



Consumers Buying Perception in BASC FPTCA Food Court

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ABSTRACT

The Bulacan Agricultural State College, Federal Parents, Teachers and Community Association food court (BASC FPTCA) serves as the main dining area for students, teachers and employees. The conduct of this study aimed to determine the consumers buying perception in BASC FPTCA food court. The descriptive method type of research was used in this study. The majority of the respondents were about 15-24 years of age, female and single which means that the respondents were mature enough to understand the issue studied. The perceived satisfaction of customers shows an overall mean of 3.29 which means that the respondents were satisfied in the services provided by BASC FPTCA food court. In terms of food services, the respondents were moderately satisfied with a total mean of 3.55. In quality of food, there was a total mean of 3.36 while in sanitation and facilities of the food court, the total mean was 2.88 which means that the respondents were satisfied. In services offered by the staff, the respondents were satisfied with a total mean of 3.24. In the perception consumers to pricing, the majority of the respondents answered that they can't afford the high price of the products, that there is a poor value for money, and fairly likely to speak positively about the food court to a colleague and the visit them to food court is every day. The main reason for not visiting the food court is price. The researchers concluded that the campus operators and administrators need to understand the overall satisfaction based on food quality perception that could be an influencing factor to enhance the consumer's satisfaction level.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Consumer Rationality, Consumer Buying Perception

Introduction

Many of the universities and colleges have foodservice operations that are providing many variety food options and delivering fresh, healthy and tasty ingredients in a way that pleases the students. School food services have become one of the major issues concerned by the management as it affects the perception of the students and the quality in educational experience, which includes the quality of food court (Matsumoto, 2002).

In Bulacan Agricultural State College, Federal Parents, Teachers and Community Association (FPTCA) found out that the students felt discomfort toward the food stalls because of inadequate space and inappropriate areas where they usually eat. They decided to build up a food court in their commitment to their children's health and well-being, as the center for multiple and diverse healthy foods and venue for learning socialization skills as a positive by-product of their children's school experience of growth as people (Narrative Report of Dr. Lolito B. San Pedro).

The most important factors consumers consider when choosing a food court ranking is food quality, service, value, and cleanliness whether their food is prepared the way they desire it or prepared according to the food service quality standard (Green, 1994).

The most common students' complaints regarding the school food services include poor ambience, shortage of staff, pricing, poor food choices and low food quality. Moreover, cafeterias play vital role in the overall satisfaction of the students towards the school. Food service operators need to provide a selection of food choices, fresh products and ingredients and tasty food in order to create student satisfaction. Other than that, the food service operator should improve their service quality of staff and evaluate the staff performance in order to maintain good quality. Student satisfaction would actually influence their buying intention and behavior, which in turns affect the organization future long-term profit and revenue.

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors or attributes which contribute significant impact on consumers buying perceptions toward the food court. The respondents for this study are students, faculty, and employees of Bulacan Agricultural State College.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, this study evaluated the buying perception of the BASC Community in FPTCA food court. Specifically, the researcher answered the following questions:

1. What are the demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Distribution of respondents in BASC Community

- 1.2. Age, Gender and Civil Status
2. Does BASC FPTCA food court satisfies the group of consumers in terms of:
 - 2.1. Food services
 - 2.2. Quality of food
 - 2.3. Ambience, environment, sanitation and facilities of the food court.
 - 2.4. How do they describe the service offered by the staff?
 - 2.5. Pricing
 - 2.6. How would they rate the last visit at the food court in terms of value of money?
 - 2.7. How likely would they be to speak positively about the food court to colleague?
3. How many times do they often visit the food court?
4. When do they not use the food court, what is the main reason?
5. What are the problems encountered and solutions made?

Significance of the Study

This research will be used for the continuous study of BASC FPTCA food court. This will help determine the BASC community buying perception on food services provided by Bulacan Agricultural State College. This may help to the continuous improvement of the food and services they provided. This will provide awareness of the administration of BASC FPTCA food court for the satisfaction of their services as perceived by the consumers. This will help BASC FPTCA food court administration to find ways on how they will satisfy the consumers. Also, this will improve some problems that the consumers and administration will encounter.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presented the methods and sources of data used. It also includes the research design, research instrument, sampling procedures and selection of the respondents and statistical tool and treatment data.

