Fast Food = American Food?
速食能完全代表美式食物嗎?

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I. Introduction

I.1 The background of the study
Recently, eating fast food has been a trend due to our busy lives. Since fast food could be prepared in a short time, people prefer to have them for meal so that they wouldn’t waste too much time on eating. Many consider it as American food since the brand Macdonald and KFC acme from America. But is that true? Does fast food can totally represent American food? What do people think about that? Why do we have this kind of stereotype? To find out the truth, I search for the answer through internet and books from the library. What's more, I even conduct a questionnaire survey for students, adults and foreigners and analyze the data. Then I could know what are people’s real thought. After the research, I can gain more knowledge about the relationship between fast food and American food and perhaps find out the truth I want in the end.

I.2 Motivation
Everyone has their “favorite”. Some like going shopping, while others enjoy exercising. As for me, my favorite is food. Recently, I saw a tremendously eye-catching topic: Does American food equal fast food? In fact, most of the people think only hamburgers and chips can represent American food. But, is it true? No one can give an exact answer. Since being a food buff, I think I have responsibility to find out the truth.

I.3 Research questions
Q1: Does American food equal fast food? If not, what can symbolize American food the most?
Q2: What are Taiwanese and American people’s thought about American food?
Q3: Why do we have this kind of stereotype that fast food is American food?

II. Research

II.1 Participants
This study aims to figure out whether fast food really represents American food. In this study, I invited people in both Taiwan and America to join in. The age range is from 20 to 50. American people’s comments are also involved because I want to make
a comparison between theirs and the Taiwanese’s thoughts about the relationship of American food and fast food.

II.2 Questionnaire
By conducting this questionnaire, I want to know more about people’s ideas. There are four questions in my questionnaire. The questions are mainly about people’s thought of American food. Then, I analyze the data we collect.

II.3 Procedure
I serve the net to find some information that matches the topic after the title was decided. At the same time, I delivered 60 copies (30 for Taiwanese and 30 for Americans) of my questionnaire survey and collect the data. Then I analyze them and get the conclusion.

III Discussion

III.1 Definition of Fast Food
According to “Chain_of_Fools_” website, fast food is food that can be prepared and served in a very short time. Stereotypical fast food is cooked in bulk and kept warm, or reheated to order. TV dinners and other foods that can be cooked easily are considered to be fast food as well.

Many fast-food restaurants are part of restaurant chains or franchise operations, and standardized foodstuffs are shipped to each restaurant from central locations. There are also simpler fast-food outlets, such as stands or kiosks, which may or may not provide shelter or chairs for customers.

III.2 The history of fast food
According to “AccuPOS” website, contrary to popular belief, the history of fast food didn’t start at the same time as the history of McDonald’s. The name and location of the first fast food restaurant is lost to history but it might have occurred in Ancient Rome. Street vendors and walk-up restaurants fed the whole population.

Later on, during the Middle Ages, quick and inexpensive food was invented in the larger cities of Europe, including London and Paris, where the fast food fed locals and tourists alike. A quick bite of hearty, inexpensive food was news eagerly shared among travelers.
III.3 The analysis of the questionnaires

III.3.1 Do you think fast food represent American food?

According to this chart, most of the Taiwanese and Americans said “no” to this question. Here I can know that for both the Taiwanese and Americans, people who disagree fast food represent American food are much more than those who agree.

III.3.2 In your mind, what kind of food can represent American food the most?  
(Answered by those who said “no” in question 1)
By designing this question, I want to know what kind of food can represent American food the most of the people who answered “no” in question one. Obviously, I can see that Taiwanese and American’s choices are completely different in this chart except for turkey, which is chose by most people. People in Taiwan think steak and donuts can represent American food while Americans prefer apple pies and other kinds of food. This shows the differences between the Taiwanese and the Americans. The Taiwanese may choose what they often eat; however, for Americans, there are actually lots of local delicacies to choose in their country.

III.3.3 Why do you think fast food can represent American food (Answered by those who said “yes” in question 1)?
The reason why people think fast food can represent American food is shown in this chart. For the Taiwanese, 60% of them are affected by the chain fast food restaurants while the rest of the people can’t come up with other examples. On the other hand, for the Americans, almost half of them take fast food as part of their culture. From these two charts, I observed how much fast food chain restaurants influence the Taiwanese’s ideas about American food.

III.3.4 Why do people in Taiwan have the stereotype that "fast food represent American food”? What do you think? (Answered by Taiwanese only)
According to chart 7, I can discover that over 50% of Taiwanese think the fast food brand from America is the main reason for the stereotype. 25% of the Taiwanese think the reason is that they often eat fast food, 15% of them guess that’s because of the impression of Americans and the rest don’t know much about American food. Thus, I learn that the stereotype is related to the fast food brand from America.

IV. Conclusion

In books, movies or TV shows from America, it isn’t hard to detect the influence of fast food. Since successful fast food brands such as Macdonald and KFC came from America, most of the people view American food as fast food. But, haven’t you ever been skeptical to this kind of concept? To find out the truth, I did a research about it. And below are the results we get.

According to the result of the study, most Taiwanese and American disagree that fast food absolutely represent American food. However, in their mind, the rank of the food which they think is the real American food is a little bit different. To the Taiwanese, most of them think turkey, donut and steak can represent American food. On the other hand, in American’s mind, turkey, donut, apple pie and some local delicacies are the most representative. Here I can find although the thoughts between Taiwanese and Americans aren’t the same, I could know that for both Taiwanese and Americans, turkey is the one which can represent American food the most.

The factors that affect Taiwanese and American’s thought are different, too. For those
who think fast food can represent American food, the data shows that over 50% of Taiwanese participants think so because they couldn’t think of any other examples. But to Americans, nearly 50% of them think fast food has become part of their culture.

For the last question, we can see that many of them think the reason why Taiwanese think “fast food equal America food” is for the brand. Macdonald and KFC are successful in the fast food industry in Taiwan, and both of them originated from America, so most people are influenced by the image and the advertisement for them.

These findings have satisfied our curiosity about the relationship between fast food and American food. Although most people have the concept that “fast food is American food”, it may not be the truth. Through this research, I find out that there are actually many other kinds of food that can represent American food. So next time, if people ask you what American food is, think for a while instead of answering “fast food” immediately!

V. References

1. Book

2. Websites

VI. Appendix

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<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
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<tr>
<td>We are the students from Jingmei Girls senior high school. Thank you for filling this questionnaire for us. Now we are doing a research about the fact of fast food, and below are some questions we want to ask you. You don’t need to leave your name on the paper, so don’t be afraid what you wrote down would be seen by others. All we will do is collect the data and analyze them. Thanks for your cooperation!</td>
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1. Do you think fast food represent American food?

| yes | no |

2. In your mind, what kind of food can represent American food the most (According to those who said “no” in question 1)?

| Thanksgiving turkey | donut | Sandwich | Steak | Apple pie | others |

3. Why do you think fast food can represent American food (According to those who said “yes” in question 1)?

For Taiwanese

| Affected by the chain fast food restaurant. |
| I can’t think of any other examples. |

For American

| I like to eat fast food. |
| Fast food has become part of our culture. |
| Macdonald is a big fast food brand in the USA. |
| Fast food is originated in the USA. |

4. Why do people in Taiwan have the stereotype that "fast food represent American food"? What do you think? (Answered by Taiwanese only)

| Macdonald and KFC came from America. |
| We have a lot of chance to eat fast food. |
| I don’t know other kinds of American food. |
| Because of the impression of America. |