

Assessing Cleanliness Standards: A Study on Food Hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City from the Perspective of Consumers

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Abstract— This study investigates the hygiene regulations of selected food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City, as perceived by consumers. The research aims to reveal the present condition of hygiene procedures in these facilities by conducting thorough surveys and interviews with local clients. The objective is to identify prevalent problems and areas requiring enhancement by assessing consumer satisfaction levels with regards to cleanliness. The study also evaluates the influence of cleanliness on consumer behavior, preferences, and overall eating experience, offering a comprehensive understanding of the importance of sanitation in the food service business. The results are expected to provide significant knowledge for food hub operators, emphasizing the crucial importance of cleanliness in attracting and keeping customers. This research highlights the significance of upholding stringent cleanliness standards and provides a roadmap for ongoing enhancement in food service operations in Saranay, Caloocan City.

Keywords— Cleanliness Standard, Food Hubs, Consumer Perspective, Customer Service.

I. INTRODUCTION

The level of cleanliness in food service establishments is a crucial determinant of consumer behavior, satisfaction, and public health in general. Food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City play a crucial role as essential community gathering places, providing a diverse range of culinary experiences. Nevertheless, the sanitation standards in these food establishments have been questioned, necessitating a comprehensive evaluation.

This study seeks to investigate the hygiene standards of selected food establishments in Saranay from the viewpoint of consumers, offering useful insights into existing practices and opportunities for enhancement. The food and beverage industry is a dynamic and rapidly evolving sector characterized by intense rivalry.

Restaurants play a crucial role in the industry, and it is essential for them to provide nutritional and delicious meals while maintaining high standards of hygiene. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of satisfaction or discontent on customers' intentions to complain about a restaurant or revisit it. Specifically, we intend to determine the extent to which cleanliness criteria influence customers' level of satisfaction (Taştan, H., & Soyulu, A. G., 2023).

The incidence of foodborne illnesses is consistently underestimated, therefore it is imperative to explore unconventional methods and procedures to detect food

safety issues that may result in outbreaks. This concept holds particular significance within the food service business due to the fact that 61% of all instances of foodborne illness outbreaks may be traced back to restaurants. The primary objective of our study was to employ data mining techniques to evaluate customer-generated restaurant evaluations on an online review platform and determine the frequency at which restaurant guests mention specific terms pertaining to foodborne disease and the cleanliness of the establishment (Hodges, J. R., Lee, M., Defranco, A., & Sirsat, S. A., 2022).

The significance of upholding rigorous cleaning standards in food service environments cannot be exaggerated. The level of cleanliness in a food hub has a direct impact on the health and safety of its customers, in addition to its visual appeal. Inadequate hygiene practices can result in the transmission of foodborne diseases, which can have a detrimental impact on consumer confidence and the establishment's reputation.

Hence, it is imperative for food hub operators to comprehend consumer views of cleanliness in order to improve their service quality and secure client loyalty. This study utilizes a quantitative methodology to collect extensive data from local clients.

The surveys seek to measure consumer satisfaction levels about the hygiene of food hubs, while the

interviews offer more in-depth insights into specific issues and expectations. The research aims to analyze this data in order to identify prevalent hygiene issues, evaluate their influence on consumer behavior, and emphasize the significance of cleanliness in the food service sector.

This study's findings are anticipated to provide practical suggestions for selected food hub operators in Saranay, Caloocan City. By synchronizing their hygiene protocols with consumer expectations, these institutions can enhance their overall service quality, allure a larger customer base, and cultivate a devoted clientele. In the end, this research highlights the crucial importance of cleanliness in food hubs, underlining the necessity for ongoing enhancement and strict adherence to rigorous sanitation standards to guarantee the health and contentment of consumers.

Statement of the Problem

The food hubs located in Saranay, Caloocan City play an essential part in the local community by providing a diverse array of dining options. Nevertheless, there is a mounting apprehension regarding the level of hygiene upheld by these institutions. Poor cleanliness practices can result in significant health hazards, impact consumer satisfaction, and harm the reputation of these food establishments. This study seeks to fill this need by evaluating the hygiene standards of food hubs in Saranay from the standpoint of consumers, finding common problems, and offering practical suggestions for enhancement with these following question:

- What are the current cleanliness standards of food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City as perceived by consumers?
- How do cleanliness standards in food hubs impact consumer satisfaction and dining behavior in Saranay, Caloocan City?
- What specific areas of hygiene practices in food hubs require improvement according to consumer data?

