

Customers' Preferences on Food Serving in Sorsogon City

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Abstract— Dining in a food-serving business strengthens the bond and relationship with friends and family members. Customer desires are the top priority of every business owner in offering products and services. This research explores what customers in Sorsogon City prefer as far as food service establishments are concerned and utilizes a descriptive design together with quantitative means to identify factors influencing customer choices among restaurants, fast food chains, and food stalls. Data was collected through surveys and interviews with fifty customers including three food business owners or managers using purposive and convenience sampling. The research focused on customer preferences in food variety, product price, promotion, and customer service. It also examined how food businesses ensure customer satisfaction in these areas. It was found that to keep the customers satisfied, food-serving businesses should have diverse menu selections, use social media to promote the business and offer good services too. The study concluded that customers prioritize local cuisine, reasonable prices, and good service. It recommended promoting local cuisine, integrating technology, and prioritizing location selection. The research also suggests training food businesses in marketing strategies and adopting the proposed strategic business plan. Finally, it proposes further research on the food preferences of specific customer segments and the influence of culinary travel.

Keywords— customer preference, diverse menu, food serving business, marketing strategy, selection.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sorsogon City is one of the fastest-growing cities in the Bicol region competing with lots of other business establishments. One trending aspect is the food service industry which allows for different providers to connect along the value chain, and consequently, everyone benefits. Meal kit delivery services, online food, and delivery services are some examples on this list we even have virtual food halls with multiple vendors under one platform. It even covers the regulations that keep the food safe and the marketing that entices us with delectable options. The marketplace here means a good place where consumers can easily place their orders without much movement and in most cases at a fee. Some marketplaces may also provide for home deliveries while others do not support this; hence it depends on what an individual prefers or rather wants from a restaurant.

In many ways, the food industry operates under such conditions as it allows customers to choose from available vendors who offer different types of foods in one place. The marketplace side has its advantage whereby businesses enjoy more customers than before. Food services presents itself as a lively space for businesses as well as clients alike to engage each other meaningfully through consumption behavior shaped by cultural and technological advances that they have experienced over time. Additionally, these platforms are instrumental in shaping future consumer trends given that technology keeps evolving faster.

Other than that, it is famous for its food delicacies such as pili nuts, banana chips, and many others. People in Sorsogon called "Sorsoganons" are fascinated by the diversity of food presentation and taste; they also like to taste varieties of their favorite foods in quick ways to address their hunger desires. For continuous growth, business owners may either establish a branch or open up another store that would suit the needs of the consumers.

The restaurant nowadays that is very famous is "Eat all you can". AYCE's business model can be successful but it requires careful planning, operational efficiency, and a strong understanding of customer behavior. The "all-you-can-eat" idea is a big draw for restaurants that give customers what seems like an endless amount of food for one set price. But owners need to be careful with this to keep making money. For the person running the business, it's a tricky balance to strike. This has nothing to do with an expansion of the meals – it's about producing a value-driven dining experience that guarantees both clients and the enterprise to remain profitable. Hence, to have a mouthwatering experience, they add different flavors and different other countries' cuisines to the menu but with unlimited serving. Thus, Sorsoganons will always make sure to try this unique and limitless all-you-can-eat with their families and friends.

Fast food restaurants often take precedence over convenience in our fast-paced lives. This is because they

are multiple restaurant chains, with standardized menus and cheaply made meals. For the fast food industry, there is a huge emphasis on efficiency whereby it can be easy to grab a quick meal due to such things as pre-cooked or prepped products, streamlined ordering systems, and drive-thru options. It is cheaper than having a sit-down lunch; hence fast food becomes of attractive value for menus common among families and individuals on the move in comparison.

