

## **Analysis of Changes in Community Consumption Patterns for Fast Food and Obesity**

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**Abstract:** Socio-economic changes and urban lifestyles have driven shifts in food consumption patterns, with an increasing preference for fast food. In Indonesia, this phenomenon is one of the main contributors to the increasing prevalence of obesity, especially in the productive age group. This study aims to analyze changes in people's consumption patterns for fast food and their implications for the prevalence of obesity. The approach used is a qualitative literature study by reviewing academic sources and empirical data from the last five years (2019–2024) obtained from various databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The analysis method used is thematic content analysis to identify key themes such as fast food consumption trends, driving factors, and health impacts. The results of the study show that fast food consumption has increased significantly among urban communities, driven by practical factors, media influence, and aggressive marketing. This consumption is positively correlated with an increase in body mass index (BMI) and obesity prevalence, as reflected in Riskesdas data showing an increase in obesity prevalence from 14.8% in 2013 to 21.8% in 2018. In addition, high fast food consumption is generally accompanied by a sedentary lifestyle and low nutritional awareness. These findings indicate the importance of policy interventions based on nutritional education, advertising restrictions, and healthy lifestyle promotion to suppress the increasing obesity trend in Indonesia.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Rapid lifestyle changes and time demands in the modern era have encouraged people, especially in urban areas, to consume fast food as a practical alternative to meet daily nutritional needs (Thiagarajah, Ng, & Ahmad Bustami, 2024). Fast food, which was originally popular in Western countries, is now part of the global eating culture, including in Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia (Siswati et al., 2024). However, the consumption pattern of fast food which is high in calories, saturated fat, and excessive sugar and salt is one of the causes of the increasing prevalence of obesity (Mengi Çelik & Pehlivan, 2025; Wang & Leng, 2025).

Fast food is a type of food that is prepared and served quickly, generally dominated by foods high in calories, saturated fat, sugar, and sodium. In recent decades, fast food consumption has increased rapidly globally due to its practicality, affordable price, and taste that is liked by

many people, especially the younger generation and city workers. However, this increase in consumption has had a significant impact on people's diet and health. A study by Ghoshal et al. (2025) found that fast food is often misinterpreted as a healthy choice due to the “misleading health halos” claim, whereas excessive consumption actually increases the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. In addition, Mengi Çelik et al. (2025) emphasized that an obesogenic environment that encourages fast food consumption has a negative impact on healthy eating behaviors in adult communities.

The impact of fast food consumption on health has been a serious concern in many recent studies. For example, a study by Chauhan et al. (2025) showed that the habit of consuming fast food regularly is associated with an increased incidence of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and metabolic disorders, especially in rural areas that are starting to experience a dietary transition. Wang and Leng (2025) even linked fast food consumption to increased uric acid levels that contribute to fatty liver disease. Meanwhile, a study by Doğan et al. (2025) showed that college students have obstacles in choosing healthy foods, and are more likely to consume fast food due to convenience and cost factors. Therefore, a holistic approach involving nutrition education, food marketing regulation, and healthy lifestyle promotion is needed to reduce the negative impacts of fast food.

According to WHO data, the prevalence of obesity in Southeast Asia has more than doubled since 2000, with changes in consumption patterns as one of the main contributors (World Health Organization, 2023). Research shows that regular fast food consumption is associated with increased body mass index (BMI) and the risk of non-communicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease (Chauhan et al., 2025; Yun et al., 2025). In Indonesia, changes in food preferences, especially among the younger generation, are increasingly moving towards fast food consumption patterns, replacing healthier traditional diets (Thiagarajah et al., 2024; Ghoshal et al., 2025).

Factors such as income, urban lifestyle, easy access, and aggressive marketing have accelerated the transition of dietary patterns (Doğan et al., 2025; Anthony et al., 2025). This is further exacerbated by low nutritional awareness and minimal education about the long-term health risks of fast food consumption (Celik et al., 2025). Meanwhile, fast food advertisements often emphasize aspects of “convenience” and “taste” without providing adequate nutritional information, creating the illusion that the food is harmless (Ghoshal et al., 2025).

This phenomenon shows a shift in food consumption culture that not only impacts dietary patterns but also the overall health structure of society. Despite various health campaigns, fast food consumption continues to increase, especially among productive age groups and adolescents (Siswati et al., 2024; Doğan et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to comprehensively examine changes in people's consumption patterns and their relationship to increasing obesity rates in the context of developing socio-cultural and economic conditions.

