

**ANALYSIS ON A FASTFOOD CHAIN'S OFF – PREMISE CATERING
SERVICES**



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by

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the level of customer satisfaction regarding the off-premise catering services of a fast-food chain in Davao City. Specifically, this study endeavored to seek answer to the level of customer satisfaction regarding the off-premise catering services of McDonald's restaurant chain according to food quality, service, staff hygiene and delivery. Moreover, it attempted to measure the customers' satisfaction based on the duration (number of years) of operation and the location of each fast-food outlet. The researchers used descriptive method and formulated survey questionnaires as instrument to gather pertinent data from respondents. Results revealed that the level of customer satisfaction was very high in all indicators of the off-premise catering services of the fast-food outlets. Moreover, no significant difference was found between the customers' satisfaction and the fast-food outlet with its corresponding duration of operation and its location. Overall, the level of customers' satisfaction was very high. Based on these results, it was recommended that the fast-food chain's employees and staff must maintain food quality and service, preserve cleanliness and hygiene, and sustain the manner of food delivery so as to promote better business-to-consumer relationship.

KEYWORDS: *Satisfaction, Fastfood Chain, Off - premise Catering Services*

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to our parents for providing us financial and moral supports, for giving us all our needs from the time we started writing our papers and for teaching us that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. Secondly, to our helpful friends and to our mentors for their overflowing support and understanding. We humbly dedicated this work.

To the Divine Maker and author of Life.

J.P.J.
A.E.C
J.D.A

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Chapter I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Background of the Study

Globally, the increased demand by the international public for private function space outside of their own homes and businesses has led the catering segment of the foodservice sector of the hospitality industry to be a leader in the continued growth of both facilities and revenue (SMEDA-Sindh, 2007).

Businesses involving catering exist in a wide variety of formats, or styles in the Philippines as of today. The resolution to take part in off-premise catering requires a comprehensive assessment of a restaurant's assets (Alexander, 2014). Locally, catering restaurants can capitalize on local causes, holidays, sustainability issues and government-sponsored events. Based on an article by Sonnenshein (2013), restaurant owners can inspect the options by communicating with agencies of commerce, tourism groups, educational institutions or national charities.

As what the feasibility study conducted by SMEDA-Sindh (2007) had found out, the profit of an off-premise catering service depends on the marketing strategies, which include the location, menu, serving policy, etc., set by the managing owner. In Davao City, there are numerous restaurants and food establishment that have decided to engage in this style of business.

One of the urgent needs for an off-premise catering service is that it could avoid annoying long wait in lines at fast-food restaurants and dining halls, especially in those situations such as graduation and business conferences. This way, people could have a place to sit and relax without having to fall in line to order and wait almost an hour for the food. In addition to this, there are also off-

premise catering businesses that offer packages including various beverages which can be predominantly helpful to people who wants to throw a large party or even a wedding. Another advantage of off-premise catering is to avoid hassle in food preparation and venue restoration. In this way, the customer can have the quality time to enjoy the event (Aucoin, 2013). Consumers indicate that they often rely on party platters or catered foods for consumption on the day before a major holiday. Based on an article on Food Weekly News (2009), party platters with ready-to-eat meals are likeable and a big time-saving alternative compared to manual and personal cooking.

Based on these scenarios, the impact of a recessionary economy is leading catering programs in non-commercial food service in new directions, with many operators going back to the drawing board to meet their clients' demands for a wider variety of less expensive catering choices. In this case, the researchers of this study are prompted to set in detail the advantages of offering and/or availing this style of food service. This is also based on other studies that separate the advantages and benefits of off-premise catering from other commercial businesses.

Statement of the Problem

This research intended to determine the level of customers' satisfaction regarding the off-premise catering services of a fast food chain in Davao City. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of customer satisfaction regarding the off-premise catering services of fast food chains in Davao City in terms of:
 - 1.1. Food quality;

- 1.2. Service;
 - 1.3. Staff Hygiene; and
 - 1.4. Manner of delivery?
2. What is the level of customer satisfaction according to the location of fast-food outlet within Davao City?
 3. Is there a significant difference in the level of customer satisfaction on off-premise catering services based on fast food outlet and number of years of operation?

Hypothesis

This study was tested at 0.05 level of significance, as guided by the hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant difference between the fast food chains' off-premise catering services and its duration of operation and location when analyzed according to fast-food chain customer satisfaction.

Review of Related Literature

This chapter discusses the definition of off-premise catering and their benefits and disadvantages through excerpts from several related literature. This also provides information regarding the current state of the local economy with the corporate judgment of the food catering services available for customers.