Research Design

This study was conducted to evaluate the buying perception of BASC Community. The descriptive method was used through surveys and personal interviews. The data gathered from the respondents used as the basis to determine the consumers buying perception.

Sampling Procedures and Selection of Respondents

Students, faculty and employees are the respondents of the study.

A total of one hundred twenty (120) respondents including students (100), faculty teachers (15), and employees (5).

The distribution of the respondents was shown in Table 1. Table 1.1. Distribution of respondents in BASC Community.

Participants	Number of Respondents
Students	N= 100
Faculty	N= 15
Employees	N= 5
Total	N= 120

Research Instrument

The researchers used survey questionnaires in gathering the information that helps to assess the buying perception of the BASC Community in food court with the support of interviews to supplement the data needed. Statistical Tools and Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the various methods were analyzed, interpreted and synthesized to provide significant answer to the specific problem of the study.

The following were used to analyze the data gathered:

1. Percentage Distribution. This was used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents.

Formula: $\% = (f/n) \times 100$

f = frequency

n =total samples

%= percentage

2. Weighted Mean. This was used to describe the analysis of the consumers buying perception in BASC FPTCA food court.
3. The five-point Likert Scale was utilized in this study. Likert Scale is a close item or forced-choice instrument that indicates the extent or degree of one's response whether positive or negative (William, 2006).

The respondents answered in the following manner:

	Scale	Extent of Satisfaction
5	4.21-5.0	Very Much Satisfied
4	3.41-4.20	Moderately Satisfied
3	2.61-3.40	Satisfied
2	1.81-2.60	Slightly Satisfied
1	1.0-1.80	Not Satisfied

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected and the result of statistical treatment used in the study with the purpose of evaluating the consumers buying perception in BASC FPTCA food court.

Profile of the Respondents

Age is an essential characteristic of respondents as by and large age indicates level of maturity of individuals which help the researchers understand their views about a particular problem. Table 1.2 presents the age, gender and civil status of the respondents.

Table 1.2. Frequency and distribution of respondents according to age, gender and civil status.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-24	103	85.83
25-34	11	9.17
35-44	3	2.5
45-54	3	2.5
55-64	0	0
Total	120	100
Gender		
Female	43	35.83
Male	77	64.17
Total	120	100
Civil Status		
Single	111	92.5
Married	9	7.5
Total	120	100

It was evident from the Table 1.2 that most of the respondents were about 15-24 years of age with 85.83%. The results implied that the youngest are the least likely to diet. Young adults are typically less concerned about weight and health, and hence the lesser tendency to try to change their diet. (https://www.researchgate.net/223981688_Age_marital_status_and_in_dietaryhabits)

Gender is an important variable that is affected by any social or economic phenomenon. Hence, this study investigated the variable gender. It was quite clear that the total respondents were dominated by females with a percentage of 64.17 whereas about 35.83 were found to be males. Males were difficult to approach. They usually ignored and refused to answer the questionnaire given by the researchers. The results implied that gender differences in food choices, therefore, appear to be partly attributable to women's greater weight control involvement and partly to their stronger beliefs in healthy eating. (Gender differences in food choice: the contribution of health NCBI (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15053018>))

It shows that the majority of the respondents were single by the count of 111 and a percentage of 92.5. The results implied that single/unmarried individuals have been noted to consume poor or less healthful diet.

(https://www.researchgate.net/223981688_Age_marital_status_and_in_dietaryhabits)

Table 2. Perceived satisfaction of the consumer.