Furthermore, dinners that accommodate everyone are no longer the norm because customers now desire personalization, and the food industry is responding by expanding its made-to-order (MTO) offerings. In an MTO, the kitchen prepares food right after getting an order. Customers can often make their meals just how they like by picking ingredients choosing how much they want, and deciding how they want it cooked. This ability to customize has an impact on customer's satisfaction. It lets them create dishes that fit their tastes and diet needs. This can lead to customers enjoying their food more and coming back often. In addition, MTOs reduce waste by making meals only when it is ordered as kitchens typically feature less preparation time and storage space for pre-cooked food to reduce operating costs. Businesses can focus on a core set of fresh ingredients, which makes inventory management easier for the reason that it responds to the increased need for tailored eating experiences. As technology advances online purchasing and customization choices will undoubtedly get more sophisticated. MTO enterprises that prioritize adaptability and innovation may thrive in the ever-changing food industry.

To wrap up sales fast food places need many ways to pay that suit their customers. People can use old-school methods like cash and checks. Cash is still big for folks without cards or those who don't like using them. It's free for the business to handle, but they need good ways to manage and protect it. Checks, on the other hand, aren't as common as cash because they take time to process and might be fake. Some eateries also take cards e-wallets, and phone payments, but these come with fees for each sale. Having lots of payment choices makes things easy for customers, which leads to more sales and happier diners.

Mendiola (2021) said that various Filipino dishes are served during feasts, commonly dishes that are grilled and/or fried, rice, noodles, and fruits as well. They are arranged for the entire party to partake in. Once the "go" is given, partakers take food using their hands and eat it

with much pleasure. It is a rowdy party, but it is a representation of the Filipinos' passion for sharing food not only with family but also with people who come from far and wide.

The passage talks about Filipino feasts as fun and friendly events where people share yummy food. They have lots of grilled and fried stuff, rice, noodles, and fruits at these parties. Everyone eats together, which shows how much Filipinos care about being close and sharing. The main point is that they love to share food because it's more than just eating. It's how they show love, make friends, and welcome new people into their group. Food helps everyone connect and have a good time together. It's like a symbol of how friendly Filipinos are and how much they enjoy celebrating life with friends, family, and even people they don't know well.

Moreover, Lumugdan (2022) also stated that there is no doubt that Filipinos like eating and it is always present, no matter where they are or what they are doing. This is why coffee pastries, pulutans, and meriendas exist: Filipinos like eating, whether out for drinks or just enjoying their afternoon coffee. As a result, it should come as no surprise that buffets are a huge favorite among Filipinos. A food buffet is a gift to a Filipino since there are many different meals to choose from.

The writer points out how much Filipinos love food. It's a big part of their everyday life. They're always munching on something, no matter what's going on. One can see this in the snacks he eats like coffee pastries, pulutans (food for drinking), and meriendas (afternoon treats). The text also talks about how Filipinos dig buffets.

These big spreads have tons of dishes to pick from, which fits what they want. Buffets are like a present to Filipinos because they can try lots of different stuff. Food means a lot to Filipinos. It's not just about filling their bellies. It's fun, it brings people together, and it's a way to spoil themselves. The fact that they're always snacking and get super excited about buffets shows how special this is to them. In short, the text paints a picture of food as a huge deal in Filipino culture. It shapes how they hang out and what they do day to day.

However, Huzar (2023) in his article explained that Fast food tends to be high in salt, sugar, saturated fats, trans fats, calories, and processed preservatives and ingredients. It is also stated that a wealth of well-conducted research has proven the negative health

effects of consuming too much of these food components. In the short term, fast food impacts blood sugar and blood pressure, increases inflammation, and may mean an individual does not eat enough necessary nutrients. In the long term, a diet rich in fast food could lead to issues with digestion, immunity, inflammation, heart health, obesity, and more. Certain menu items might be lower in these substances than others, while some fast food outlets might focus on providing healthier options. To preserve health, a person should try to identify fast food items that contain less salt, fat, sugar, and total carbohydrates, and generally try to limit the amount of fast food they consume.

The author emphasized the health risk of consuming too much fast food that is typically loaded with unhealthy components like salt, sugar, saturated and trans fats, excessive calories, and processed additives. It focused on the importance of moderation and making informed choices when it comes to fast food. Regularly eating fast food can negatively affect your blood sugar levels and blood pressure. It can also increase inflammation in your body and potentially lead to a deficiency in essential nutrients.

Fast food offers convenience and tastes but it has a cost to your health. It's best to prioritize a balanced diet with limited fast food intake to avoid potential health problems.