Lang (2001) stated that many commercial food establishments are resorting into extra-income-generating business such as catering. Also, he claimed that this profit vehicle make perfect sense in many instances, allowing

the company/operator to better utilize existing resources, build sales, expand market share and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

By definition, catering includes the supply of prepared food and drink being served in a strategically formulated type of service. Apparently, there are numerous instances where these type of catering services are currently being established through different ways of supplying processes. For instance, there are supplies made in restaurants, refectories, small cafeterias and similar factories that deliver, except for supplies of frozen take-out food. Moreover, Lang (2001) stated that third-party supplies of catering services especially for important events, such as wedding receptions, and politically-reserved functions like closed-door official conferences. A catering service operator may also want to personally fund the cooking and/or food preparation to be provided to a customer and to be carefully delivered at the customer's home, for example for a dinner party.

A comprehensive survey conducted by Hertneky (1996) about food service processes and setups all over the nation show a sharp demand for off-premise catering. Operators of every catering-type businesses are innovating diverse trends to slowly uptake this endeavor by looking at their talented employees and work shy kitchens as bases for unexploited potential. In another survey by Hennessy (1995), he examined several successful catering operations of several restaurants in California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Cincinnati and Indiana, and found out that these establishments were vastly different, ranging from party consulting to full-service catering. Each has a signature food or service—something that sets them apart from (literally) a lot of supermarkets that started to bargain on selling holiday platter packages. Even while consumers are

slow to embrace catering, the trend of offering the service is growing. Even the most unlikely players are getting into the act. In all cases, the food service operations with the biggest gross sales have been offering catering the longest-proof that the big companies have been on to catering for years.

In addition to this, a full-automated catering department gives a company a marketing advantage that makes it easier to satisfy sophisticated techno-savvy members. Specialized software exists that can turn the catering department into a powerhouse. This type of technology is applicable for any type of catering style operation. Moreover, Hennessy (1995) emphasized that there are several softwares that could help assist the promotion of such business into the tech-savvy world and offer an array of options as to how the transaction can be made. At a good note, all systems come with instruction manuals, but even the software providers do not recommend to use them. However, the cost of automating is something to consider. The good news is that it saves doing paperwork, or avoid the disaster of double-booking a wedding reception, and either of these systems will have paid for itself.

Also, as the heat from competition continues to rise within the fine-dining community, Frumkin (2000) asserted that an increasing number of operators are firing up their on-premises private-party business to supplement a *la carte* sales. Private-party business can be very profitable and that is because an operator knows how many people he is going to serve and how much they are going to eat, less food is wasted.

Locally, according to Food Caterer's Association of the Philippines, most people plan to spend less financially in their special celebrations or parties in this contemporary time because of high-priced costs of living and additional taxes.

However, they still want to celebrate it to thank for their blessings and to prepare food for their guests or to share it with their loved ones. The budget intended for the catering services should be planned according to the needs and numbers of attendees because the expenses are costly, especially during wedding occasions. Filipinos want to be practical and at the same time, to save money and to stretch our resources at hand. In any occasions, caterers must be flexible to follow the wishes of their clients.

To elaborate on this type of catering business, off-premise catering is a typical catering event that starts with a small personal discussion or even an over-the-phone session with a potential client to evaluate the nature/theme of event, number of visitors/guest, specific venue, and special food requests. The client may want the caterer to also communicate and organize facility rental, props and flowers, entertainment equipment, and photography. The caterer formulates various proposals and generates a detailed list of menu, beverages, choices for rental needs, special necessities, and a thorough price quote. After the client accepts a proposal, recurrent communications with the client are kept until the event come about. In this manner, several food service providers experienced increasing—which includes restaurants, grocery stores and big-box clubs - by growing 12% in 2013, while quick-service catering sales are predicted to grow 8% this year. (National Restaurant Association)

Based on the literature written by Coomes (2013), off-premise foodservice sales continue gradual recovery in the foreign economy, but many chains are reporting surges in off-premise catering sales, fuelled by revived corporate spending and cost-conscious consumers looking to trade down from more

expensive options. At the same time, catering is proving to be a bright spot for several chains in the struggling casual-dining segment.

To succeed in the field of off-premise catering today, a catering professional needs much more than just exceptional culinary talent. According to the book published by Shock, Stefanelli and Sgovio (2013), a catering service, in collaboration with the company employees and stockholders, must construct detailed information containing step-by-step processes on how to setup the development and pricing of a certain function space and working with mediators and contractors. On the broad side, off-premise catering has a need of essential knowledge starting off with the basics of accounting and marketing, down to multicultural etiquette and management skills.

Talking about the social side, things are changing for the off-premise catering as what caterers would agree on. Instead of formal, stylized, sit-down dinners with prime rib as the entree, wedding receptions tend toward four- and five-hour buffets. The reasons are generally that these allow more time for dancing and socializing and the guests are free to eat when and as much as they choose. Also, second weddings—and there are more every week—tend to be less formal (Fegan, 1989).

