking skills, and (iv) demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, working status and income level) influence fast-food consumption among AMA consumers and to assess the relative importance of these factors in fast-food consumption.

In order to explain how identity influences fast-food consumption (**Chapter 4**), the interrelationship between social identity and fast-food consumption was explicitly examined with the purpose of achieving conceptual clarity in treating identity as a variable that influences food consumption. The basis on which a person adopts, joins or expresses a particular identity may be analysed as depending on (i) *the identity content* (the meaning of a social identity, which include the group's norms and goals, its views and beliefs about other identities, and the group's understandings of its material conditions and interests), and

(ii) *the degree of contestation of the identity content*. Moreover, four types of identity content can be identified, namely, (i) *constitutive norms*, (ii) *social purposes*, (iii) *relational comparisons*, and (iv) *cognitive models*. This chapter thus sought first to describe the sociocultural meanings consumers ascribe to fast food's social identity and how these meanings are contested, and second to explain how the meanings and their contestations influence fast-food consumption.

To examine how personal responsibility influences fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal decisions (**Chapter 5**), the study examined how the three factors of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) – *attitude toward behaviour*, *subjective norms about behaviour*, and *perceived behavioural control* – can influence responsible consumer behaviour (behavioural intentions) such as the adoption of *loyalty* or an *exit strategy* towards *health* and *environmentally* responsible fast-food purchase, consumption and waste disposal. In addition to the three TPB factors, a fourth factor was introduced, namely, *awareness of negative consequences* of consumption.

The findings showed that the core food items present in fast-food restaurants are menu items such as foods generally recognised as fast food (FGRAFF), including fried rice, burgers, pizzas and French fries, as well as common Ghanaian foods such as *banku* and *kelewele*. (Interestingly, the FGRAFFs have been transformed in several ways mainly by the incorporation of aspects of the Ghanaian food culture.) For international tourists, therefore, especially those from Western countries who both/either seek new food and dining experiences and/or need a certain degree of familiarity and therefore will prefer their 'core' food, fast-food restaurants in the AMA may provide the desired combination of newness and familiarity with a blend of the global-local.

The findings showed that most people eat fast food because of their desire to save time, mental and physical effort, as well as because of the inherent convenience attributes of fast food, but they also showed that people consume fast food because of its role in identity formation and expression. Thus, in respect of the latter, eating in a fast-food restaurant is a way to be connected with what is new and unique, and not only pleasurable but also associated with social interaction and sensory and health values. Essentially, the implication of this is that people want eating outlets that suit their status and serve their social purposes–fast-food restaurants, therefore, appear to meet their varying aspirations.

Nevertheless, some aspects of fast-food consumption were also contested along the lines of its health impact. On the one hand, fast food and fast-food restaurants were perceived as hygienic and 'decent' and as having some inherent nutritional and health benefits. On the other hand, fast food was perceived to have properties that could negatively affect health and body and self-image in particular. Concerns were also raised about the large usage of plastic and polythene materials in the serving, packaging and consumption of fast food, which can cause sanitation problems. Strikingly, the findings showed that fast-food consumers do not only eat fast food for convenience and identity expression, but that they are also reflective about the health and environmental anxieties that might come along with the social practice of consumption. Therefore, consumers may adopt loyalty or exit strategies as a way of reducing the effects of the health and environmental anxieties on themselves and society as a whole.

Finally, the study proposed some strategies for the Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) and similar programmes currently being implemented in Ghana. These were as follows: (i) the RHN should encourage fast-food restaurants to provide healthier foods served and packaged in more environmentally friendly packaging; (ii) the RHN should encourage the integration of convenience attributes (e.g. quick to get, easy to get, easy to prepare, eat and clear-up) into the overall meal process in the home (i.e. in terms of purchasing, preparation, cooking, eating and clearing-up) for consumers who would adopt an exit strategy; (iii) RHN interventions should target the youth, people in employment and students, who are frequent fast-food consumers, and develop strategies to reduce the time and physical and mental effort required for them to obtain healthy and environmental friendly meals at work places and on school campuses; (iv) the RHN should encourage inputs from a number of actors in the fast-food network to ensure delivery and consumption of fast-food products and services with minimal health and environmental anxieties; (v) RHN and other health and nutrition educational messages should not only emphasise exit behaviours (e.g. stop eating fast food), as is usual, but should also highlight loyalty strategies (e.g. preferably choose healthier options, such as grilled or baked chicken). The study also recommended that nutrition and food science researchers and others in Ghana, such as sociologists, should also focus their studies on the ready-to-eat urban food sector to improve our understanding of fast food's contribution to food security and its links to health, culture and the environment.