The food service industry plays a vital role in our daily lives, ensuring safe and delicious meals are readily available. The Philippines boasts a vibrant food service industry and ensuring its smooth operation relies on several government agencies. Government agencies including the Department of Agriculture (DA) create a competitive, sustainable, and technology-based agriculture and fishery sector. The agency makes sure farms and fisheries are productive and profitable while also using modern methods and protecting the environment. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) sets and enforces regulations for businesses to ensure fair competition and consumer protection. It includes public safety, labeling, and intellectual property.

By fulfilling its duties, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plays a crucial role in safeguarding the health and well-being of Filipinos. Agencies collaborate extensively to ensure a comprehensive food safety framework. They also work with local government units (LGUs) for on-the-ground

enforcement. Other agencies like the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) contribute to specific aspects of food safety. The above government agencies serve as the silent guardians ensuring the food journey is a safe and delicious experience.

Understanding customer preferences is crucial for success in the food service industry. Customers seek delicious food prepared with high-quality ingredients, Flavor profiles can vary greatly so catering range of preferences is important. The perceptions of value consider not just the price tag but also portion size, quality, and overall experience.

Busy lifestyles create a demand for convenient options this includes factors like online ordering, fast service, and easy access to restaurants. There's a growing focus on healthy eating as customers also seek options that cater to dietary restrictions, allergies, and desire for nutritious meals. Sustainable sourcing, ethical treatment of animals, and eco-friendly packaging can influence their choices due to increasing concern about environmental and social responsibility. The key to success lies in understanding your target audience and tailoring offerings to the preferences. Striking a balance between tastes, value, convenience, health, and social responsibility is essential for attracting and retaining customers in the competitive food service industry.

The researcher aims to study the customers' preferences in food serving to unlock success in the food service industry. By implementing these insights, it can transform customer preferences from a mystery to a roadmap for success. This will be done by choosing customers in Sorsogon City and conducting inquiries if they consider some factors for a decision in dining such as product price, advertisement, and customer service. The researcher will study the possible reason for the high demand for food serving businesses in Sorsogon City.

Generally, this study assessed the demand of customers in terms of food variety, product price, advertisement, and customer service. Further, it identified the factors that influence the choice of customers in food serving and contribute to the growth and development of the City's food service industry benefiting both businesses and consumers. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What are the customer's preferences in terms of
 - a. food variety,

- b. product price,
 - c. product promotion, and
 - d. customer service?
2. How do food business owners ensure customers' satisfaction in terms of?
- a. food variety,
 - b. product price,
 - c. product promotion, and
 - d. customer service?
3. What are the facilitating and hindering factors that affect customers' preferences for food servings?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The researcher used the quantitative research methods. The study identified the preferences of the customers of Sorsogon City in terms of preferences in choosing food serving business restaurants over other kinds of restaurants. A structured survey was used to collect representative sample data from customers who have experienced dining in any kind of food serving business answered questionnaire and interviews through pen and paper and face-to-face interaction. Then, these identified factors by the customer are used in identifying the customer's concern. Finally, this study determines the preferences in terms of food menu and customer service. Researcher identified 50 customers in six different food serving business like restaurant, food

stalls fast food chains. Customers were selected randomly that showed willingness to give feedback to the researcher. Overall respondents are 47 customers, 2 managers and 1 owner.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Customers' Preferences for Food Servings

The uniqueness of every individual is not only noted in the physical aspect being possessed, but the preferences in terms of food servings also reflect the distinct personality. In the tourism sector, understanding the evolving food-serving preferences of tourists is crucial for the sustainability of the business.

Table 1.1 has the data on the customers' preferences for food servings regarding food variety. The data in the Table revealed that providing tourists with local cuisines of the place with ingredients locally sourced out was generally preferred as evidenced by the acquired sum of rank 111 with a final rank of 1.

Tourists consider immersing themselves in the local culinary scene a form of cultural enrichment and an exciting gastronomic adventure. A certain study conducted by Bautista et al. (2018) highlighted the reason why tourists usually look for locally prepared cuisine and such was associated with flavor explorations which are usually distinctive traits of the travelers.