Off-premise catering is one of the leading commercial sectors with a fast-growing potential on food and hospitality service trade. In line with this, off-premises caterers organize blow-out halls and gazebo hotels by commanding the majority of the special-event shops—but not dominating it. Several researchers including Kasavana (1991), Courtney (1987) and Fegan (1989) believed that off-premise catering is making a loud noise in the business world. Restaurants that are delving into catering and off-premise services might want to

look into the specific software that is focused on the hard-to-defy challenges of feast-like occasions, reserved parties, and home delivery services.

Basically nowadays, proposals regarding off-premise catering services involving detailed stages of planning and execution, there is a dire need to launch appropriate computer software to ease the progress of each procedural step. Catering software files created by computer contractors are useful in performing functions similar to traditional restaurant management applications. This is the ultimate target of a multi-outlet home delivery network, which is able to provide a center that are connected to remote production and delivery agencies for order-taking. With the advanced technology assistance, sooner or later, off-premise catering service will likely be just one click of a button away (Kasavana, 2001).

As Fegan (1989) has claimed that catering manner falls into three classifications: On-premises, off-premises and gourmet-to-go, backed up by a growing support industry. Sometimes they overlap in what they can provide, but mostly each stays within its own niche. He directly considered what experts call "off-premise", which is most useful during a launch a new product, or celebrating a mall opening. He also commented that today's on-the-job business meeting may be a catered corporate breakfast or seminar with lunch from the same source. If there's something to celebrate, a special-events firm designs and produces the party.

But Duecy (2005) claimed that beyond irate clients, off-site catering can encounter a chain of highly-demanding operational obstacles. To overcome these challenges, restaurants are strategically upgrading their businesses by offering special package deals for private group events. Moreover, Brandau

(2009) also commented that off-premise catering is actually bringing the restaurant into every event.

In an article published by Mealey (2013), it stated that more and more restaurant owners are reaching beyond their dining rooms to bring in business, by catering. It has become rampant—the off-premise catering—that many food chains have almost the same techniques. She emphasized that privatization of restaurants increases sales by catering made-to-order meals and theme-requested parties. The type of occasion may also vary from large functions such as weddings and holiday parties, and even business conferences. On the other end, off-premise catering is another venue of fast-foodcommerce that remains to develop.

Customers calling an off-premise caterer are looking mainly for food. Off-premise caterers often have difficulty obtaining deposits and final payments. Along the side note, Ramseyer (2002) and Roman (2012) proposed that it would be better off for many restaurants to provide some form of banquets, even on a restrictedrange, but that does not mean it is easy. Always put in mind that serving large groups on off-premise presents extraordinary challenges. Operationally, the most crucialconcern is food preparation, as emphasized by Ramseyer (2002). Challenges aside, most restaurant operators approve that as long as off-premise catering service has a tempting and moneymaking upside. However, newcomers to this kind of business must be able to err for caution of inevitable errors. Since off-premise customers want to negotiatewith the price to cut down by small discounts, off-premise caterers must trade in their list of service options and consider the exceptionsinvolving public or private venue.

In the most appropriate catering business, five pillars are required to fast-track any successful restaurant catering operation, whether in one or in a thousand locations in the world: Leadership, Centralized Services, Sales and Marketing, Operations and Delivery (Dardick, 2012).

By looking at how off-premise catering works, there are some key requirements that need to be focused upon. One essential key is business leadership. This is crucial as in any business, which needs to have an expert person encouraging the upholding of the mission and vision of the catering services being offered to the consumer. In the long run, the leader must then be supported by the overall company and managing stakeholders engaging and aligned with catering business. This could be a good part of the overall strategic plan for the company. The second key requirement is a cultural shift, and in this likelihood that centralized services must be in contact and be controlled by the restaurant leader. This can also lead the employees and staff to focus on correct protocol on order execution from food preparation, cooking, plate and assembly, polishing and distribution. As stated in this paragraph, Dardick (2012) also emphasized that food delivery is the last key requirement in the venture to off-premise catering business. Since delivery adds a unique twist into the daily transaction cycle, it somehow relieves stress from the repetitive routine and lessens the complexity and speed of service. It is also on the manner of product delivery to customers that will make or break a catering service program.

Catering business, as described by Ramsey (2008), is growing across all sectors, and one reason is that operators are diversifying their catering options by turning to delivery and/or pick-up catering services. "One of the biggest trends lately is off-premises dining," Rebecca Killarney said in an interview with Keegan

(1994). She insisted that one strategy constructed by one corporation was to have service that stipulates orders made a day in advance, and delivery must be available on bulk orders. Special packaging, such as heat-and-cold-resistant containers and thermo-stable bins, had been designed to keep the food warm and fresh while they are being delivered. Geoff Alexander, a restaurateur, said that much larger average size of delivery and catering orders occur compared with in-restaurant transactions. In his dialogue with Liddle (2011), Geoff Alexander claims that he typically makes more than three times the profit on delivery orders, even after paying bicycle delivery riders to transport food to customers. Clearly, the manner of delivery for an off-premise catering service is an essential factor to its profit.