To conclude, this study has shown that some consumers would prefer to adopt loyalty strategies, implying that fast food provides some major material, social, cultural and behavioural benefits for these consumers hence and so they may not choose to curtail their fast-food consumption. Therefore, for nutrition and health intervention programmes to be effective, there is a clear need to adopt more holistic approaches by incorporating material, social, cultural and behavioural aspects of food into formal programmes.

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Summary in Dutch (Samenvatting)

Dit proefschrift heeft verschillende theoretische kaders gebruikt met als doel inzicht te ontwikkelen in praktijken van fast-food consumptie in Ghana. Het proefschrift benadrukt dat onderzoekers veelal de neiging hebben om fast food consumptiepraktijken vanuit een westerse blik te evalueren aan de hand van slechts een of twee specifieke (statische) kenmerken. Dit proefschrift stelt echter dat fast food praktijken in tijd en ruimte veranderen, dynamisch zijn en zich daarbij steeds opnieuw aanpassen aan de maatschappelijk context. Kortom: dat zij zich re-contextualiseren. Vandaar dat dit proefschrift het noodzakelijk acht een empirisch onderzoek uit te voeren naar de kenmerken en maatschappelijke praktijken van de fast food consumptie in Ghana om daadwerkelijk inzicht te krijgen in de wijze waarop de re-contextualisering van fast food consumptie in Ghana plaatsvindt. Daarbij is besloten om zich met name te richten op de aanschaf en consumptie van fast food producten in fast food restaurants daar dit domein nog nauwelijks onderzocht is.

De analyse die in dit empirisch onderzoek is gehanteerd is geïnspireerd door de materiele culturele benadering waarbij fast food producten in fast food restaurants geanalyseerd zijn als materiele-culturele objecten. Hierbij is vooral het "cuisine concept" nader uitgewerkt en daarnaast is er gezocht naar additionele kenmerken die een re-contextualisering illustreren van de fast food consumptie in de restaurants van het Metropolitane Gebied in Accra (AMA), Ghana. De hypothese van een re-contextualisering van de fast food consumptie in de restaurants van Accra is verder onderzocht door drie elementen van de "culinaire driehoek" (nml: **gemak, identiteit en verantwoordelijkheid**) vanuit een interdisciplinaire invalshoek te bestuderen.

Naast deze wetenschappelijke motivatie en positionering voor een empirisch onderzoek naar de maatschappelijke praktijken van de fast food consumptie in restaurants in Accra beoogt deze studie ook een bijdrage te leveren aan het terugdringen van problemen op het gebied van gezondheid, milieu en cultuur. Problemen die vaak geassocieerd worden met fast-food consumptie maar - zoals dit proefschrift betoogt – opnieuw bezien moeten worden daar deze problemen kunnen zijn veranderd door de inbedding van de fast food consumptie in een andere maatschappelijke context. Vanwege deze dynamiek in de maatschappelijke context van fast food consumptie beoogt dit proefschrift op een bescheiden wijze een aantal aanbevelingen te formuleren voor overheidsinterventies die ertoe zouden kunnen bijdragen dat fast food een mogelijke nieuwe rol kan gaan spelen in de Ghanese urbane context. In dit opzicht is het proefschrift dus ook gerelateerd aan en reflecteert op de doelstellingen van de Ghanese overheid om haar burgers voedselvoorziening, gezondheid en milieu veiligheid te garanderen en toerisme te stimuleren. De vele activiteiten, die de Ghana Tourism

Authority uitvoert t.a.v. de restaurants die zij als belangrijke toeristische bedrijven beschouwt, spelen een belangrijke rol in het bereiken van deze beleidsdoelen.

Hoewel fast food globaal uitgebreid bekritiseerd is vanwege haar banden met gezondheidsproblemen, milieuvervuiling en vanwege de neiging om traditionele voedselculturen te ondermijnen, stimuleren de vele overheidsmaatregelen - gericht op de fast food restaurants - dat nu onderzocht kan worden óf en zo ja op welke wijze fast food in Ghana zich in een ander maatschappelijke context bevindt dan die nomaliter in globale theorieën verondersteld wordt. Dit impliceert dat kan worden nagegaan in hoeverre fast food juist een belangrijkere rol kan gaan spelen om de urbane voedselvoorziening en gezondheid te verbeteren en ook het toerisme te stimuleren. Het empirisch onderzoek is dus uitgevoerd vanuit deze verwevenheid van wetenschappelijke en ontwikkelingsperspectieven. Daarbij richt het onderzoek zich op de vraag in hoeverre kenmerken van het cuisine concept, zoals *gemak, identiteit en verantwoordelijkheid*, de fast food consumptie in het metropolitaanse gebied van Accra beïnvloedt en welke strategieën er geïdentificeerd kunnen worden die fast food restauranthouders, beleidsmakers en consumenten kunnen implementeren om het belang van fast food te vergroten voor de urbane voedselvoorziening en voor het verbeteren van gezondheid en toerisme.