Table 1.1: Customer's preferences for food serving in terms of food variety

Indicators	Sum of Rank	Final Rank
Local cuisines of the place with ingredients locally sourced.	111	1
Classic recipes fused with a modern twist.	146	2
Dishes of fresh ingredients that are in season.	161	3
Foods that cater to dietary requirements.	164	4
Dishes that are visually appealing with intricate garnishing.	168	5

Meanwhile, the indicator which states that classic recipes fused with a modern twist obtained a sum of rank of 146 and a final rank of 2. Implied by this finding that this food-serving option is still among the preferred choices of customers. Classic recipes fused with a modern twist continue to captivate the customers in food service. About this, Gill (customer, 2024) stated his experience that Latin American cuisine is deeply intertwined with the region's cultural identity where chefs increasingly turn to local ingredients and traditional recipes to create culinary masterpieces. This resurgence of interest not only preserves heritage but also introduces the world to unique flavors and cooking methods that form the backbone of Hispanic culture food.

Dishes of fresh ingredients that are in season gain a sum of 161 and a final rank of 3. Suggests that using seasonal ingredients is considered moderately important and more likely to choose dishes that are made with fresh ingredients that are in season. Dishes made with fresh, seasonal ingredients offer a win-win situation. They provide a more flavorful, nutritious, and potentially affordable dining experience for the customer while also promoting environmental sustainability and supporting local agriculture. Studies on sensory experience by Prakoso (2023) indicate that freshness influences taste perception. A study in Food Quality and Preference showed that diners rated dishes made with fresh ingredients as tastier.

Moreover, foods that cater to dietary requirements attain a sum of 164 and a final rank of 4. This means that customers somewhat care about a restaurant offering options that meet their dietary needs. Even though it ranked fourth, this doesn't mean that catering to dietary needs is unimportant.

Customers may prioritize other factors when choosing a restaurant but they still value restaurants that offer options that suit their dietary needs. Studies and reports by hospitality associations emphasize the importance of inclusivity and catering to diverse customer needs, including dietary restrictions. This reflects a growing industry focus on accommodating dietary variations.

However, dishes that are visually appealing with intricate garnishing acquired a sum of 168 and a final rank of 5. Out of the five indicators listed, customers place moderate importance on the visual presentation of the food with elaborate garnishes. A visually stunning plate with intricate garnishes can be very eye-catching and increase the perceived value of the dish. This can attract customers and make them more likely to order the dish, especially for those who eat with their eyes first. While presentation is important, ultimately the food needs to taste good. If a dish relies heavily on garnishes to look impressive but the flavor is lacking it will disappoint customers. Focusing on fresh, delicious food and catering to customer preferences is still an important thing. Spence (Multisensory Perception of Food, 2015) a professor of experimental psychology at the University

of Oxford, delved into multisensory aspects of food perception. The author has shown that the way food is presented visually can influence the perception of its taste, aroma, and even texture. One study found that people rated red wine as tasting sweeter when it was served in a white glass compared to a red glass.

Table 1.2 titled "Customer's Preferences for Food Serving in Terms of Price" shows the result of a survey on what customers look for in terms of pricing. The survey indicates that customers value food prices indicated in the menu that derived a sum of 123 and final rank of 1.

Menus with clear pricing can build trust with customers. It expresses transparency and avoids any hidden surprises when the bill arrives which may lead to a more positive dining experience. Customers can easily compare the cost of different dishes and make informed choices about what to order based on their budget. This is especially important for people on a tight budget or those who are unfamiliar with the restaurant pricing strategy. Studies like income level are the bases of purchasing the products and services. Cuevas et al. (2016) stated that High-income customers may have more diverse and pronounced preferences for food service businesses compared to low-income customers. The author suggested low-income consumers might have limited choices due to economic constraints and might prioritize affordability over other factors like variety or ambience.