In line with this, an article written by Sheridan (2003) which involved Laurel Cudden claiming that cleanliness entails good food, and that the must-haves for kitchen staff are gloves, goggles, facemasks, hair restraints and slip-proof shoes. She explained that food safety is about cleanliness, personal hygiene and proper temperatures. According to Doty (2005), employee education, sanitary kitchen and preparation environments, hand hygiene, proper food holding and cooking temperatures are all potential areas of focus for operators addressing food safety concerns in their facilities. Special training plan for each operation, with customized checklists for every employee, is vital. To quote Nicolas Granucci, VicePresident of Food Service Marketing, (Ecolab, 2011), "Understanding and anticipating consumer preferences is vital to our customers' success; hence cleanliness is very important to restaurant guests."

In a survey conducted by Hertzman (2007) and Barrash (2007), they found out that hand washing violations occurred much more often at the off-

premise functions. It has been observed that service staff not wearing gloves when working with ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. This leads to food contamination, and eventually causes bacterial diseases, which is one of the most unwanted issues of restaurateur. When discerning the food preparation, the most frequent violation was transferring food to holding equipment without checking its temperature. It is important to maintain optimum temperature that is required for special kinds of food to be delivered. Performing proper food safety practices before delivery is very essential so as to make sure the quality of food is preserved. One reason of forgetting the said practices is that may be the employees were so busy trying to complete basic food preparation and provide off-premise service, either consciously or subconsciously, not to follow proper food safety and sanitation practices.

Green and Selman (2005) also found that there were a number of factors that impacted food-service employees' ability to prepare food safely, including time pressure; equipment and resource availability; food safety emphasis by management and co-workers; and food safety education and training.

Improvements in food quality and service, especially at fast-casual and fast-food chains, appear to be a significant factor in restaurants' recent gains with catering. People have more money to spend now and are demanding a variety of food services (Phelps, 1993). As what Diane McHugh said in interview with Frawley (1988), corporate clients enjoy the flexibility offered by caterers, both in price and the services offered. Menus run from the standard fare to elaborate, and generally the only barrier is price. Furthermore, "You have to make them proud, (because) the service reflects on the corporation," she said.

According to Frawley (1988), catering is a service; it's more than just a matter of moving food around. Caterers don't believe, however, that that is any reason to pass a potential customer by. Especially since the trend seems to be that corporate clients tend to return again and again to the same caterer for service -- if the service is good. Although price is always a factor, the level of service seems to be the main indicator of which ones will succeed and which will even survive in the catering business.

Not only food quality, cleanliness and staff hygiene would do the trick of the off-premise catering trade, Steve Jones (President of the 125-room Quality Inn King's Grant Hotel in Danvers, MA), said in an interview with Wolff (1992) that people are looking for something a little different, like theme parties and theme menus. Also, Wolff (1992) noted that one would still have to talk budget, but service is high on the list, too. And, of course, it varies whether you're talking about a private function or a corporate function. So service is the key; and so is marketing.

Overall, the catering consensus is that growth is occurring in the industry, but it is happening at a simmering pace. No one can predict when another boom will occur as in the past decade. The focus is to provide quality food and services under budget constraints and wait until the economy starts cooking again. Lockyer (2004) has claimed that restaurateurs' heightened outlook for increased capital spending and their ever-present need for additional profit streams are building expectations that off-premise catering service is positioned to surge as a new or expanding profit center.

Not only do these fast-food chains' income that is skyrocketing, but also of the knowledge people gain from the factors that are related to customers'

demands, most especially in the line of food quality, service, manner of delivery, staff hygiene and cleanliness of preparation area. Indeed, indication of greater-than-before off-premises sales is largely circumstantial. Many companies here in the Philippines, especially those renowned fast-food chains, have started to delve into the perimeter of off-premise catering services, that they now combine catering sales with total restaurant sales. And by far, the results are staggering.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Catering operations are generally one of the more complex components of a venue's activities. It is estimated that only 15% to 30% of restaurant, hotel and club catering operations are profitable. A successful catering department requires the effective management of everything from price and portion size to marketing and human resources. In a theory presented by Ceserani, Kinton (2007) and Foskett (2012), it presented an overview of the hospitality industry, including current business trends and influences, as well as up-to-date information on products and menus. There is also an expounded explanation on concepts such as kitchen planning and design, nutrition and hygiene, marketing and pricing and supervisory skills.

The benefit of a successful catering operation is that it not only brings in profits from the catering department, it also serves to enhance other areas of the business. However, Taylor and Forte (2008) said that these are simply artefacts of a food safety management system, not the system itself. The perception on the part of the operations is that take-out food will not be as good as in the restaurant. To quote Farkas (1996), "I believe expectations are different when it comes to take-out." Thus, the notion of getting off-premise catering services as part of the standard operations will only be dependent on the level of customer satisfaction.