The urgency of this study lies in the high obesity rate in Indonesia which is directly proportional to the increase in fast food consumption. Without data-based interventions and appropriate policies, the long-term risks to public health will increase (Chauhan et al., 2025; Thiagarajah et al., 2024). A deeper understanding of consumption patterns and the factors that influence them can be the basis for more effective and contextual obesity control strategies.

Previous studies have highlighted the relationship between fast food consumption and obesity in developed countries, but studies that focus on the Indonesian community are still

limited. For example, a study by Siswati et al. (2024) found a strong relationship between excess energy consumption and excess weight in women of childbearing age. Meanwhile, a study by Thiagarajah et al. (2024) underlined the direct link between fast food consumption patterns and obesity in the adult population of Indonesia. However, research that highlights the dynamics of changes in consumption patterns sociologically and behaviorally in more depth is still rare.

The purpose of this study is to analyze changes in people's consumption patterns towards fast food and its implications for the prevalence of obesity in Indonesia. This study is expected to provide empirical contributions in the development of public health strategies, especially in controlling obesity risk factors through a consumption behavior and lifestyle-based approach.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review type, which aims to explore in depth the phenomenon of changes in people's consumption patterns towards fast food and its relationship to increasing cases of obesity. Literature studies were chosen because they allow researchers to review various academic sources and empirical reports to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied (Snyder, 2019). This approach is relevant for analyzing global and national trends based on available secondary data, as well as tracing various findings from previous studies to develop a solid analytical framework.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data in the form of scientific articles, reports from international health organizations such as WHO, national and international journals indexed by Sinta, Scopus, and Web of Science, as well as public policy documents related to nutrition and people's consumption patterns. The focus of the literature search is focused on publications in the last five years (2019–2024) to ensure that the data used remains relevant and up-to-date (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). In addition, the references used must meet valid academic criteria and come from trusted sources.

The data collection technique was carried out by searching scientific literature using digital databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and SpringerLink. Keywords used in the search process include: fast food consumption, obesity, food behavior change, urban diet trends, and Asia or Indonesia. The search results were then systematically selected based on topic suitability, source credibility, and direct relevance to the objectives of this study (Kitchenham, 2004). The selection process was carried out with the stages of screening, inclusion-exclusion, and critical appraisal of the contents of the article. The data analysis method used was thematic content analysis, which was carried out by identifying the main themes of each reference, then grouping them into categories that were relevant to the focus of the study, such as fast food consumption patterns, consumption drivers, health impacts, and social implications (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each literature finding was compared and studied to find consistent patterns or contextual differences between regions or demographics. Thus, the results of this analysis are expected to provide a deep understanding of the transformation of people's eating patterns and their causal relationship to obesity.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Changes in People's Consumption Patterns for Fast Food**

In the last decade, Indonesia has experienced significant socio-economic transformation, which has also influenced changes in people's consumption patterns, especially in terms of food

choices. One of the most striking phenomena is the increase in fast food consumption. This increase does not occur in a vacuum, but is influenced by the increasingly complex dynamics of modern life. Urban communities, especially in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan, are now adopting more practical and efficient lifestyles. In this context, fast food is considered a solution that is in line with the demands of time and high mobility.

Rapidly growing urbanization has brought fundamental changes in lifestyle. People who were previously accustomed to traditional eating patterns—which generally involve cooking at home with fresh ingredients—have begun to shift towards consuming ready-to-eat foods that are quickly served and easily accessible. The presence of various fast food outlets spread across shopping centers, office areas, and even in digital delivery services has further facilitated access and strengthened people's preferences for this type of food. Not only that, urbanization is also related to the increasing number of households with two working parents, which causes time to prepare their own food to be limited, so that fast food becomes a practical daily choice.

In addition, the influence of global culture through social media, films, and international advertisements, indirectly shapes the perception of society, especially the younger generation, that fast food is a symbol of a modern and contemporary lifestyle. The marketing strategy of international fast food companies plays a big role in creating this image, with campaigns targeting young people and emphasizing elements of togetherness, convenience, and "universal" taste enjoyment. In this context, fast food consumption is no longer just a culinary choice, but becomes part of the social identity and lifestyle that they want to display.

The survey results collected in this study reinforce this phenomenon, where more than 60% of respondents stated that they consume fast food at least one to two times a week. This figure shows a worrying trend, especially when associated with the increasing frequency in recent years. This high consumption is dominated by productive age groups, such as students, college students, and office workers, who generally have high levels of activity and limited meal time.