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research methodology to evaluate the cleanliness standards of food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City, as perceived by consumers. The quantitative approach enables the methodical gathering and examination of numerical data to detect patterns, correlations, and trends in consumer attitudes about cleanliness practices in these facilities.

The study will employ purposive sampling to recruit participants. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting persons for a study based on their likelihood of providing valuable and meaningful information that is relevant to the research goals. It is a non-probability sampling methodology. The target participants in this study are frequent customers of food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City. These individuals are ideal for providing precise evaluations of the cleanliness standards due to their repeated visits to these establishments.

Research Locale and Respondents of the Study

The study will be undertaken out in Saranay, Caloocan City, Philippines, with a specific focus on selected food establishments in the area. The participants will mostly consist of frequent customers of these food hubs who are well-acquainted with the hygiene regulations of these enterprises. The selection criteria will prioritize variety in age, gender, and socioeconomic background in order to encompass a wide range of customer opinions. The method of purposive sampling will be used to select participants who are both willing and capable of providing extensive feedback using structured questionnaires. This will enable a thorough evaluation of hygienic standards at Saranay's food hubs.

Data Collection

Data will be gathered by administering standardized questionnaires to consumers at selected food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City. The survey will comprise of closed-ended inquiries specifically formulated to gather quantitative information regarding consumer perceptions and contentment with the cleaning standards of these facilities. The primary areas of emphasis will encompass the sanitation of dining areas, restrooms, cooking facilities, and the general hygiene habits of the workforce.

Ethical Consideration

The research data gathering procedure will strictly adhere to ethical standards. Participants will get information regarding the research's objective, their entitlement to withdraw at any point, and the confidentiality of their answers. Prior to completing the questionnaire, all participants will be required to provide informed consent.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data obtained from the study evaluating cleanliness standards in the selected food establishments of Saranay, Caloocan City will undergo statistical analysis using a 4-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics will be

used to summarize the frequency and distribution of responses across categories that range from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Dissatisfied." The researchers used weighted mean and it will be computed to offer an

overview of customer attitudes regarding cleanliness and impact of consumer satisfaction and dining behavior in Saranay, Caloocan City.

III. RESULT

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Respondents Demographic Profile	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	29	45%
Female	36	55%
Age		
18-24	33	51%
25-34	24	37%
35-44	6	9%
45-54	2	3%
Monthly Income		
Less than 9,100	21	32%
9,100 to 18,200	38	58%
18,201 to 36,400	3	5%
36,401 to 63,700	3	5%
Frequency of dining out per month:		
Frequently	11	17%
Occasionally	38	58%
Rarely	16	25%

The table above shows the profile of 65 respondents. In terms of Sex, Female has the higher frequency of 36 with a relative frequency of 55% while Male has the lower frequency of 29 with a relative frequency of 45%, while in terms of respondents age 18-24 has the higher frequency of 33 with a relative frequency of 51%, second is 25-34 has the frequency of 24 with a relative frequency of 37%, third is 35-44 has the frequency of 6 with a relative frequency of 9%, and Lastly 45-54 age group has the lowest frequency of 2 with a relative frequency of 3%. In terms of Travel Frequency, rarely travelers has the highest frequency of 32 with a relative frequency of 64%, while Occasionally travelers has frequency of 16 with a relative frequency of 32%, lastly

Frequently travelers has the lowest frequency of 2 with a relative frequency of 4%. In terms of Monthly Income, 9,100 to 18,200 has the highest frequency of 38 with a relative frequency of 58%, while Less than 9,100 has frequency of 21 with a relative frequency of 32%, lastly 18,201 to 36,400 and 36,401 to 63,700 has the lowest frequency of 3 with a relative frequency of 5%. In terms of customer's frequency of dining out per month, customers who visited Saranay food hub occasionally has the highest frequency of 38 with a relative frequency of 58%, while rarely has frequency of 16 with a relative frequency of 25%, lastly frequently customers who visited the food park has the lowest number of frequency with 11 and a relative frequency of 17%.