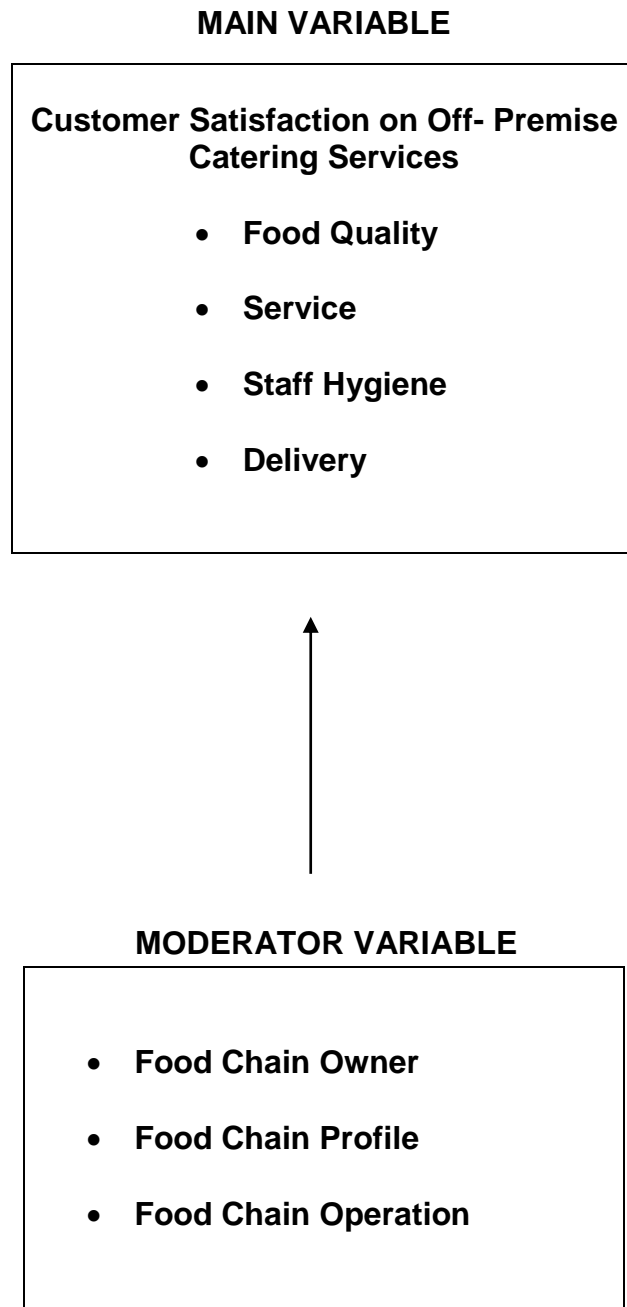


Figure 1. The conceptual framework showing the variables of the study

The result of the study may be useful to the following beneficiaries:

Fast-food Chain. It would help the establishment to determine the market according to social status of the society. They could acquire new ideas and thus improve the image of the catering establishment and providing good services. As a result, fast-food chains in Davao City would become competitive as part of the hospitality business.

Consumers. It would help consumers, and loyal customers and guests of these fast-food restaurants, by having information and idea of choosing a good budget catering services at a very affordable and/or reasonable price.

Future Researchers. It would provide reference for conducting another research that will help answer problems that may arise regarding this study. And from the study, a door will be opened for further discussion and evaluation of the presence of the catering flow of organization.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in the study are defined conceptually and operationally for common understanding of concepts.

Catering Services. Conceptually, it is the activity of providing food and beverage for events (Hard, 2014); Operationally, it provides food for a full range of events through tasks of planning, organizing, controlling and executing.

Customer satisfaction. Conceptually, this is the act of doing enough to be acceptable to a customer by his/her meeting basic expectations (Jacques, 2010); Operationally, it is the aspect at which the particular fast-food chain restaurant is able to meet through their service, food quality, manner of delivery and staff hygiene and cleanliness.

Fast-food restaurant. Conceptually, it is an establishment that produces food very quickly making people not to wait for a long time. (Antonsson, Engstrom, and Verbus, 2011); Operationally, it is a local establishment that offers off-premise catering service.

Off-premise catering. Conceptually, it is a way of bringing the food to the customer, either in their home or at another location that doesn't serve food (Mealey, 2013); Operationally, it is restaurant service that provides quality food services through efficient delivery to the customers by hygienic staff and standard maintenance.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

This chapter encompasses the discussion of the research design, respondents, research instrument, data gathering procedure, and statistical treatment of the data.

