

# “Predicting Consumer Patronage Behaviour in the Egyptian Fast Food Business”

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## Predicting Consumer Patronage Behaviour in the Egyptian Fast Food Business

Yasser Ibrahim, Claudio Vignali

### Abstract

This study investigated consumer buying behaviour towards international fast food restaurants. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey ( $n = 563$ ) at four fast food restaurants, located in Cairo – Egypt, representing two of the leading fast food chains. Of particular interest was the role of international fast food restaurants image, consumers' values of eating-out and their opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food chains in shaping consumer future intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. Consumer intention to patronage international fast food restaurants was modelled using the classic belief-attitude-behaviour intention model (i.e. attitude and subjective norm) based upon the theory of reasoned action, and an extended model that included variables external to the classic theory. Findings suggest that, when used to predict consumer patronage behaviour in the international fast food markets, the classic belief-attitude-behaviour intention model should be extended to include fast food store image factors, consumers' values of eating-out, consumers' opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food chains and consumers demographics.

**Key words:** fast food restaurants, consumer behaviour, theory of reasoned action, store image, eating-out values.

### Introduction and Purpose of the Research

The contemporary fast food revolution essentially had its origins in the US in the mid 1950's and this style of catering has continued to grow there and to spread to most of the rest of the world (Jones et al., 2002). Ritzer (1996; 2002) and Schlosser (2002) argue that fast food can be seen as a powerful symbol of globalisation and post-modern society and few countries of the world seem immune to its apparent attractions. McDonalds, for example, claim to serve 45 million customers every day in 30,000 restaurants in 121 countries around the world. Consumer behaviour is likely to be somewhat different in developing countries since it is largely influenced by social, political and economic conditions (Raju, 1995). It could be argued that the consumers of the less developed countries have a different concept of fast food and fast food restaurants and their perceptions and attitudes towards international fast food restaurants are different from that of the international markets in the industrialized (more developed) countries (Brady and Robertson, 1999; Watson, 2000; Eckhardt and Houston, 2002). International fast food chains marketing strategies in overseas countries need to be aware of the distinct consumer expectations and perceptions in each country they enter (Clark, 1990; Kara et al., 1995). Lee and Ulgado (1997) state that 'what fast food restaurants are to US consumers may not be what they should be to foreign customers if they are to be successful'.

Several comprehensive theories/models have been developed within the field of consumer behaviour (Engel et al., 1968; Engel et al., 1995; Howard and Sheth, 1969; Nicosia, 1966). Models have also been developed for specific contexts, such as for family decision-making (Sheth, 1974) and information processing (Bettman, 1979). These models vary in their approach and utility, and all have been subjected to modification and improvement since their introduction (Williams, 2002). These theories/models have played an important role by detailing how various factors influence consumer behaviour. However, most of these models have been criticised for being descriptive and the predictive power of them is limited (Bareham, 1995; Chisnall, 1995; Bareham, 2004; Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999). The complexity of these models and difficulties inherent in the operationalization of the numerous concepts have made their application in international con-

text especially difficult (Raju, 1995). There has been very little academic research on the fast food sector in the developing countries, so little is known about the fast food consumer in these countries. In order to identify patterns of consumer buying behaviour in the fast food market, a programme of research is needed. This research will seek to probe and discover the reasons concerning why and how consumers engage in different types of buying behaviour of international fast food restaurants. An extensive review of the literature reveals that there is no simple framework that lends itself to a comprehensive study of consumer behaviour in international markets. Also, it was found that no specific model to explain the consumer buying behaviour in the field of the foodservice sector and none of the generic models of consumer buying behaviour have been applied to the fast food sector. Problems with the existing frameworks make it essential to provide some structure to the study of consumer behaviour in the international fast food markets. The objectives of this article are to develop a framework that can be used to study consumer behaviour in the global fast food markets and to apply this framework to examine and understand consumer behaviour in a developing country (Egypt).

### **The Theory of Reasoned Action**

A greatly simplified view of buyer behaviour is offered in reasoned action theory which is operationalized in the extended Fishbein model (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). This model, which is consistent with cognitivist thinking, has been the subject of extensive empirical validation and has shown impressive heuristic utility in consumer behaviour research (see Sheppard et al., 1988). The basic theory is that a weighted combination of attitudes towards behaviour and subjective norms (attitudes imposed by referent groups) leads to intention which, in turn, precedes behaviour (Fig. 1). The theory of reasoned action (TORA) models decision processes where people have a high degree of volitional control and make reasoned choices among alternatives (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen developed and explicated TORA over a number of publications (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975; 1980). The theory is a development of Fishbein's (1967) theory of attitude and is known as the Fishbein-Ajzen behavioural intentions model, the I-B model and the extended model.

Consumer researchers have applied the theory of reasoned action to a wide variety of behaviours over the years, including the consumption of automobiles, banking services, computer software, coupons, detergents, food choice, fast food restaurant choice and hotel choice. Sheppard et al. (1988) conducted two meta analysis to investigate the effectiveness of the Fishbein and Ajzen model in marketing and social psychology research. They concluded that "the Fishbein and Ajzen model has strong predictive utility, even when utilized to investigate situations and activities that do not fall within the boundary conditions originally specified for the model". The extent to which the theory succeeds in predicting behavioural intention is usually evaluated by means of linear multiple regression analysis.