Table 1.2: Customers' preferences for food servings in terms of product price

Indicators	Sum of Rank	Final Rank
Food prices are indicated in the menus.	123	1
Reasonable prices for the offered high-quality food.	141	2
Budget-friendly options for food prices are provided.	142	3
Discounts are honored and special discounts for groups are offered.	153	4
Willing to avail and pay for the pricier foods equivalent to exceptional quality and upscale experience.	191	5

Furthermore, reasonable prices for the offered high-quality food attain a sum of 141 and a final rank of 2. Reasonable prices for high-quality food are more accessible to a wider range of customers. This can be particularly important for attracting repeat business and fostering a loyal customer base. They considered it important that the restaurant offers high-quality quality food at a fair price. But there are some factors to consider on what constitutes a reasonable price for the specific offerings. First, Prices may vary depending on the location. Second, restaurants in high-end areas may charge more for similar food than those in more casual

settings. Third, high-quality ingredients such as organic produce or premium meats may justify higher prices. Lastly, the complexity of the dishes and the overall restaurant ambience can also influence pricing. This implies that customers are looking for a balance between high-quality food and fair pricing. Cuevas et al. (2016) stated that customers' response in pricing are based on the income of individual. Customer who have higher income are willing to pay as much as price; contrary to this, lower customer income purchases low price to satisfy their needs and wants along with food and services. Even high-quality food may not be seen as

valuable if the price is unreasonable. Restaurants that achieve a balance between quality and price are more likely to succeed.

Hence, budget-friendly options for food prices are provided acquiring a sum of 142 and a final rank of 3. A significant portion of customers' value restaurants that offer options that cater to their budget needs. Some customers may be tight on budget and prioritize affordability when choosing a restaurant. Budget-friendly options allow them to enjoy a meal without breaking the bank. Even for customers who aren't on a strict budget and are looking for good value offers for money can be appealing. Budget-friendly options provide variety for customers who may want a more economical option for a casual lunch but are willing to spend more for a special occasion. Including budget-friendly options on the menu can be a smart strategy to attract a wider range of customers and cater to their varying needs.

In addition, discounts are honored and special discounts for groups are offered receiving a sum of 153 and a final rank of 4. The restaurant takes customer loyalty and group dining into consideration. Businesses are willing to give customers a break on the price if they meet certain criteria. The specific discounts that are offered may vary depending on the businesses and the type of product or service that is being purchased. Some businesses may offer discounts for seniors and students, others for bulk orders or for signing up for a loyalty program. Some of the customers ask about discounts before making a purchase.

Moreover, willing to avail and pay for the pricier foods equitable to exceptional quality and upscale experience

obtain a sum of 191 and a final rank of 5. Exceptional quality and upscale experience are the least important to customers. However, they are still somewhat important as customers are willing to pay more for these extras. In essence, while price is important customers are also looking for good value for money. They are willing to pay a bit more for a higher quality meal and a nicer experience but it's not the top priority. High-quality ingredients, skilled preparation, and a luxurious atmosphere can significantly elevate the dining experience. The willingness to pay for premium food experiences helps maintain a diverse culinary landscape. It allows for fine dining establishments to exist alongside more affordable options catering to different preferences and budgets. Additionally, it incentivizes innovation and quality within the food industry benefiting everyone who enjoys good food.

Table 1.3 shows the results on Customer Preferences for food serving promotions. Customers preferred promotional techniques that offered more food or lower prices, rather than traditional advertising methods. The technique that received the highest ranking was the "Buy One, Get One Free Promo" or discounts to the regular customer with the sum of 127 and a final rank of 1.

Buy One, Get One Free Promo can help move slow-selling items or excess stock by bundling them with popular products. This strategy attracts customers who might not have otherwise tried the product or service of the perceived value of getting something for free even if it's a lesser-valued item. Regular discounts are better for building long-term and positive brand image. Building loyalty through regular customer discounts can lead to increased customer lifetime value.