Research Design

This research was designed to use the descriptive survey research, wherein a collection and analysis of responses of large samples of people (population) were intended to elicit their opinions and attitudes about a specific topic. This research design secures uniform but superficial information about a much larger portion of the population. Survey studies assess the characteristics of whole populations of people or situations (Key, 1997). Moreover, survey research usually does not take into account the complex structure of relations and interactions among individuals that shapes their social behaviour.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the walk-in customers of McDonald's. There were one hundred (100) customers respondents who participated in the answering of the questionnaire was designed questionnaire which was designed to determine the level of customer satisfaction regarding an establishment with off-premise services.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used was in the form of questionnaire. The construction of questions was based on the research variables. The

questionnaire has four parts, equal to a profile indicator, wherein each part is based on Likert scale for interpretation.

In interpreting the level of overall customer satisfaction, the following scale was used:

Numerical Rating	Adjectival Rating	Description
4.50 – 5.00	Very High	This indicates that the customer feels very satisfied, and the establishment fulfilled the expectations at the highest note.
3.50 – 4.49	High	This indicates that the establishment has met the customer's expectations and needs as much as possible, remarkable but not outstanding.
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate	This indicates that the establishment has basic knowledge in meeting the customer's satisfaction in an acceptable way.
1.50 – 2.49	Low	This indicates that the establishment needs enhancement in skills and content knowledge in customer satisfaction.
1 – 1.49	Very Low	This indicates that the customer was not satisfied and the establishment performed below par.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers observed the following steps in the conduct of the study:

1. The researchers forwarded a letter asking permission to the respective managers/owners of a particular fast-food chain in Davao City. These letters specifically sought approval to conduct a survey regarding the establishment's off-premise catering services.
2. Upon approval, the researchers proceeded in administering the questionnaires to the respondents, as well as explaining to them the purpose of this study.
3. The questionnaires were then retrieved by the researchers after the respondents have answered them.
4. Collected data were collated and tallied for further tabulation. Then, the tabulated data were consolidated for computation.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used to treat the data of this study:

Mean. This was used to determine the satisfaction level of clients or customers on having off- premise catering services in a fast-food chain.

One-Way ANOVA. This was used to determine the significant of difference on the off-premise catering services of a fast-food chain to its duration of operation and location.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the results of the survey. Discussions of topics are arranged in the following subheadings: Interpretation of Level of Customer Satisfaction; Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction on Off-Premise Catering Based on Fast-Food Outlet Location; and Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction on Off-Premise Catering When Analyzed According to Years of Operation. The data on fast-food branches and respondent profile are shown in tables. To illustrate, tables are used to easily differentiate the mentioned profiles. Further, the data were examined based on the corresponding description and interpretation.

Interpretation of Level of Customer Satisfaction

Table 1 presents the level of customer satisfaction. According to the customers, food was cooked to doneness which garnered a mean of 4.93, followed by availability of side dishes with 4.88 and food being tasty and flavorful with 4.86. Also, customers thought that food portion was enough and beverages/drinks were served chilled, which both obtained 4.85 mean. Lastly, food arrived hot and fresh obtained a mean of 4.84. Overall, food quality has very high customer satisfaction at a mean of 4.92. **This implies that the customer who have experienced off premise catering services were highly satisfied with the food of the establishment**

The next indicator was service, and customers felt that complaints/queries were addressed immediately by the staff and garnered a mean of 4.90. This was followed by friendliness and courtesy of employees, priority for special persons, and management of irate customers, which all obtained a mean of 4.87. Also,

customers thought that price value was reasonable and that employees obtained orders correctly, hence both garnered a mean of 4.86. Lastly, employees spoke clearly with 4.82. Nonetheless, customer satisfaction regarding the fast food service was very high at 4.86. **This shows that the service staff or crew have rendered an extremely satisfactory services to the customers' which exceeded their expectation.**

In terms of staff hygiene and cleanliness, customers observed that the staff always wash and/or disinfect their hands before handling the food, and this obtained the highest mean at 4.93, followed by the staff having short and clean fingernails and avoiding sneezing and coughing while handling food, which both obtained means of 4.92. Also, customers observed that staff wore minimal jewellery, and have proper haircut with 4.91, and 4.88 respectively. Overall, the staff hygiene and cleanliness garnered a mean of 4.92, which meant a very high customer satisfaction. **This implies that food safety and sanitation is one of the factors that influence the overall satisfaction of customers' on off premise catering.**

The last indicator was the manner of delivery. The highest mean was garnered by unpacking, unloading and returning were done by the loading staff with 4.94, followed by the reasonable price/cost of delivery with 4.93 customers being properly managed and guided (e.g. falling in line) during food service and provision of entertainment (live band, music sound system, party games, etc.) both with 4.90. Moreover, customers observed that the ordered food arrived hot and/or fresh, and that the number of personnel was sufficient, both obtained means of 4.89. Lastly, table setting and serving were done by serving staff only and the delivery of food was prompt and on time, both have a mean of 4.87. The

overall mean of customer satisfaction of delivery system was very high at 4.88. This shows that the manner of food delivery—from packing, maintaining temperature during transportation, and unloading—has influenced the overall satisfaction of customers.