In proposing the theory of reasoned action, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) argued that it provided a complete explanation of volitional control, and the addition of other variables would not significantly enhance the prediction of behavioural intention. Nevertheless, a number of additional components have been proposed, such as perceived moral obligation (Beck and Ajzen, 1991), past behaviour (Bentler and Speckart, 1979), habit (Tourila and Pangborne, 1988), self identity (Biddle et al., 1987) and retail characteristics and consumer lifestyle (Ogle et al., 2004). Perhaps the most significant of these proposed additions involves the influence of perceived behavioural control initially proposed by Ajzen (1985) in his theory of planned behaviour. However, this approach has been criticized by Fishbein and Stasson (1990) and Ajzen (1988), who acknowledge that problems associated with this extension to the model have yet to be extensively investigated. In the context of food choice behaviour Sparks et al. (1992) conclude that perceived control is likely to prove applicable to those classes of action where volitional choice is significantly impeded. Since the initial stages of this study indicated that volitional choice of using international fast food restaurants was not "significantly impeded", perceived behavioural control was not measured. A healthy debate about additions and modifications to the theory of reasoned action continues; other criticisms include limited applicability (Sarver, 1983) and conceptual problems (Lalljee, 1984). Never-

theless, the theory's basic proposals have received continuing, widespread empirical corroboration and support, having been successfully applied to a diverse range of behaviour (see, for example, East, 1993; and Sheppard et al., 1988).

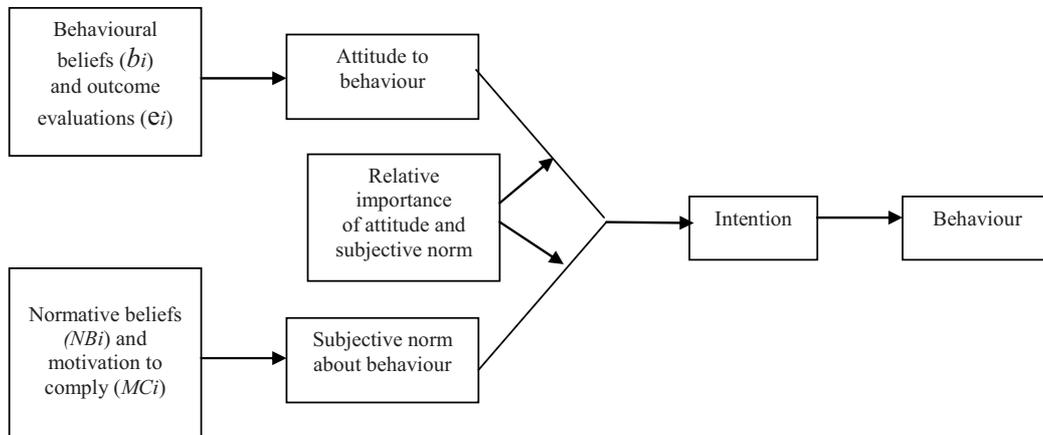


Fig. 1. A Schematic Representation of the Theory of Reasoned Action

### Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which suggests that human behaviour is best predicted by an individual's stated intention to behave in a certain way. An individual's behavioural intention is a product of two factors: his/her attitude toward a given behaviour and his/her subjective norm (i.e., his/her perception of the desirability of the behaviours to important others). This theory is expressed by the following equation:

$$B \sim BI = (Aact)w1 + (SN)w2, \quad (1)$$

where  $B$  = behaviour,  $BI$  denotes behavioural intention,  $Aact$  denotes the attitude toward the behaviour,  $SN$  is subjective norm, and  $w1$  and  $w2$  denote the weights of the respective factors. In turn, attitude toward a given behaviour ( $Aact$ ) is calculated as the summed product of belief strength ( $bi$ ) and belief evaluation ( $ei$ ):

$$Aact = \sum_{i=1}^n bi ei, \quad (2)$$

where  $n$  is the number of relevant consequences of the action. Belief strength refers to the extent to which an individual believes behaviour and/or its outcome to be true or probable, whereas belief evaluation refers to the importance or desirability of the belief to an individual. Subjective norm is the summed product of normative belief ( $NB$ ) and motivation to comply with others ( $MC$ ):

$$SN = \sum NBi MCi. \quad (3)$$

An individual's perceptions about what others think or believe constitute his/her normative beliefs. One's motivation to comply refers to the extent to which an individual wants to do what others think that he or she should do. In sum, the theory suggests that a person's behavioural intention is a product of attitude-towards-the-act (2 above) and subjective norm (3). This formulation is modelled and expressed algebraically as follows:

$$B \sim BI = [\sum bi ei] w1 + [\sum NBi MCi] w2. \quad (3)$$

## The Extended Model

In the present study, the theory of reasoned action was used to predict consumer's behavioural intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the varied factors that may influence consumer patronage behaviour, the classic beliefs-attitudes-behaviour intention model was extended to include variables external to the theory of reasoned action. These factors are related to the use of fast food restaurants which may explain some variance in consumer's behavioural intention to use international fast food restaurants.