Als onderdeel van de methodologie is er eerst een restaurant enquête met behulp van een semigestructureerde vragenlijst uitgevoerd in 90 restaurants in het AMA gebied. De enquête had tot doel inzicht te krijgen in de praktijken van de restaurants, hun diensten en producten en om na te gaan of die restaurants als fast food restaurants konden worden geclassificeerd om vervolgens hieruit die restaurants te selecteren waar een consumentenstudie kon worden uitgevoerd. Op basis van deze studie en bestaande wetenschappelijke literatuur werd een fast food restaurant gedefinieerd als: Een restaurant dat tenminste één type voedsel aanbiedt dat wereldwijd als een algemeen erkend fast food product wordt beschouwd. Dit product aanbiedt om óf mee te nemen (take away) óf ter plekke aan een tafel te consumeren en dat het een restaurant betreft dat geen vaste etenstijden kent. De producten die in het algemeen als fast food worden beschouwd (Foods Generally Recognized as Fast Food, GRAFF) zijn frites, hamburgers, gebakken kip, pizza's en gebakken rijst. Op basis van deze definitie van fast food restaurants bleek dat 68% van de ondervraagde restaurants in het AMA gebied als fast food restaurants geclassificeerd konden worden.

De tweede fase van het empirisch onderzoek bestond uit een consumenten studie om de kenmerken en functies van fast food producten en fast food restaurants voor het dagelijks bestaan van de consumenten te begrijpen. Vandaar dat de studie zich concentreerde op die mensen die tenminste één keer fast food producten in een fast food restaurant hadden geconsumeerd. Om hiervan zeker te zijn werden survey deelnemers geselecteerd uit 20

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restaurants die in de restaurant survey als fast food restaurants (68%) waren geclassificeerd. Het consumentenonderzoek werd verder aangevuld met: (i) diepte-interviews van drie bewust geselecteerde sleutelinformanten, nml. managers van fast food restaurants; (ii) 35 informele interviews met consumenten; (iii) Een evenwichtige participerende observatie; (iv) Een gericht onderzoek van 3 groepen van elk 12 personen en wel van één groep van mannelijke en één groep van vrouwelijke studenten van tertiair onderwijs, en één groep werkenden; (v) Enkele diepte-interviews met zowel vertegenwoordigers van belangrijke overheidsinstanties alsook met andere informanten die inzichten hadden ontwikkeld in de typische Ghanese eetcultuur, en tenslotte (vi) via inzichten uit secundaire bronnen.

In het onderzoek naar de kenmerken en het maatschappelijk belang van fast food consumptie in het AMA gebied (**hoofdstuk 2**) is "**het cuisine concept**" gebruikt als analytisch kader, waarbij fast food, fast food restaurants en fast food consumptie onderzocht zijn in relatie tot vier cuisine kenmerken, namelijk *(i) de prioritering van een specifiek voedselproduct als basis voor de "lokale keuken";(ii) de specifieke technische bereidingswijzen van voedsel; (iii) de bijzondere smaak van en gebruik van kruiden in het voedsel en (iv) het geheel van etiquette en gewoontes die bepalend zijn voor de wijze waarop het voedsel wordt geconsumeerd.*