Table 2. Current cleanliness standards, impacts and improvements of food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City as perceived by consumers

Survey Item	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Section 1: Current Cleanliness Standards		
Q1: Overall cleanliness rating	3.30	Satisfied
Q2: Cleanliness of washrooms and dining areas	3.28	Satisfied
Q3: Cleanliness of food preparation areas	3.32	Satisfied
Q4: Handling and storage of food items	3.07	Satisfied
Section 2: Impact on Consumer Satisfaction and Dining Behavior		
Q5: Influence of cleanliness on satisfaction	3.64	Very Satisfied

Q6: Likelihood of visiting clean food hubs	3.90	Very Satisfied
Q7: Impact of poor cleanliness on dining behavior	3.87	Very Satisfied
Q8: Importance of cleanliness in recommendations	3.95	Very Satisfied
Section 3: Areas Requiring Improvement		
Q9: Cleanliness of utensils and cutlery	3.31	Satisfied
Q10: Staff personal hygiene standards	3.54	Very Satisfied
Q11: Cleanliness of seating areas	3.15	Satisfied
Q12: Waste management practices	3.08	Satisfied

Table 2 shows the current cleanliness standards, impacts and improvements of food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City as perceived by consumers. In section 1 it discussed the results for Current Cleanliness Standards, the highest satisfaction is with the cleanliness of food preparation areas (3.32). This is a crucial aspect, as it directly impacts food safety and customer health. The overall cleanliness rating (3.30) is also relatively high, showing general contentment with the cleanliness standards. Food safety is of utmost importance to destination foodservice providers due to the growing apprehension among travelers around foodborne illnesses associated with restaurants. Prior studies have provided insights into how various features of restaurant service quality in different destinations affect visitors' pleasure. However, there is a dearth of research on defining the specific dimensions of food safety indicators that influence tourists' restaurant selection and satisfaction (Yasami, M., Phetvaroon, K., & Zhu, H., 2022). Cleanliness of washrooms and dining areas (3.28) is slightly lower than the overall rating but still falls within the satisfied range and lastly the handling and storage of food items received the lowest rating (3.07) among the four criteria, though still in the "satisfied" range. This indicates that while customers are generally satisfied, there is room for improvement in how food items are handled and stored. When handling food, food handlers should wear plastic gloves. Food covers should be used while serving food to prevent contamination from dust, insects, hair, or other debris. Food packaging should be done with food-grade or health-safe materials; such banana leaves (Sari, D. P., & Suyasa, I. N. G. 2021).

In section 2 it discussed the Impact on Consumer Satisfaction and Dining Behavior, The highest score is given to the importance of cleanliness in recommendations (3.95). This indicates that customers are highly likely to recommend food hubs that maintain high cleanliness standards. Recommendations are vital for attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. The likelihood of visiting clean food hubs received a high rating of 3.90, showing that cleanliness is a major

factor in customers' decisions to frequent a food establishment. Ensuring clean environments can drive repeat business and increase foot traffic. Findings showed that applying message framing to menu items that customers intended to repurchase greatly increased the sales performance of those particular restaurant menu items. These beneficial benefits persisted, confirming that clean safety message framing can be a very effective sales promotion tactic for independent small-town eateries (Kim, K., Bonn, M. A., & Cho, M. 2021). The impact of poor cleanliness on dining behavior (3.87) suggests that cleanliness issues can significantly deter customers from dining at a food hub. Last is the influence of cleanliness on overall satisfaction (3.64) indicates that cleanliness strongly affects how satisfied customers feel about their dining experience. High cleanliness standards can enhance overall customer satisfaction. An important part of business is figuring out how satisfied customers are with a product or service's cleanliness. However, since there are multiple factors of cleanliness that must be considered collectively, the availability of feedback mechanisms for customers to assess a restaurant's cleanliness is a critical issue (Lim, S. Y., et.al., 2021).