Among those variables added was the international fast food restaurant image. The retailing and foodservice literature suggests that consumers' store image perception is a significant construct in explaining store patronage and store loyalty (Darley and Lim, 1999; Hildebrandt, 1988; Steenkamp and Wedel, 1991; Martineau, 1958; Soriano, 2002; Clark and Wood, 1998; Johns and Howard, 1998; Lee and Ulgado, 1997; Pettijhon et al., 1997; Stevens et al., 1995; Morgan, 1993; Auty, 1992). To account for the influence of store image on store patronage, the international fast food restaurant image factors (e.g., product, service, atmosphere, price and modernity) were examined. Together, these variables may explain some variance in consumer's behavioural intention to patronize international fast food restaurants.

Previous research has suggested that social context and values of eating out may directly affect consumer attitudes and behaviours (Bagozzi et al., 2000; Park, 2004; Madrigal, 2001; Warde and Martens, 2000). Thus, in keeping with prior work and to better predict future fast food consumer patronage behaviour, consumers' values of eating-out orientation, were also included in the extended model.

The consumers' opinions about the globalization or localisation of international fast food restaurants were also added. These variables may explain some variance in consumer's behavioural intention to patronize international fast food restaurants, as there is evidence to suggest that the fast food consumer behaviour (e.g., choosing to use international fast food restaurants) can be explained in part by the global or local image of these chains (Bak, 1997; Dana and Vignali, 1998; Eckhardt and Houston 2002; Ibrahim, 2004; Kara et al., 1995; Lee and Ulgado, 1997; Ritzer, 1996; Vignali, 2001; Watson, 2000; Watson, 1997; Wu, 1997; Yan, 1997).

Finally, because prior work (Erdem et al., 1999) has suggested that simultaneously exploring consumer values and demographics can provide a better understanding of consumer behaviour so age, gender, education and income were added to the model.

## Aims and Hypotheses

Within the framework provided by the theory of reasoned action, the overall aim was to establish the relative importance of the two predictors which drive from reasoned action theory (attitude, subjective norm) to the decision to patronize international fast food restaurants.

*H1:* Components of the theory of reasoned action, attitude and subjective norm, are sufficient predictors of intention.

An additional aim was to test the efficiency of a proposed modification to the theory, the inclusion of measures of fast food restaurant image, consumers' values of eating-out, consumers' opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants, and consumers' demographics.

*H2:* Inclusion of a measure of international fast food restaurant image in the regression equation will add significantly to the prediction of intention.

*H3:* Inclusion of a measure of consumers' value of eating out orientation in the regression equation will add significantly to the prediction of intention.

*H4:* Inclusion of a measure of consumers' opinion about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants in the regression equation will add significantly to the prediction of intention.

*H5:* Inclusion of measures of consumers' demographics (age, gender, education, and income) in the regression equation will add significantly to the prediction of intention.

## Methodological Approach

### *Election of salient beliefs and referents*

Consistent with the standard practice as proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) (see East, 1990; 1997) semi structured focus groups were used to elicit the salient outcome beliefs, and referents in respect to international fast food consumption. Three focus groups have been conducted with 27 Egyptian fast food consumers during April 2004 in Cairo. Twenty one salient beliefs and two referents were selected for inclusion in the main questionnaire. Consumers use international fast food chains because of 21 beliefs under the main following headings: Service, product, atmosphere, price and symbolize modernity. The referents are family and friends.

### *Data Collection*

A total of 563 customers were sampled randomly to collect data using a questionnaire survey in four fast food restaurants, located in Cairo – Egypt. Data were collected during the daily meal hours over a one month period. The four restaurants sampled represented two of the leading fast food chains (McDonald's and KFC). The questionnaire was pre-tested for face validity and clarity in the questions with a convenience sample of a graduate students enrolled in a hospitality program.

The survey questionnaire comprised items adapted from previously used measures as well as items developed from the focus groups. In keeping with the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), the questionnaire included measures of behavioural intention (the dependent variable) as well as attitude and subjective norm (independent variables). Additional independent variables (i.e., those extraneous to the classic beliefs-attitudes-behaviour intention model) included respondents' opinions about the globalization or localization of international fast food chains, values of eating-out, perceived image of international fast food restaurants, and demographics (i.e., age, gender, education, and income).

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic. To address potential translation problems, procedures for quality checks as developed and demonstrated in the literature were used, involving double translation (Brislin, 1970; Brislin et al., 1973; and Brislin, 1986). Basically, the questionnaire, originally written in English, was translated into Arabic by two bilinguals, and was subsequently back-translated into English by two different bilinguals. Then, based on the comparison between the original and the back-translated English versions, adjustments were made on the Arabic questionnaire.

The questionnaire was distributed to every fifth incoming customer (Pizam and Milman, 1993; Oh and Jeong, 1996) at the door of the restaurant and collected upon her/his departure. Each subject spent an average of five minutes answering the survey.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire included questions about the usual occasion of visit, average length of stay, who usually consumers go with when visiting international fast food restaurants, and demographic questions (age, gender, income and education). The main body of the questionnaire consisted of the following measures:

### *Behaviour*

One item regarding the average regular visit to international fast food restaurants included to measure consumer behaviour. Participants indicated how frequently they visit international fast food restaurants in a typical month (less than once, once, two to three times, four to five times, six times or more).