Om uit te leggen hoe "**gemak**" fast food consumptie beïnvloedt (**hoofdstuk 3**) is dit kenmerk van "gemak" onderzocht in relatie tot twee dimensies, namelijk *het gepercipieerd gemak van een product* (gemak als een attribuut van het product) en *het gemak als oriëntatie t.a.v. consumptie* (als een psychosociale eigenschap van de individuele consument). Bovendien werd de oriëntatie op gemak niet als een afzonderlijk variabele onderzocht maar eerder in relatie tot drie kenmerken van gemak om het relatieve belang van deze kenmerken te kunnen inschatten. Het betrof de neiging van consumenten om (i) tijd, (ii) mentale en (iii) fysieke inspanning in de sociale praktijken van voedsel consumptie te beperken. De frequentie van fast food consumptie, het gepercipieerde gemak van het product en de oriëntatie op gemak van de individuele consument zouden beïnvloed kunnen worden door demografische en lifestyle variabelen alsook door de vaardigheid van de consument om zelf eten klaar te maken. Vandaar dat dit hoofdstuk - als aanvulling op het gemak-aspect van de culinaire driehoek - ook geprobeerd heeft uit te leggen hoe (iii) de kook vaardigheden van de fast food consument en (iv) verschillende demografische variabelen (zoals leeftijd, gender, burgerlijke staat, opleidingsniveau , arbeids- en werksituatie en inkomensniveau) de fast food consumptie onder de AMA consumenten beïnvloeden. Het onderzoek geeft aan dat naast het (i) gepercipieerd gemak van fast food en (ii) de oriëntatie op gemak van de individuele consument, ook (iii) de kookvaardigheden en (iv) demografische variabelen mede het relatieve belang van het "gemak" aspect van de culinaire driehoek bepalen.

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Om uit te leggen hoe "**identiteit**" fast food consumptie beïnvloedt werd de samenhang tussen sociale identiteit en fast food consumptie expliciet onderzocht *(**hoofdstuk** 4)*. Dit had tot doel conceptuele duidelijkheid te verkrijgen in het behandelen van identiteit als een variabele van voedselconsumptie. De basis waarop een persoon een bepaalde identiteit aanneemt, tot uitdrukking brengt of zich bij een bepaalde groep personen voegt, kan geanalyseerd worden als afhankelijk van (i) *de inhoud van de identiteit* (d.w.z. de normen, doelen, visies en ideeën van een groep over andere identiteiten en de wijze waarop een groep haar eigen materiele omstandigheden en belangen ervaart en die tezamen de maatschappelijke identiteit van een groep's identiteit vormen waartoe een individu behoort) en (ii) *de mate waarin de inhoud van een identiteit betwist wordt*. Bovendien kunnen vier verschillende inhoudelijke identiteiten worden onderscheiden, namelijk (i) *constitutieve normen, (ii) sociale doeleinden, (iii) relationele vergelijkingen, en (iv) cognitieve modellen*. Dit hoofdstuk tracht allereerst de sociaal-culturele betekenis te beschrijven die consumenten toeschrijven aan de maatschappelijke identiteit van fast food, in welke mate deze betekenisgeving aan fast food betwist wordt en vervolgens op welke wijze en in welke mate de betekenisgevingen en de discussies over deze fast food (groeps)identiteit de fast-food consumptie zelf beïnvloeden.

In **hoofdstuk 5** wordt onderzocht hoe de persoonlijke "**verantwoordelijkheid**" invloed uitoefent op de aanschaf en consumptie van fast food en op de besluitvorming op welke wijze de consument met het afval van de fast food (bijv. plastic verpakkingen) omgaat. De studie richt zich op hoe de drie factoren van de "Theory of Planned Behaviour" (TPB) – *nml. de houding ten opzichte van gedrag, de subjectieve normen over het gedrag en de gepercipieerde controle van het gedrag* – verantwoord consumenten gedrag kunnen beïnvloeden. Daarbij wordt verwezen naar de gedragsintenties van een consument die óf een strategie hanteert om loyaal te blijven t.o.v. de fast consumptie óf ervoor kiest juist afstand te nemen van die consumptie. M.a.w. een consument die een "loyalty or exit strategy" hanteert t.o.v. een gezonde en milieu-verantwoorde aanschaf en consumptie van fast food producten en t.o.v. een gezonde en milieuverantwoorde verwerking van het afval van fast food producten. Ter aanvulling op de drie hierboven genoemde factoren van de "Theory of Planned Behaviour" werd een vierde factor in dit proefschrift geïntroduceerd, namelijk de *bewustwording over de negatieve gevolgen* van fast food consumptie.

De resultaten van het empirisch onderzoek hebben aangetoond dat de belangrijkste producten van de fast food restaurants die producten zijn die op hun menu staan en in het algemeen als fast food erkend worden (FGRAFF) zoals gebakken rijst, hamburgers, pizzas, frites alsook het traditionele Ghanese voedsel als *banku en kelewele*. Het is daarbij interessant om te constateren dat de algemeen erkende fast food producten (Food Generally Recognized As Fast Foods, FGRAFF) op verschillende wijze veranderd zijn doordat zij aspecten van de traditionele Ghanese keuken hebben opgenomen. Voor de internationale

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toeristen en met name zij die uit de Westerse landen komen en op zoek zijn naar nieuwe gerechten en eetgelegenheden maar tevens een zekere mate van vertrouwdheid verlangen, hebben daarom vaak de voorkeur voor voedsel die hen enerzijds bekend voorkomen maar anderzijds ook exotisch zijn, kortom hebben een voorkeur voor een mengsel van globale en lokale voedselkenmerken die de fast food restaurant inderdaad kunnen leveren.