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
2.1. Food Services		
Speed of service	3.47	Moderately Satisfied
Friendliness and courteous	3.75	Moderately Satisfied
Appearance of staff	3.57	Moderately Satisfied
Knowledge of food on offer	3.46	Moderately Satisfied
Ability to handle questions	3.34	Satisfied
Paying attention to food hygiene practices	3.4	Satisfied
Personal treatment	3.43	Moderately Satisfied
Having a can-do attitude	3.52	Moderately Satisfied
Total	3.49	Moderately Satisfied

The total mean in terms of food services is 3.49 which showed that the respondents were moderately satisfied. The results implied that service was a performance by an individual that was proposed by another person, where the better the service provided to the customer, the better customer's satisfaction and vice versa. Moreover, the attitudes and behaviors of the employees positively influenced the consumer's satisfaction and perception towards the food service operator. Researchers stated that

service quality and customer satisfaction are interconnected and it is one of the main factors affecting

2.2. Quality of food		
Taste of food	3.75	Moderately Satisfied
Temperature of the food	3.32	Satisfied
Freshness of ingredients	3.32	Satisfied
Presentation of the food	3.34	Satisfied
Creativity of the menu	3.17	Satisfied
Range of healthy options	3.34	Satisfied
Range of vegetarian options	3.34	Satisfied
The menu in general	3.44	Moderately Satisfied
The promo offer in general	3.47	Moderately Satisfied
Size of the portions	2.92	Satisfied
Total	3.33	Satisfied

consumer satisfaction. (Han et al., 2009)The total mean in terms of quality of food is 3.33 which showed that the respondents were satisfied. The results implied that food quality was ranked as the most essential factor affecting the consumer's satisfaction. Moreover, the consumer satisfaction on the food court was related to the food quality such as the freshness of ingredient, temperature, appearance, taste, smell etc. (Othman et al., 2012)

2.3. Ambiance, environment, sanitation and facilities of food court.		
Ambiance	3.18	Satisfied
Decoration	3.23	Satisfied
Temperature	2.98	Satisfied
Smell	3.04	Satisfied
Noise	2.91	Satisfied
Cleanliness	2.96	Satisfied
Privacy	3.09	Satisfied
Total	3.06	Satisfied

The total mean

in terms of ambiance, environment, sanitation, and facilities is 3.06 which showed that the respondents were satisfied. The results implied that atmosphere or ambient is the element that helps to enhance the school food service environment with the combination of attributes such as color, temperature, and odor. The ambiance of the food service was one of the most critical factors that led to consumer satisfaction. (Basera et al., 2013)

2.4. How do they describe the service offered by the staff?		
Convenience	3.39	Satisfied
Speed	3.21	Satisfied
Total	3.3	Satisfied
Overall Mean	3.30	Satisfied

The total mean in terms of service offered by the staff is 3.3 which show that the respondents were satisfied.

The results implied that the attitudes and behavior of the employees positively influenced the customer's satisfaction and perception towards the food service operator. (Han et al., 2009)

2.5. Pricing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very low priced	0	0
Low priced	7	5.83
Fair priced	37	30.84
Good priced	25	20.83
High priced	44	36.67
Don't know	7	5.83
Total	120	100

The table shows that most of the respondents answered "HIGH PRICED" with a percentage of 36.67. The results implied that price is one of the most crucial factors that affect the customer's buying behavior. The pricing perception of an individual must be examined to understand its effect on buying decisions. Price was defined as "which is given up in exchange to acquire food or service". It is the willingness of a consumer to pay for a product or service which interrelated to their price sensitivity and perception towards the price and perceived quality of an individual. It is crucial for the organization to set the right price for the products and services offered to the customers and the price that set by the organization must be able to look into the customer's perspective and the value perceived by customers. (Nasir et al 2014)

2.6. How would they rate the last visit at the food court in terms of value of money?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent value for money	0	0
Very good value of money	12	10
Good value for money	14	11.67
Fair value for know	21	17.5
Poor value for money	73	60.38
Total	120	100

The table shows that most of the respondents answered "Poor value for money". The results implied that it is crucial for the organization to set a right price for the products and services that offered to the customers and the price that set by the customer's perspective of price was generally from the concept of consumer rationality. Consumer rationality was the tendency of the consumer to purchase the products based on belief that it would benefit them. Some customers tend to judge the product quality based on the prices; higher price would

have high quality and lower price would perceive as low quality. (Nasir et al.,2014)

2.7. How likely would they be to speak positively about the food court to colleague?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely likely	0	0
Very likely	38	31.67
Fairly likely	62	51.67
Not very likely	8	6.66
Not at all likely	12	10
Total	120	100