### *Behavioural intention*

This study explored consumers' behavioural intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. Participants rated on a 7-point semantic differential scale (where 1 = extremely

unlikely and 7 = extremely likely) one item: "I intend to visit an international fast food restaurant during the next two weeks".

#### ***Belief and belief evaluation***

The focus group discussions revealed that consumers made their patronage decisions principally on the basis of their perceptions of the international fast food restaurants image attributes. So the scale used to measure the fast food restaurant image (perception and importance) was also used as a measure of the beliefs and beliefs evaluation. Each belief (perception) response (*bi*) was multiplied by the appropriate evaluation (importance) score (*ei*) and the products were summed to give ( $\sum bi ei$ ). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the belief and belief evaluation (*biei*) scale was 0.95.

#### ***Attitude***

Participants rated on a four 7 point bipolar adjective scales the following item: "visiting an international fast food restaurant is ..." (1 = unpleasant, 7 = pleasant; 1 = unattractive, 7 = attractive; 1 = not enjoyable, 7 = enjoyable; 1 = boring, 7 = exciting). The attitude components were summed to give a total attitude score (*Act*). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the attitude scale was 0.86.

#### ***Normative belief and motivation to comply***

Participants rated on a 7-point semantic differential scale (where 1 = extremely unlikely and 7 = extremely likely) two items (e.g., most members of my family think I should visit international fast food restaurants) to measure normative belief for each of the two salient referents. And another two items (e.g., generally speaking, I want to do what most members of my family think I should do) to measure the motivation to comply with salient referents for each of the two salient referents. Normative belief responses (*NBi*) were multiplied by the corresponding motivation to comply responses (*MCi*) and the products summed to give ( $\sum NBi MCi$ ).

#### ***Subjective norm***

Participants rated on a 7-point semantic differential scale (where 1 = extremely unlikely and 7 = extremely likely) one item: "most people who are important to me think I should visit international fast food restaurants".

#### ***International fast food restaurant image***

The consumer perceptions or beliefs about fast food restaurant attributes were measured on a 7-point, Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). And the importance or belief evaluation of these attributes were measured on a 7-point, Likert-type scale (where 1 = not at all important and 7 = very important). Each belief response (perception) was multiplied by the appropriate evaluation (importance) and the products were used in the further analysis.

Factor analysis, using principle component analysis with varimax rotation was used as a data reduction technique. A minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 determined the number of factors extracted. Items loading equal to or greater than 0.60 on a single factor were retained. Five distinct restaurant image factors were identified: Atmosphere and facilities (e.g., modern atmosphere, decor & furniture, cleanliness of the restaurant, air-conditioning, staff appearance, children facilities and location), service (e.g., fast service, efficient & friendly service, friendly, polite & helpful staff and sympathetic handling of complains), product (e.g., quality of food, menu item variety, size of portions and nutritious food), modernity and Americanisation (e.g., experiencing the American life style in using restaurants, feeling of the modern life style when using international fast food restaurants and experiencing the same products & services available in developed countries) and price (e.g., value for price paid, price promotions and reasonable prices).

Atmosphere and facilities accounted for 22.56% of the variance, followed by service (15.39%), product (13.65%), modernity and Americanisation (12.73%), and price (12.45%). Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability for the factors. The factor structure and reliability

coefficients for each factor are summarized in Table 1. The reliability coefficient for the atmosphere and facilities factor with seven measurements items was 0.92, the service factor with four measurements items was 0.91, the product factor with four measurements items was 0.86, the modernity and Americanisation factor with three measurements items was 0.96, and the price factor with three measurements items was 0.89.

#### *Consumer value of eating out*

Consumer values of eating out were assessed using a developed scale based on the findings of (Park, 2004; Babin et al., 1994 and Batra and Ahtola, 1991) and the findings from the previous focus groups discussions. Consumer values of eating-out were measured on a 7-point, Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Factor analysis, using the principle component method with varimax rotation of factors, was performed to identify characteristics of consumer values of eating out. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability for the factors. The factor structure and reliability coefficients for each factor are summarized in Table 2.

The factor structure of consumer values of eating-out consisted of two aspects, hedonic and utilitarian values. The two-factor solution explained 69.27% of the variance in the correlation matrix. Hedonic factor accounted for 37.39% of the variance, and the utilitarian factor accounted for 31.89%. The reliability coefficient for the hedonic value factor with three measurements items was 0.83, and the utilitarian value factor with three measurements items was 0.71.

#### *Consumer opinion about globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants*

Consumers' preferences about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants products, services and image were assessed using a developed scale based on the findings from the previous focus groups discussions, the literature review and experts' evaluation. After testing the validity and reliability of the scale during the pilot study, six items were chosen to be included in the scale.

The consumer opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants were measured on a 7-point, Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

Factor analysis, using the principle component method with varimax rotation of factors, was performed to identify characteristics of consumer opinions about the globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability for the factors. The factor structure and reliability coefficients for each factor are summarized in Table 3.