De resultaten tonen aan dat de meeste personen fast food producten consumeren omdat zij willen besparen op tijd en op de mentale en fysieke inspanningen alsook vanwege het gemak dat in de fast food producten zelf is opgenomen. Een ander reden is de rol die de fast food producten spelen voor de vorming en het uitdrukken van een bepaalde identiteit. Voor wat betreft dit laatste aspect is het eten in een fast food restaurant een manier om zich te associëren met dat wat "nieuw en uniek" is. Fast food consumptie vindt dus niet alleen plaats omdat het makkelijk en plezierig is maar ook vanwege deze associate van fast food met sensorische waarden, met gezondheid en met sociale interacties. De implicatie van dit alles is dat de personen in feite alleen die producten consumeren die passen bij hun status en die ertoe bijdragen hun persoonlijke doelstellingen te realiseren. Fast food consumptie in restaurants vindt dus plaats omdat het tegemoet komt aan het realiseren van allerlei specifieke aspiraties.

Toch werden ook enkele aspecten van de fast food consumptie ter discussie gesteld vanwege haar impact op gezondheid. Aan de ene kant werden fast food producten en fast food restaurants bezien als "hygiënisch en fatsoenlijk" met een aantal inherente voordelen voor voeding en gezondheid. Aan de andere kant werden zij ook gezien als objecten met eigenschappen die juist een negatieve invloed hebben op de lichamelijke gesteldheid, gezondheid en het zelfbeeld van de consument. Daarnaast werd ook bezorgdheid geuit t.a.v. het veelvuldig gebruik van plastic en polyethyleen materiaal in het serveren, verpakken en consumeren van fast food producten die gezondheidsproblemen kunnen veroorzaken. Opvallend is dat de bevindingen hebben aangetoond dat de fast food consument niet alleen fast food consumeert vanwege het gemak en om uiting te geven aan haar identiteit maar dat zij ook reflecteert over wat het consumeren van deze producten betekent voor haar gezondheid en het milieu. Daarbij kunnen consumenten zich loyaal opstellen t.a.v. de fast food consumptie (loyalty strategy) of er juist afstand van nemen (exit strategy) als een manier van handelen om de negatieve effecten van fast food consumptie op gezondheid en het milieu voor zichzelf en voor de gehele samenleving te verminderen.

Tenslotte formuleert de studie een aantal aanbevelingen voor het Regenerative Health and Nutrition (RHN) programma en voor soortgelijke andere programma's die momenteel in Ghana geïmplementeerd worden. Deze aanbevelingen zijn de volgende:(i) Het RHN zou de fast food restaurants moeten stimuleren om gezonder voedsel in milieuvriendelijker verpakkingen te serveren (ii) De RHN zou de integratie van gemaksattributen in de totale

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bereidingswijze van voedsel thuis moeten stimuleren (bijvoorbeeld producten die snel en makkelijk kunnen worden aangeschaft, klaargemaakt, opgegeten en opgeruimd) voor juist die consumenten die afstand nemen van de fast-food consumptie; (iii) De RHN interventies zouden zich moeten richten op de jongeren, werkenden en studenten, die frequent fast-food consumeren en zouden daarbij strategieën moeten ontwikkelen die erop gericht zijn om de tijd en de fysieke en mentale inspanning te verminderen die nodig zijn om gezonde en milieuvriendelijke maaltijden op het werk en op de school campussen te krijgen ; (iv) De RHN zou ervoor moeten zorgen dat de inputs die verschillende actoren van het fast food netwerk leveren aan de fast food consumenten inputs zijn met minimale negatieve consequenties voor gezondheid en milieu (v) De berichtgeving van RHN en die van andere instanties over gezondheid, voeding en milieu zouden niet alleen erop gericht moeten zijn om consumenten te stimuleren uit de fast food omgeving te stappen (stop met fast food consumptie) maar zouden ook op strategieën moeten wijzen waardoor de consumenten loyaal kunnen blijven aan de fast food omgeving door bij voorkeur gezondere opties te presenteren (zoals gegrild of gebakken kip). Een andere aanbeveling van het proefschrift is tenslotte dat wetenschappers in Ghana op het gebied van voeding en voedsel maar ook op andere wetenschappelijke terreinen, zoals sociologie, hun onderzoeksactiviteiten meer zouden moeten richten op de sector van de kant-en-klare stedelijke voedselproducten om tot een beter begrip te komen van welke bijdrage fast food levert aan het verhogen van de voedselzekerheid en om na te gaan welke relaties fast food heeft met gezondheid, cultuur en milieu.