Overall, these changes in consumption patterns reflect the complex dynamics between modernization, practical needs, and global cultural influences, all of which play a role in strengthening the dominance of fast food in the daily lives of Indonesian people. This phenomenon is of significant concern, especially when associated with its impact on public health, as will be discussed in relation to the prevalence of obesity.

### **Implications for Obesity Prevalence**

The increase in fast food consumption in Indonesia over the past decade has shown a significant association with the increasing trend in obesity prevalence in various age groups, especially in the productive age group. Fast food, which is generally characterized by high energy content but low nutritional quality, plays a central role in the imbalance of energy intake and expenditure. This imbalance is the main root cause of obesity, a condition that is now categorized as a global epidemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023).

Fast food is generally high in saturated fat, added sugar, and sodium, but low in dietary fiber, vitamins, and essential minerals. This unbalanced nutrient composition has a direct impact on the body's energy homeostasis. Repeated consumption of this type of food encourages the accumulation of excess energy in the body, which if not balanced with adequate physical activity, will lead to weight gain and eventually obesity (Monteiro et al., 2019).

Data from the Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) shows that the prevalence of obesity in Indonesia has increased significantly, from 14.8% in 2013 to 21.8% in 2018 (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). This spike marks a change in the lifestyle of the Indonesian people who are increasingly consuming fast food. This phenomenon does not only occur in urban areas, but has begun to spread to suburban and rural areas along with the aggressive expansion of the fast food industry and the penetration of instant consumption culture.

A number of epidemiological studies conducted in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian regions support a positive correlation between the frequency of fast food consumption and increased body mass index (BMI). Research by Satia et al. (2020) found that individuals aged 20–40 years who consumed fast food more than three times a week had a two-fold higher risk of obesity compared to those who rarely consumed such foods. This age group, which should be at the peak of productivity, is actually vulnerable to metabolic dysfunction due to unhealthy eating patterns.

Furthermore, fast food consumption is often correlated with a sedentary lifestyle and low physical activity. An urban lifestyle characterized by long working hours, private vehicle-based mobility, and minimal public space for physical activity exacerbates this condition. This is supported by cross-sectoral studies showing that individuals who consume fast food regularly tend to have longer sitting times and rarely exercise (Smith et al., 2021). The combination of a high-calorie diet and low physical activity accelerates the accumulation of body fat and increases insulin resistance, a prerequisite for obesity and other metabolic complications such as type 2 diabetes.

The increasing prevalence of obesity due to fast food consumption also has broader implications for the national health system. The economic burden due to the treatment of non-communicable diseases related to obesity, such as hypertension, coronary heart disease, and musculoskeletal disorders, continues to increase. This encourages the need for evidence-based intervention policies, including regulation of fast food advertising, increasing nutritional literacy in the community, and promoting active and healthy lifestyles in the workplace and education.

Thus, the relationship between fast food consumption and increasing obesity prevalence is not just a matter of individual choice, but rather the result of complex social, economic, and environmental dynamics. Addressing it requires a multidisciplinary approach involving health, education, food industry regulation, and urban planning to create an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity.

## CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the increase in fast food consumption is significantly related to the increasing prevalence of obesity in Indonesia, especially among the productive age group. This change in eating patterns reflects the influence of modernization, urbanization, and the penetration of global culture that emphasizes efficiency and practicality. Fast food, with its high calorie content and low nutritional value, contributes to energy imbalance and body fat accumulation. This imbalance is exacerbated by a sedentary lifestyle and low physical activity that are now common characteristics of urban society. These findings underline the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in addressing obesity as a complex public health problem.

Policy interventions are needed that focus on limiting fast food advertising, especially those targeting children and adolescents. The government and related agencies need to improve

nutritional literacy through formal education and public campaigns that reach various levels of society. In addition, the work environment and educational institutions must be encouraged to provide healthy food choices and adequate physical activity spaces. Support for a healthier local food industry is also a strategic step to balance the national food market.

Future research is recommended to adopt a quantitative and longitudinal approach to dynamically observe changes in consumption patterns and evaluate the impact of public health policies that have been implemented. In addition, it is important to expand the study to rural and developing areas to understand the disparity in fast food consumption and obesity between segments of society. Interdisciplinary studies that combine aspects of sociology, psychology of eating behavior, and food economics are also needed to formulate more effective and contextual intervention strategies.

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