The factor structure of consumer opinions about international fast food restaurants consisted of two aspects, globalisation and localisation factors. The two-factor solution explained 78.06% of the variance in the correlation matrix. Localisation factor accounted for 43.37% of the variance, and the globalisation factor accounted for 34.69%. The reliability coefficient for the localisation factor with three measurements items was 0.92, and the globalisation factor with three measurements items was 0.78.

Table 1

Factor structure and item-reliability of international fast food restaurant image attributes

| Fast food restaurant attributes                  | Factor loadings |          |          |          |          |
|--|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|  | Factor 1        | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 |
| Factor 1 (Atmosphere and Facilities)             |                 |          |          |          |          |
| Temperature of the restaurant (air-conditioning) | 0.824           |          |          |          |          |
| Cleanliness of the restaurant                    | 0.812           |          |          |          |          |
| Staff appearance                                 | 0.807           |          |          |          |          |
| Modern atmosphere                                | 0.779           |          |          |          |          |
| Décor and furniture                              | 0.766           |          |          |          |          |

Table 1 (continuous)

| Fast food restaurant attributes               | Factor loadings |          |          |          |          |
|---|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|   | Factor 1        | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 |
| Children facilities                           | 0.643           |          |          |          |          |
| Location                                      | 0.500           |          |          |          |          |
| Factor 2 (Service)                            |                 |          |          |          |          |
| Friendly, polite and helpful staff            |                 | 0.820    |          |          |          |
| Efficient and friendly service                |                 | 0.819    |          |          |          |
| Sympathetic handling of complaints            |                 | 0.815    |          |          |          |
| Fast service                                  |                 | 0.733    |          |          |          |
| Factor 3 (Product)                            |                 |          |          |          |          |
| Menu item variety                             |                 |          | 0.796    |          |          |
| Nutritious food                               |                 |          | 0.765    |          |          |
| Quality of the food                           |                 |          | 0.710    |          |          |
| Size of portions                              |                 |          | 0.695    |          |          |
| Factor 4 (Modernity and Americanisation)      |                 |          |          |          |          |
| Feeling of the modern life style when using   |                 |          |          | 0.849    |          |
| Experiencing the American life style in using |                 |          |          | 0.827    |          |
| Experiencing the same products and services   |                 |          |          | 0.825    |          |
| Factor 5 (Price)                              |                 |          |          |          |          |
| Price promotions                              |                 |          |          |          | 0.852    |
| Reasonable prices                             |                 |          |          |          | 0.842    |
| Value for the price paid                      |                 |          |          |          | 0.789    |
| % of variance                                 | 22.56           | 15.39    | 13.65    | 12.73    | 12.45    |
| Cronbach's alpha                              | 0.92            | 0.91     | 0.86     | 0.96     | 0.89     |

Table 2

Factor structure and item-reliability of consumer values of eating-out

| Consumer values of eating- out items   | Factor loadings |          |
|--|-----------------|----------|
|  | Factor 1        | Factor 2 |
| Factor 1 (Hedonic value)   |                 |          |
| The atmosphere and interior design of restaurants are important when eating-out  | 0.884           |          |
| Although the cost is the main factor, it is necessary to eat-out at a good place | 0.866           |          |
| Eating-out should be fun and pleasant  | 0.838           |          |
| Factor 2 (Utilitarian value)   |                 |          |
| The best place to eat-out is one that is economical                              |                 | 0.848    |
| Eating-out should be simple and convenient                                       |                 | 0.771    |
| It is a waste to spend a lot of money when eating-out                            |                 | 0.771    |
| % of variance  | 37.39           | 31.89    |
| Cronbach's alpha   | 0.83            | 0.71     |

Table 3

Factor structure and item-reliability of consumer opinion about globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants

| Consumer opinion about international fast food restaurants services and products  | Factor loadings |          |
|---|-----------------|----------|
|   | Factor 1        | Factor 2 |
| Factor 1 (Localisation of services)   |                 |          |
| International fast food restaurants should offer food closer to my culture diet   | 0.937           |          |
| International fast food restaurants should offer local specialities   | 0.927           |          |
| The atmosphere of the international fast food restaurants should reflect the local culture                              | 0.913           |          |
| Factor 2 (Globalisation of services)  |                 |          |
| The international atmosphere and image are important when eating at fast food restaurants                               |                 | 0.857    |
| I prefer to experience the same atmosphere and food offered worldwide when visiting international fast food restaurants |                 | 0.843    |
| I prefer to eat something different to the traditional Egyptian food when visiting international fast food restaurants  |                 | 0.791    |
| % of variance   | 43.37           | 34.69    |
| Cronbach's alpha  | 0.92            | 0.78     |

### Sample

563 completed questionnaires were collected. The sample consists of 47.4% (n = 267) males and 52.6% (n = 296) females. 28.6% of them were between the ages of 15 and 24, 35.7% were between 25 and 34, 21.8% were between 35 and 44, 11.7% were between 45 and 54, and 2.1% were over 54. 46.4% of them were married and 53.6% were unmarried. Concerning the level of education 11.4% high school, 10.1% two years college, 63.9% university graduate, and 14.6% are post graduate. With respect to the household monthly income 8.5% of the sample earns less than 1000 Egyptian pounds, 25.9% between 1000 and 1999, 29.7% between 2000 and 2999, 13% between 3000 and 3999, and 22.9% over 4000.

