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## Research on convenience food

Convenience food also known as fast-food in America has been growing since 1970. America estimated that in the year 2020, people will buy their food in fast-food chains and will spend about \$223 billion. The truth can't be hidden, people would rather grab an extra-large cup of coffee on their way to work than make a sumptuous breakfast paired with a green smoothie. Back in the days, there is not much of convenience food and people were still into family breakfast, conversations over food, cultural eating etiquettes. People see food as something that is appealing to the eyes as well as to the palate. Food is essential and necessary for humans. Food is respected in all such as ways to preserve the value of it. But what if we are now in the age where most people don't appreciate and cheapen the sustenance of life? It is earth-shattering how people have been interacting with food all their lives and have forgotten the art of eating and the value of it. Convenience food corrupt the way we see food.

Convenience foods are expensive. People are into the grab, go, and eat system because it is easy, and while this may be true convenience food have a high price attached to it as well. When people go to a grocery store, they would see a stall of pre-washed and pre-cut green apples tagged with much higher price than a pound of apples. With this in mind, most of them would choose the ready to go one despite its price. Whereas, a bag of apple washed and cut at home is more inexpensive. Helping them to realize the long-term effect of buying convenience food is helpful. For example, the cost of pre-cut slices of green apples in the market today is \$4 considering that they can only get a pound of apples for \$1.30. People save a lot of money every second by choosing uncut apple. Puzic (2014) writes in her article that "consumers are willing to pay more for the usual conveniences, such as bagged salad and pre-cut vegetables because they know they will save time in the kitchen." She also mentions that companies have always been doing brainstorm meeting because they want to put value in their products. If people don't see the value in their food, it will just fade away automatically. Food is fad-oriented, it is determined by people for a finite period of time. The value of food dictates how much people are willing to pay for it.

The fact that convenience foods contain many added flavoring, it also covers the true taste of every ingredient because it is mixed sources. The quality of food is at stake. Manufacturers are so aware of putting all ingredients in making one product and are able to do "cut corners". For example, if people eat a can of corned beef, it is hard to tell if they are really getting the quality of meat that the manufacturer promised for or rather be eating gristle and leftovers. In Puzic (2014) articles, she states that "it's important to distinguish between useful, "value-added" food conveniences and "frivolous" ones." People should know what to buy and what not. Settling for the benefit of time in buying convenience food will not justify the quality of the food. Convenience food doesn't guarantee the quality of food, even worse is the notion that the people pay for something that is not worth the price.

Certainly, convenience food is tasty. It is packed with thousands of flavors that burst in your mouth. There is a lot of convenience food that satisfy crave and hunger such as chocolate protein bars, processed meats and cheeses, ready-made pasta dishes, and too many more. Millennials can get tasty and instant meal wherever they want it. Nevertheless, most convenience food is unhealthy. They are overrated with tons of ingredients that seems so

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healthy and appealing to the consumers. The processing that convenience food go through lessens the vitamins and mineral in the food which is essential for health. Vitamins and nutrients that are added to food afterward are called fortification. It is harder for the body to absorb this kind of nutrients and can be highly misleading because it carries less nutritional value. It is still important to get natural nutrients from fresh foods. Another reason why we shouldn't buy convenience food is the amount of salt and sugar in it. Too much salt and sugar in our bodies cause water retention, cramping, obesity, and heart damage. Convenience food also contains lots of fats that increase the rate of having heart disease and high cholesterol. In the long run, tastes buds may not be able to function well in fresh food because of getting used to salt and fats. As a result, convenience food does not promote healthy living despite its taste. Convenience food rather offers a lot of health issues.

Convenience food takes away the pleasure of eating. Some of the most cherished moments of eating are the joy of cooking with relatives and friends. Small or big gatherings include food and it also a great time to spend time while cooking. These include greeting Christmas morning with warm gingerbread, chatting with friends while making a proper biryani which takes a lot of time to cook, or a busy night for everyone preparing a dinner meal. There is an essence of authenticity when people make their food. After the long hours of hovering on the stove is the pleasure, to just take delight in every little piece of the food knowing that it pays off. Food is meant to be savored and convenience food is like extracting the distinctive flavor, richness, and nutrients of a food. Brean (2014) states in his article that "a banana is not worth just a measure of potassium." He also added that food is not about discernable rules, it is about "...shop, chop, and cook, adjust to taste, serve with grace, eat with gusto – is a more human enterprise." Convenience food removes the essence of a nutritious and delicious food.

It is clear that the rise of convenience food changes the way we behave towards food. People have been replacing real food with convenience food that is expensive and unhealthy. At the same time, the significance of food is demeaning because of the benefit they can get from buying convenience food. Time and taste are just some of the factors that trigger people to consume convenience food. Truly, convenience food has gone on top of people's lives to think that the same food that saves their time will steal their pleasure and longevity of life.