With the research done by Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Johnson, Anderson, and Fornell (1995), they found out that customer satisfaction is likely to be perceived as the overall evaluation a customer based on purchase and consumption experience of a good or service. In addition Zithanml (1987), perceived quality refers to consumer's judgment about how well the product or service is accepted by the public. Furthermore, researchers, Rust and Oliver (1994), agreed that satisfaction and perceived quality were two of the most fundamental elements in effective service management.

In off-premise services, it is best to captivate customers and clients by observing proper execution, as well as appropriate attitude/behavior of the employees towards customers. In this way, the overall package can be subjectively seen as a reliable and responsive service, competent employees are important attributes in contributing to the high satisfaction of diners. As studied by Namkung and Soocheong (2008), they found that it is basic to have appealing food presentation as shown in plating and food polishing. Aside from aesthetic aspect, the next best thing to focus on is taste, which must uphold the reputation of its physical presentation.

Table 1
Level of Customer Satisfaction

INDICATORS	MEAN	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
FOOD QUALITY		
1. Food is cooked to doneness.	4.93	Very High
2. Food is served on time.	4.81	Very High
3. Food arrived hot and/or fresh.	4.84	Very High
4. Food is tasty and flavorful.	4.86	Very High
5. Food portion is enough.	4.85	Very High
6. Beverage/drinks are served chilled.	4.85	Very High
7. Side dishes are available.	4.88	Very High
8. Overall quality of food.	4.92	Very High
SERVICE		
1. Employees speak clearly.	4.82	Very High
2. Employees are friendly and courteous.	4.87	Very High
3. Ordered food was correct and complete.	4.86	Very High
4. Price value is money-wise and/or reasonable.	4.86	Very High
5. Special persons (disabled, pregnant, senior citizens) are prioritized.	4.87	Very High
6. Irate customers are handled properly.	4.87	Very High
7. Complaints/queries are addressed immediately by the staff.	4.90	Very High
8. Overall service.	4.86	Very High
STAFF HYGIENE		
1. Staff/personnel have proper haircut, with those who have longer hair are covered and tied back.	4.88	Very High
2. Staff/personnel wear minimal jewellery.	4.91	Very High
3. Staff/personnel have short clean fingernails.	4.92	Very High
4. Staff/personnel always wash/disinfect hands before handling food.	4.93	Very High
5. Staff/personnel refrain from sneezing and smoking while handling food.	4.92	Very High
6. Overall staff hygiene.	4.92	Very High
DELIVERY		
1. Delivery is prompt and on-time.	4.84	Very High
2. Ordered food arrived hot and/or fresh.	4.89	Very High
3. Price/cost of delivery is reasonable.	4.93	Very High
4. Number of personnel is sufficient.	4.89	Very High
5. Unpacking, unloading and returning are done by the loading staff.	4.94	Very High
6. Table-setting and serving are done by the serving staff.	4.87	Very High
7. Customers are properly managed and guided (e.g. fall in line) during food service	4.90	Very High
8. Entertainment (live band, music sound system, party games, etc.) is provided.	4.90	Very High
9. Overall delivery system.	4.88	Very High

Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction on Off-Premise Catering Based on Fast-Food Outlet Location

Table 2 displays the significant difference between the level of customer satisfaction on off-premise catering based on fast-food outlet location. Shown in the table were the fast-food outlets, with the corresponding number of respondents, and were identified as follows: McDonald's Bolton and Sta. Ana both with 20 respondents, SM Ecoland and Damosa branch both with 30 respondents. According to the customers, McDonald's Bolton has the highest rate at 4.93, followed by Sta. Ana, SM Ecoland and Damosa at 4.91, 4.83, and 4.78 respectively. With an average rate of 4.861, the location of each fast-food outlet has no implication to the customer satisfaction. Moreover, with a high computed F-value at 1.18 and P-value at 0.323, it shows that there is no significant difference between the fast-food outlets' location and the customer satisfaction on their off-premise catering services. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Based on the results, customer satisfaction level is still high, regardless of the location of the fast-food outlet. Consumers claim that fast service is less important than the convenience of getting to the restaurant, as what Kasdan (1996) had surveyed. Moreover, it concluded that a convenient location for a good and decent meal is the most prominent influence in their choice of fast-food restaurants. According to Fraser, Edwards, Cade, and Clarke, (2010), the location of fast-food outlets and therefore the availability of such foods to the population has been a recent research interest.