The frequency of visit to international fast food restaurants in a typical month of the sample was as follows: 3.4% less than once, 24.3% once, 34.3% two to three times, 19.4% four to five times, and 18.7% six times and more. One interesting observation found that Egyptian fast food consumers seldom go to international fast food restaurants alone; 37.3% were with groups of three or more, 26.5% were with family, 30.6% were with a friend, and only 5.7% were alone. Another interesting result that only 5.3% of the consumers stay less than 15 minutes in the international fast food restaurants and 31.6% stay more than 45 minutes, 20.6% stay between 15 to 30 minutes, and the majority 42.5% stays between 30 to 45 minutes. Regarding the occasion of visit 6.2% reported that they usually visit international fast food restaurants to celebrate a special occasion, 54.4% visit international fast food restaurants to meet friends or as a family outing (social occasion) and 39.4% go for a quick meal.

### Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12 was used to analyse the quantitative data obtained from the research instrument. Five types of procedures for the analysis of data were used in this study: reliability analysis; descriptive statistics; factor analysis; Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict the patronage intention toward international fast food restaurants. This intention was predicted using two models: (a) a classic model based upon the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) theory of reasoned action, which included attitude and subjective norm as the only independent variables, and (b) an extended model, which included

attitude and subjective norm as well as variables external to the theory of reasoned action (e.g., five fast food restaurant image factors, two consumer values of eating out, two consumer opinions about globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants and the demographics). In all cases, the R-squared value is reported within the text to account for the proportion of variance explained by a given model.

## Results and Discussion

### *The Classic Ajzen and Fishbein Model*

Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used to investigate the relations in the model. All the results are summarized in Figure 2 and Table 5. The strength of correlation ( $r = 0.69$ ) between intention and reported behaviour satisfies Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) condition that the model is only applicable when intention and behaviour are highly related. The findings support the basic structure of the theory of reasoned action. Multiple regression analysis of the full model yielded  $R = 0.76$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) and  $R^2 = 0.58$ . The sum of belief-evaluation products ( $\Sigma be$ ) correlated significantly with the attitude measure ( $A_{act}$ ) ( $r = 0.72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the attitude measure ( $A_{act}$ ) in turn correlated significantly with the intention to patronage international fast food restaurants ( $r = 0.73$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The sum of normative belief and motivation to comply products ( $\Sigma NB MC$ ) correlated significantly with the subjective norm measure ( $SN$ ) ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the subjective norm measure ( $SN$ ) in turn correlated significantly with the intention to patronage international fast food restaurants ( $r = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The test of TORA requires not only an index of relationship between two variables ( $r$ ) but also an index which predicts one variable (intention) from a simultaneous consideration of two other variables (attitude-towards the act and subjective norm). Such an index is provided by the multiple correlation coefficient ( $R$ ). In computing this index, a weight ( $\beta$ ) for each of the predictor variables is obtained to measure the independent contribution of that variable in the prediction of intention.

Multiple  $R$  (0.76) represents the multiple correlation, i.e. the correlation between the criterion variable (intention) and the weighted sum of the predictor variables ( $A_{act}$  and  $SN$ ).  $R^2$  (0.58) indicates how much of the variance of the criterion variable is explained by all of the predictor variables combined, adjusted  $R^2$ , is a more conservative estimate of the variance explained in that it takes error variance into account. Thus, the  $R^2$  of 0.58 and adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.58 indicate that the two combined predictor variables,  $A_{act}$  and  $SN$ , have done a good job in explaining the variance in the criterion variable 'intention to patronage international fast food restaurants'. The  $F$  statistics ( $F = 391.592$ , Sig.  $F < 0.001$ ) are highly significant. Sig.  $F$  indicates that the equation is one that is extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In summary, the model showed good prediction of reported intention to visit international fast food restaurants. The multiple correlation coefficient outcome of  $R = 0.73$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) indicates a very strong correlation which compares favorably with the estimate of an overall result of  $R = 0.66$  from two meta analysis conducted by Sheppard et al. (1988) involving 87 studies and over 12,000 subjects.

The results of the regression analysis using the classic model indicated that both attitude toward the behaviour ( $t = 22.263$ , Sig.  $< 0.001$ ) and subjective norm ( $t = 8.350$ , Sig.  $< 0.001$ ) influenced consumer's future patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants. The beta coefficients indicated that attitude ( $\beta = 0.65$ ), was a more important predictor than subjective norm ( $\beta = 0.24$ ) in determining the intention to use international fast food restaurants. The findings that attitude exerted more influence upon behavioural intention than did subjective norm is consistent with prior applications of the classic theory of reasoned action model (e.g., Buttle and Bok, 1996; Thompson and Thompson, 1996; Ogle et al., 2004).

The hypothesis  $H1$  is shown to be valid.