Table 1.3: Customer's preferences for food servings in terms of product promotion

Indicators	Sum of Rank	Final Rank
"Buy One, Get One Free Promo" or discounts to regular customers.	127	1
Receive complimentary presents as an inducement to put a large order.	147	2.5
Printed coupons that show the product, price, and discounts.	147	2.5
Certain sorts of clients receive lifestyle discounts, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and students.	157	4
Perceived on television, and radio as well as modern means like social networking.	172	5

Receive complimentary presents as an inducement to place a large order and Printed coupons that show the product, price, and discounts both obtain a sum of 147 and a final rank of 2.5. Customers are equally receptive to these two promotional tactics. They may be more likely to purchase a larger quantity of food if they are

offered a gift, or they may be more likely to purchase if they can see a clear discount on the items they are considering. Complimentary presents and coupons both play a significant role in food service as gifts can attract new customers who might be curious about the product or the offer. It is also a valuable tool for restaurants to

boost sales, attract customers, and create a positive brand image. Giving away presents can create a sense of value and generosity, fostering a positive feeling towards the restaurant. Coupons directly address cost concerns, making your food service more appealing to budget-minded consumers. Target coupons can encourage customers to try new menu items or dishes with lower sales as it can be a great way to bring in new customers or entice existing ones to return more frequently. GrabFood- The Impact of Electronic Coupons on Consumer’s Purchasing Power (2023) explores the psychological aspects of incentives. While this study focuses on e-coupons, the concept applies to complimentary gifts as well. It highlights how these promotions can influence a customer’s mental accounting, making them feel they have more budget to spend due to the perceived savings for the gift. The study provides strong evidence that complimentary presents and coupons can be effective tools for food service businesses.

On the other hand, certain sorts of clients receive lifestyle, discounts, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and students receive a sum of 157 and a final rank of 4. Customers are particularly receptive to targeted promotions that offer discounts to specific groups such as seniors, people with disabilities, and students. This type of promotion can be appealing to these customer groups for a variety of reasons. Seniors, people with disabilities, and students may often be on fixed incomes and appreciate the opportunity to save money.

Offering targeted discounts can also make these customers feel valued and appreciated by the restaurant. Discounted meals make food service more accessible to these demographics who might have limited budgets due to fixed incomes (seniors, students) or additional expenses (disabilities). Targeted discounts show these groups they are valued customers and encourage them to dine out more often. Lifestyle discounts cater to a wider customer base, build loyalty, and project a positive brand image while increasing sales and revenue.

Perceived on television, radio as well as modern means like social networking gained a sum of 172 and a final

rank of 5. Customers are responsive to promotions that they see advertised through mass media and social media channels. These mediums can reach a large audience quickly and efficiently making them a great way to generate awareness about the promotion. Seeing a promotion advertised across multiple platforms can create a sense of social proof, making customers believe that the deal is worthwhile. The effectiveness of these advertising channels will depend on the target audience and the specific promotion. Social media marketing may be more effective for reaching younger demographics while television advertisement may be a better way to reach seniors. Syafinaz et al (2019) investigated the effectiveness of TV advertising in reaching younger demographics (centennials) in the food service industry. While it acknowledges a shift towards digital media it highlights that strategically crafted TV commercials can still be captivating and influence purchasing decisions, especially for specific menu items or special offers. The study states that advertising through television, radio, and social media can be a powerful tool for food service businesses to reach new customers and boost sales.

Table 1.4 shows the Customers’ Preferences for Food Servings in terms of customer service indicating that customers prioritize friendly and efficient service with a focus on catering to their needs and preferences. The crew warmly greets diners before and after the meal acquire a sum of 130 and a final rank of 1.

The crew warmly greets diners before and after the meal is a very important aspect of customer service in the food industry. A warm greeting can set a positive tone for the entire dining experience when the staff acknowledges the customer and appreciates their business. It is a simple yet effective way to show customers they are valued and contribute to a positive dining experience. Greetings can open a conversation and allow staff to identify any questions or concerns a customer might have. Being greeted warmly makes customers feel like their patronage is appreciated this can lead to increased satisfaction and a desire to return. Friendly greetings can leave a lasting positive impression on diners making them more likely to remember the restaurant fondly. This is a way to show customers one cares and set the tone for a positive and memorable dining experience.