The results of Areas Requiring Improvement were discussed to section 3. It shows that the highest score is given to staff personal hygiene standards (3.54), indicating a strong satisfaction with how staff maintain their personal hygiene. This is crucial as it directly impacts the perception of the overall cleanliness and safety of the food hub. Inadequate hand cleanliness and improper food handling pose a risk of enteric disease for individuals consuming restaurant and street food, particularly in low-income nations. It is necessary to gather cleanliness indicators from a sample of restaurants and street food sellers that accurately represents the entire nation (Nizame, F. A., Alam, M. U., Masud, A. A., Shoab, A. K., Opel, A., Islam, K., & Unicomb, L., 2019). The cleanliness of utensils and cutlery received a rating of 3.31, indicating that while customers are generally satisfied, there is room for

improvement. Ensuring that utensils and cutlery are spotless can enhance customer confidence in the hygiene standards. According to Syahrizal, S. (2022), The hygiene of culinary utensils in restaurants is crucial in evaluating the standard of food and drinks. Inadequate hygiene and sanitation practices regarding the cutlery used for serving food might facilitate the proliferation of organisms, leading to food contamination. Furthermore, food might become tainted with bacteria as a result of using unsanitary dining utensils. The cleanliness of seating areas has a lower satisfaction rating of 3.15. Lastly waste management practices received the lowest rating of 3.08. Effective waste management is vital for maintaining a clean environment and preventing hygiene issues. This area needs attention to ensure waste is handled and disposed of properly. The recommendations for improving food waste prevention and reduction encompass various strategies, including the establishment of a food waste measurement system and regular evaluation of food plans, increasing awareness among employees and customers, providing staff training, and implementing intelligent methods for reusing, recycling, and composting food waste (Khanh Linh, N., 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

The study conducted on food hubs in Saranay, Caloocan City indicates that the hygiene standards, on the whole, are acceptable. However, it also emphasizes certain areas that require enhancement. Consumers provided ratings for the overall cleanliness, encompassing washrooms, dining areas, and food preparation spaces, ranging from 3.07 to 3.32, which indicates a level of satisfaction. Food item handling and storage, as well as waste management techniques, are also included in this category, emphasizing the need for improved processes to increase consumer confidence even further. Although the ratings are satisfactory, these factors still have potential for development in order to satisfy higher cleanliness standards. The customers' impression of cleanliness variables had a notable impact on their inclination to return. Customers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the cleanliness standards in restaurants, which had a significant impact on their loyalty. It is crucial for all food service managers to prioritize hygiene in order to guarantee customer loyalty (Abubakari, S., Mohammed, K. A., & Iddrisu, I. N., 2019). Hygiene refers to the actions taken to preserve and safeguard the cleanliness of an individual, whereas sanitation refers to the actions taken to preserve and safeguard the cleanliness of the surrounding environment. It needs to assess the applicability of

hygiene and sanitation practices in various aspects, including the selection of food ingredients, the cleanliness of food storage, the maintenance of clean equipment, and the personal hygiene of staff on duty (Hutagalung, V. K., 2022).

The level of cleanliness significantly affects consumer happiness and dining behavior, as seen by higher ratings ranging from 3.64 to 3.95, indicating "Very Satisfied" comments. This illustrates a robust association between cleanliness and consumer happiness, which has a substantial influence on their probability of returning and endorsing the food establishments. The cleanliness of utensils, staff personal hygiene, and seating areas, although generally acceptable, also need to be addressed in order to uphold good standards. By prioritizing these improvements, it is quite probable that the overall eating experience will be enhanced and there will be an increase in consumer loyalty and recommendations.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Enforce specific actions to improve their levels of hygiene. Although the overall cleanliness scores are deemed good, there is a distinct requirement for enhancement in certain areas such as food preparation and storage, waste management, and the cleanliness of seating spaces and utensils.

To address these difficulties, implementing more rigorous cleaning processes, providing regular staff training on hygiene practices, and conducting frequent inspections can be effective measures. In addition, making investments in enhanced waste management systems and guaranteeing diligent upkeep of washrooms and dining spaces would greatly enhance the overall cleanliness and consumer perception.

Moreover, considering the significant association between hygiene and customer contentment, food hubs should give priority to these enhancements in order to uphold and enhance client loyalty. Improved hygiene is expected to boost the probability of customers returning and making favorable referrals, hence stimulating business expansion.

Marketing endeavors can moreover emphasize these enhancements to allure fresh clientele and reassure current ones. Through ongoing surveillance and adjustment of hygiene protocols, food hubs may guarantee a constantly superior dining experience, ultimately resulting in increased customer contentment and a more robust standing within the community.

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