Table 4

Regression analysis: Attitude and subjective norm as predictors of consumer patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Dependent Variable    | Intention   |
| Independent variables | Aact (attitude towards behaviour)<br>SN (subjective norm) |
| Method                | Enter   |
| Multiple R            | 0.764   |
| R square              | 0.583   |
| Adjusted R square     | 0.582   |
| Standard error        | 0.846   |

Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

|            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.  |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|
| Regression | 561.097        | 2   | 280.548     | 391.592 | 0.000 |
| Residual   | 401.202        | 560 | 0.716       |         |       |
| Total      | 962.298        | 562 |             |         |       |

Coefficients

| Variables in equation | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|                       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| (Constant)            | 0.864                       | 0.154      |                           | 5.597  | 0.000 |
| Aact                  | 0.167                       | 0.007      | 0.646                     | 22.263 | 0.000 |
| SN                    | 0.191                       | 0.023      | 0.242                     | 8.350  | 0.000 |

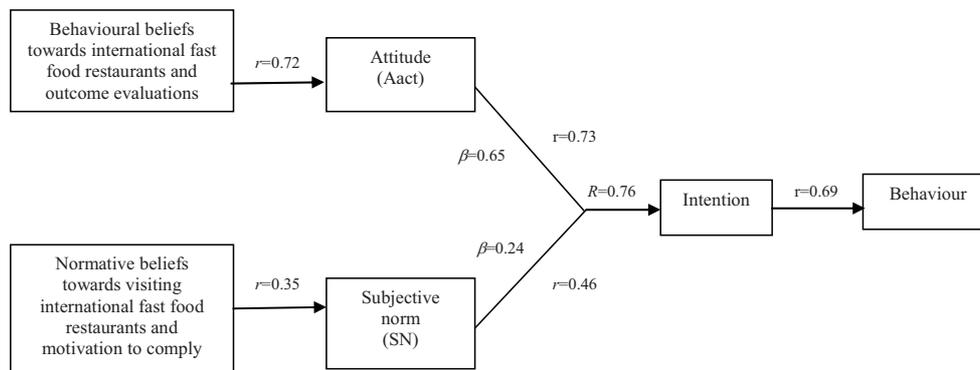


Fig. 2. Correlation between components of the theory of reasoned action

**The Extended Model**

Multiple regression is one of the fussier of the statistical techniques. It makes a number of assumptions about the data, and it is not all that forgiving if they are violated. Before applying the regression analysis all the assumptions are checked and based on these assumptions, some variables (localisation of services factor, utilitarian value of eating out factor, gender and level of education) are removed from the regression equation as they did not satisfy the assumption that the independent variables should show at least some relationship with the dependent variable (above 0.3 preferably) (Pallant, 2001, p. 145; Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996; Norusis, 2002). In this case the scales (the five fast food restaurant image factors, hedonic value of eating-out factor, the globalisation of interna-

tional fast food restaurants factor and only age and income from the demographics) correlate substantially with the intention (Table 5). So these variables are included in the multiple regression analysis.

Inclusion of the external variables in the regression equation improved the predictive power of the model, from  $R^2 = 0.58$  to  $R^2 = 0.84$ . The results of the multiple regression appear in Table 6. The relatively high measure of variance ( $R^2 = 0.84$ ) indicates that the eleven factors have done a good job of explaining the variance in intention, and the highly significant  $F$  statistics ( $F= 259.176$ , Sig.  $F = < 0.001$ ) strongly support that the contention that the result could not have occurred by chance.

Findings from the extended regression model revealed differences in the importance of selected variables in predicting consumer's patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants. In this case we are interested in comparing the contribution of each independent variable; therefore we will use the beta values. The rank order of the beta weights gives us the rank order of importance of the predictor factors. In this case the largest beta coefficient is 0.327 which is for atmosphere and facilities factor. This means that this variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model is controlled for. Followed by the modernity and Americanisation factor ( $\beta = 0.274$ ), service factor ( $\beta = 0.25$ ), price factor ( $\beta = 0.201$ ), product factor ( $\beta = 0.191$ ), globalization of international fast food restaurants factor ( $\beta = 0.135$ ), attitude towards the behaviour ( $\beta = 0.135$ ), hedonic value of eating out factor ( $\beta = 0.118$ ), subjective norm factor ( $\beta = 0.091$ ), income factor ( $\beta = 0.087$ ) and age factor ( $\beta = 0.041$ ).

For each of these variables we check the value in the column marked Sig. (Table 6) this tells us whether this variable is making a statistically significant unique contribution to the equation. If the Sig. value is less than 0.05, then the variable is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. If greater than 0.05, then we can conclude that this variable is not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. In this case all the variables included in the regression model made unique, and statistically significant, contribution to the prediction of the consumer's patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants.

The hypotheses  $H2$ ,  $H3$ ,  $H4$ , and  $H5$  are shown to be valid.