The table shows that most of the respondents answered "Fairly likely". The results implied that a fair and reasonable price is the price point for a good or service that is fair to both parties involved in the transaction. (<https://searchchannel.techtarget.com/definition-fair-and-reasonable-price>)

3. Days of visit the food court.

Week	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	47	39.2
A few times a week	40	33.3
Once a week	33	27.5
Total	120	100

The respondents were asked by the researchers how many days would they often visit the food court it was evident that most of the respondents 39.2% answered "Everyday". The results implied that for the students who use the canteen regularly, the food purchased makes a significant contribution to their total food intake and nutrition, therefore it makes sense to ensure the best food possible is available to enhance their ability to learn and take in the information presented to them in class. (<http://www.role.of.the.school.canteen.in.contributing.to.a.health.promoting.school>)

4. When do they not use the food court, what is the main reason?

Problems	Percentage	Ranking
Distance	20.5	2
Service	6.67	6
Atmosphere	11.67	4
Quality	13.33	3
Price	36.67	1

Choice	11.16	5
Total	100	6

The respondents were asked by the researchers when they not use the food court. The main reason is the price. The results implied that the price perception of the customer should be examined in order to understand the customer's buying decision. The majority of the researchers agreed that the product value was highly related to the product price, whether or not the customers are willing to pay for the quality at a certain price. Specifically, when the customer perceived the price as reasonable, the product value would tend to increase and thus create customer satisfaction. (Nasir et al., 2014)

5. What are the problems encountered and solutions made?

The researchers asked the respondents if they encounter other problems besides pricing. Most of the respondents answered sanitation, due to the stray dogs and flies in the food court they might feel uncomfortable and probably lose their appetite. The respondents said that they should maintain cleanliness by preventing the dogs from inside the food court and insecticide to avoid an unsanitary environment. Other respondents said that they encountered problems related to the odor of the drainage because of its bad smell and it is not appropriate to eat seeing the uncovered drainage near the food stalls. They said that, in order to prevent the unpleasant smell of the drainage they should always keep it clean and covered. More also, they feel uncomfortable because of the crowded space and poor ventilation inside the food court which makes the consumers feel irritated and discomfort. The respondents said that they should provide proper ventilation and sufficient tables and chairs that will accommodate more consumers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to assess the consumers buying perception, to identify the reasons for not using the food court and to determine problems encountered by the consumers. This study identified five underlying factors of perception used in evaluating consumers' satisfaction. This five factors were (1) food services, (2) quality of food, (3) sanitation and facilities of the food court, (4) serviced offered by the staff and (5) pricing of food. As the result, researchers found that five factors which were worthy in evaluating consumers buying perception, (1) importance of the low prices, (2) paying attention to food hygiene practices and (3) size

of the portion of food. Moreover, the consumers' perceptions indicated that the low price is an important factor.

As the results of reasons for not using the food court price, distance and quality affects the consumers' satisfaction. It was found that pricing perception of an individual must be examined to understand its affect on the buying decisions. Also the distance factor makes it inconvenient for some consumers to visit the food court often and the food quality greatly affects the preference of the consumer.

This study provided valuable information to the administration and management of -BASC FPTCA food court related to the insight concerning the consumers buying perception. In addition, understanding the food service quality factors and satisfaction of consumers relative to buying perception is important to the food service operators in the food court. The management must understand that the important serviced quality factors of food services are the key to successful business and customer retention.

Recommendations

This study revealed the consumers' problems and complaints as presented in the preceding discussion. Based on previous findings and the conclusion of the study, the researchers formulated the following recommendations:

1. The food service operators should seek to improve the service quality. Moreover, the campus food service operators should develop a comprehensive employee training program, sanitation management programs, and food service guiding principles and best practices in order to maintain high food quality and a clean and attractive environment.
2. The management should seek reasonable prices and nutritional information as they represent key issues for increasing the consumers' spending patterns in the BASC FPTCA Food Court.
3. Campus operators and administrators need to understand the overall satisfaction base on the food service quality perception dimensions that could be an influencing factor to enhance the consumer's satisfaction level.
4. The management should observe proper hygiene and sanitation to maintain the cleanliness of the food court.

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