Since Davao City is such a crowded place—literally strewn with buildings to live, to enjoy, to sleep, and to dine in—and some catering establishment came

up with strategies to sell their products to the customers. With very high incidence of competition among other food establishment in the area, McDonald's examines optimal product positioning strategies of asymmetric firms in the context of retail outlet locations in the fast food industry (Thomadsen, 2007). If the market location is extensive enough, almost all restaurants will decide to locate on opposite sides of the market. In that case, McDonald's will locate closer to the center of the market than other competing fast-food chains. Mazzeo (2002) and Seim (2006) show that competing restaurants (e.g. McDonald's, Burger King, etc.) try to innovate and differentiate themselves for the distinction by their customers and soften price competition as well.

Table 2
Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction
on Off-Premise Catering Based on
Fast-Food Outlet Location

FASTFOOD LOCATION	No. of Respondents	Mean	Computed F-value	P-Value $\alpha = 0.05$	Decision on H_0
Bolton	20	4.93			
Sta. Ana	20	4.91			
SM Ecoland	30	4.83	1.18	0.32	ACCEPTED
Damosa	30	4.78			
Average		4.86			

Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction on Off-Premise Catering When Analyzed According to Years of Operation

Table 3 displays the significant difference between the fast-food chain's off-premise catering services and the number of years of operation. In terms of length of operation, the Bolton outlet has just begun operating at about 3 months, followed by Sta. Ana outlet at one year, SM Ecoland at three years, and lastly the longest operational outlet is Damosa at eight years. Consequently, Damosa outlet garnered the highest customer satisfaction at an astounding 4.93, followed by Bolton outlet at 4.90, SM Ecoland at 4.85, and lastly Sta. Ana at 4.85. With a high computed F-value at 0.64 and P-value at 0.59, there is no significant difference between the fast-food outlets' duration of operation and the customer satisfaction on their off-premise catering services. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. **This shows that the length of operation of the establishment does not affect its efficiency and capacity to do so. In other words, customers definitely trust the renowned service that the fast-food chain has offered through time.**

The interaction between customer and food-service provider can have a significant impression on evaluations of a restaurant service. It is best for the restaurant managers to meet the expectations of their loyal customers by maintaining and sustaining the kind of service they offer. Although empathy is vital to be integrated in restaurant services, as well as reliability, responsiveness, and competency, it has been found that the insurance of high consumer satisfaction is not based on the number of years the restaurant has been operating. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), reliability refers to the ability to implement and cleanly execute the guaranteed services exactly. Also, they defined responsiveness as the willingness to help customers, especially the physically-challenged persons (people with disabilities, pregnant

woman, and senior citizens) and provide prompt service. To define furthermore, assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees, as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence. In addition, empathy refers to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers.

By analyzing the mentioned values and their consistent description, it has been found out that there is no significant difference between the level of satisfaction and respondent profile to fast-food outlet duration of operation. Customer satisfaction was not perceived from the fast-food restaurants' "age", but on their quality service.

Table 3

**Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction
on Off-Premise Catering When Analyzed According To
Years of Operation**

FASTFOOD OUTLET	Years of Operation	Mean	Computed F-value	P-Value $\alpha = 0.05$	Decision on H_0
Bolton	0.25	4.90			
Sta. Ana	1	4.85			
SM Ecoland	3	4.85	0.64	0.59	ACCEPTED
Damosa	8	4.93			
Average		4.88			

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendation drawn by the researchers based on the obtained results.

Summary

This study aimed to determine the level of customer satisfaction regarding the off-premise catering service of fast-food chain in Davao City. It was also conducted to identify the significant difference between the customer satisfaction and the fast-food chain's outlets with their corresponding length of operation.

The findings of the study were as follows:

1. All indicators (food quality, service, staff hygiene, and delivery) of the off-premise catering service garnered means above the 4.5 to 5.0 range which means very high;
2. Customer satisfaction on off-premise catering service was very high at 4.88 and 4.86 based on the years of operation of the fast-food outlets and on the location of the fast-food outlets, respectively; and
3. Test of significant difference on fast-food outlets' years of operation and location obtained F-values and p-values at 0.64 and 1.18, and 0.59 and 0.32, respectively.

Conclusion

According to the outcome of the study, the following conclusions were agreed:

1. The overall customer satisfaction on the fast-food chain's off-premise catering service is very high;

2. There is no significant difference between the fast food chains' off-premise catering services and location; and
3. There is no significant difference between the fast food chains' off-premise catering services and its duration of operation.

Recommendations

Based on the result of this research, the following recommendations were formulated:

1. The establishment should create bundle treats and discounts for loyal customers so as to promote better business-to-consumer relationship;
2. Staff and personnel must maintain food quality and service, preserve cleanliness and hygiene, and sustain the manner of food delivery; and
3. For the future researchers, they should also consider the on-premise service of the fast-food chain, and compare it to the performance of off-premise service. Moreover, they should also accentuate the attributes of highly-satisfied and the unsatisfied customers.

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