Table 5

Pearson correlations between the dependent variable (intention) and the independent variables

| Pearson Correlation |           | Intention | Sig. (2-tailed) | N   |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----|
|                     | Intention | 1         | .               | 563 |
| Attitude            | .729(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| SN                  | .463(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Local               | .071      | .091      | 563             |     |
| International       | .593(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Atmosphere          | .479(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Service             | .371(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Product             | .331(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Modernity           | .454(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Pricevalue          | .307(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Hedonic             | .600(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Utility             | .044      | .299      | 563             |     |
| Gender              | .031      | .459      | 563             |     |
| Age group           | -.331(**) | .000      | 563             |     |
| Level of education  | .183(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |
| Monthly income      | .390(**)  | .000      | 563             |     |

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

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

Table 6

Regression analysis: attitude, subjective norm, as well as variables external to the theory of reasoned action as predictors of consumer patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Dependent Variable    | Intention  |
| Independent variables | Aact (attitude towards behaviour)<br>SN (subjective norm)<br>Hedonic value of eating out<br>Globalisation factor<br>Product<br>Price<br>Service<br>Modernity<br>Atmosphere<br>Monthly income,<br>Age group |
| Method                | Enter  |
| Multiple R            | 0.915  |
| R square              | 0.838  |
| Adjusted R square     | 0.835  |
| Standard error        | 0.532  |

#### Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

|            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.  |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|
| Regression | 806.438        | 11  | 73.313      | 259.176 | 0.000 |
| Residual   | 155.860        | 551 | 0.283       |         |       |
| Total      | 962.298        | 562 |             |         |       |

#### Coefficients

| Variables in equation | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
|                       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| (Constant)            | 3.885                       | 0.167      |                           | 23.308 | 0.000 |
| Aact                  | .035                        | 0.007      | 0.135                     | 5.261  | 0.000 |
| SN                    | .072                        | 0.015      | 0.091                     | 4.730  | 0.000 |
| Globalisation factor  | .176                        | 0.027      | 0.135                     | 6.543  | 0.000 |
| Hedonic value         | .154                        | 0.028      | 0.118                     | 5.566  | 0.000 |
| Atmosphere            | .428                        | 0.027      | 0.327                     | 15.982 | 0.000 |
| Service               | .328                        | 0.025      | 0.250                     | 12.902 | 0.000 |
| Product               | .250                        | 0.026      | 0.191                     | 9.483  | 0.000 |
| Modernity             | .359                        | 0.028      | 0.274                     | 12.674 | 0.000 |
| Price                 | .263                        | 0.025      | 0.201                     | 10.567 | 0.000 |
| Age group             | -.051                       | 0.023      | -0.041                    | -2.232 | 0.026 |
| Monthly income        | .089                        | 0.019      | 0.087                     | 4.739  | 0.000 |

### Conclusions and Implications

The present findings contribute to the understanding of consumer behaviour in the international fast food market, an area that has received little attention within the academic literature. Specifically, this study lends insight into the varied factors that shape consumer's future purchase

intention towards international fast food restaurants. To identify these factors, consumer patronage behaviour was predicted by using classic and extended models based upon the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). In the classic model both attitudinal variable and subjective norm predicted consumer's behavioural intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. The findings support the basic structure of the theory of reasoned action. Expanding the classic belief-attitude-behaviour intention model to include variables external to the theory of reasoned action, however, increased the amount of variance explained in behavioural intention. Hence, the findings suggest that, when used to predict consumer patronage behaviours in the international fast food market, the classic belief-attitude-behaviour intention model should be extended to include variables such as fast food restaurant image factors, consumer values of eating out, consumer opinions about globalisation or localisation of international fast food restaurants and consumer demographics.

Although prior research has suggested that multiple demographic characteristics (including age, gender, education and income) may influence consumer behaviour in the food service industry, age and income are the only demographic variables found to predict intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. Because results suggested that older consumers were less likely than younger consumers to patronize international fast food restaurants in the future (beta value is negative for the age factor), fast food restaurants may want to develop marketing strategies aimed at this market segment.

A more interesting result is that there is a significant relationship between the hedonic value of eating-out and consumer patronage intention towards international fast food restaurants. Generally, a fast food restaurant is considered as an economical and convenient place to eat out. The utilitarian value is more related to buying frequency and intention to revisit fast food restaurants. However the hedonic value is significantly correlated with behavioral intention to visit international fast food restaurants in Egypt. This means that international fast food restaurants are regarded as pleasant and social places in Egypt. As the hedonic value of eating-out is more related to patronage intention than the utilitarian value, international fast food restaurants in Egypt should be more fun, enjoyable, pleasant and playful than economical or functional.

Findings highlighted the influence of reference groups upon the consumer's intention to patronage international fast food restaurants. As such, international fast food restaurants may benefit from the use of varied promotional methods (e.g., advertisements, special events, and publicity) to communicate their corporate philosophy to reference groups in order to develop and promote positive word-of-mouth. Additionally, because findings indicated that store image factors are the main contributor to consumer's intention to patronize international fast food restaurants, the fast food operators might consider giving particular attention to these variables.

The present findings provide opportunities for further work. For example, in the future, it will be important to further examine the relevance or usefulness of the theory of reasoned action to predict consumer behaviours and to compare the utility of the classic Ajzen and Fishbein model (1980) to the expanded models. The present findings support the inclusion of a social context variable in future analyses of belief-attitude-behaviour correspondence. Findings from this study lend understanding not only about the international fast food consumers but also serve as a foundation for additional work exploring the importance of store image in consumer decision making.

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