Tot slot heeft dit onderzoek aangetoond dat sommige consumenten de voorkeur geven zich loyaal op te stellen t.a.v. de fast food consumptie omdat de fast food consumptie een aantal belangrijke materiële, sociale, culturele en gedragsmatige voordelen biedt. Dit brengt de consumenten er dus toe om er voor te kiezen hun fast food consumptie *niet* te verminderen. Programma's die dan toch beogen de fast food consumptie te veranderen, vanwege de gezondheid en milieu aspecten van fast food consumptie, zouden dit alleen effectief kunnen doen indien zij een meer holistisch benadering volgen door in hun interventieprogramma's ook de materiele, sociale, culturele en gedragsaspecten van fast food consumptie op te nemen.

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Rose Omari
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)
Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS (28 hrs)
A) Project related competences			
Advanced Social Theory (RSO 32806)	WUR	2009	6
Qualitative Data Analysis: Procedures and Strategies (YRM 60806)	WUR	2009	6
Food Law (LAW 30806)	WUR	2009	6
Food Risk Analysis: An integrated approach combining insights from the natural and social sciences	Mansholt	2009	3
Proposal Writing	WUR	2009	6
Food Studies Conference: Prevalence of Fast Food in urban Ghana: Implications for Development	University of Nevada, Las Vegas, USA.	2011	
B) General research related competences			
CERES Basic Training Course	CERES	2010	10
Interpersonal Communication for PhD students	WGS	2009	0.6
Information Literacy, including Introduction Endnote	WUR	2009	0.6
Scientific Writing	WUR	2010	1.8
Techniques for writing and presenting a scientific paper	WGS	2010	1.2
Investigating Technology: Politics, Power and the Social Shaping of Technology	WASS	2011	4
Scientific Integrity	WGS	2013	0.2
Mobilising your Scientific Network	WGS	2013	1.0
Reviewing a Scientific Paper	WGS	2013	0.1
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Policy Analysis and Multilevel Governance (ENP 52306)	WUR	2010	6
Career Assessment	WGS	2013	0.3
Guest Lecture: RSO 55806- Food Sociology: Emerging Theories and Themes	Rural Sociology	2013	
Total (30 - 45 ECTS)			**52.8**

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About the Author

Rose Omari, born on August 28 1972 is a native of Likpe-Bala in the Volta Region of Ghana. She attained her undergraduate degree in Biochemistry and Food Science in 1997 and Master of Philosophy degree in Food Science in 2001 from the University of Ghana. Her BSc dissertation focused on processing soybeans for meat analogues and meat extensions in Ghana while her Master's dissertation concerned predicting lipid stability in soybean flour.

From 2004, Rose worked with the Women in Agriculture Development (WIAD) Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture where she was involved in food product development, food safety and nutrition activities. There, she became a member of the National Food Safety Working Group that drafted the national food safety action plan. The experiences she acquired while working at the Head office of WIAD stimulated her interest in social and policy issues. Therefore, in the latter part of 2006, she joined the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute as a Research Scientist where she has been part of several social and policy studies and policy development processes such as studies on Public Private Partnerships in Agribusiness; Business Opportunity Identification Studies; Biotechnology policy; Science, Technology and Innovation policy; Science, Technology and Mathematics Education policy; and the Composite flour policy.

Rose is so passionate about food safety and healthy eating that in 2007 she co-founded Eat Safe Ghana, an NGO that seeks to improve public health through safe and healthy food. Through the work of this NGO, Rose has conducted several public and targeted food safety and nutrition education in various parts of Ghana. Rose is also a member of the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa and an FAO-led team of experts that has developed a Food Safety Risk Communication Handbook.

In August 2009, Rose started a PhD study at the Rural Sociology Group at Wageningen University and Research Centre and has worked tirelessly to produce this thesis. The PhD work was an interdisciplinary research that assessed the prevalence, characteristics, and relevance of fast food in Ghana. Her research interests are food safety, food law, food policy and consumer studies.

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