Table 1.4. Customers' preferences for food servings in terms of customer service

Indicator	Sum of Rank	Final Rank
The crew warmly greets diners before and after the meal.	130	1
Quickly accommodate the queue when ordering the food.	145	2

Workers are flexible when responding to customers' needs.	146	3
Provides outstanding service and care to their diners by recommending dietary restrictions.	151	4
Having a deep grasp of the food when clients have difficulty deciding what to eat.	178	5

Next, quickly accommodate the queue when ordering the food achieving a sum of 145 and a final rank of 2. Customers consider it important for a restaurant to have an efficient system for taking orders so that they don't have to wait too long in line. Customers generally dislike waiting in lines because long waits can lead to frustration and impatience. Faster service translates to a smoother customer experience when they feel their time is valued they're more likely to be satisfied with the overall service. A quick queue keeps the flow of customers moving this allows the restaurant to serve more people in a shorter amount of time ultimately boosting revenue. Efficient order-taking creates a positive perception of the restaurant to recognize it as a well-run establishment that prioritizes time. It also sets the tone for the entire interaction and shows customers that the restaurant values their business. One of the factors that Fatma (2024) explained that customer feels satisfied if they experience excellent services. Hence, workers are flexible when responding to customers' needs gaining a sum of 146 and a final rank of 3. In today's competitive marketplace flexibility can be a key differentiator. Businesses that can cater to individual customer needs are more likely to stand out from the crowd. When a worker can adapt to a customer's request it leads to a more positive experience and value responsiveness. This can be anything from accommodating special needs to adjusting portion sizes or finding a way to resolve minor issues. Satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the business to peers. Flexible workers can think on their feet and find solutions to unexpected situations and it can help to avoid frustration for both the customer and the employee leading to a smoother interaction.

However, providing outstanding service and care to their diners by recommending dietary restrictions acquire a sum of 151 and a final rank of 4. Outstanding service and care to their diners by recommending dietary restrictions considered important but not the most important factor in customer service. Staff should also be aware of the difference between allergies and intolerances so that they can recommend dishes that are safe for the diner to eat. When diners feel safe and confident about what they eat they can relax and enjoy their meal more. Recommending dietary restrictions is

an investment in creating a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable dining experience for all customers. This translates to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and business growth.

Thus, having a deep grasp of the food when clients have difficulty deciding what to eat garner a sum of 178 and a final rank of 5 which means it's considered the least important factor out of the listed indicator. However, having a deep understanding of the food can still be helpful for servers in assisting indecisive customers. Servers who are knowledgeable about the menu can recommend dishes that are likely to appeal to the customer's taste preferences. For example, if the customer is looking for something light the server could recommend a salad or fish dish. Having a comprehensive understanding of the menu can be a valuable asset for servers who want to provide excellent customer service.

II. How Food Business Owners Ensure Customers' Satisfaction

Food business owners have to ensure the customer's satisfaction with their food needs and preferences. In the competitive world of food businesses, customer satisfaction reigns supreme. It's the lifeblood of repeat business, positive reviews, and thriving establishments. Friendly, knowledgeable servers who anticipate customer needs and go the extra mile create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere. This encompasses everything from attentive wait staff to a smooth ordering process.

Table 2.1 shows that customer customer-friendly menu with a variety of choices is important for customer satisfaction in the food business acquired a 100% frequency. A customer-friendly menu should be easy for diners to understand. This means using clear and concise language avoiding jargon and providing descriptions that are helpful but not overwhelming. Le et al. (2023) suggested that attention of customer can be with the images indicated in the menu option. Images can catch the attention that even products that is not planned to buy, the customer will definitely purchase. A variety of choices gives diners options to suit their taste and dietary needs. According to business owners, a clear and easy-to-navigate menu minimizes confusion and frustration

for diners. When they can effortlessly understand options and make informed decisions satisfaction soars. Variety ensures something for everyone, reducing the chance of someone leaving disappointed. The well-designed menu can subtly nudge diners toward higher-

margin items or entice them to try additional courses. A customer-friendly menu reflects professionalism and attention to detail. It portrays business as one that prioritizes customer experience creating a positive brand image that keeps ahead of the competition.

Table 2.1. How food business owners ensure customers' satisfaction along with food variety

Indicators	Frequency	Percent (%)
The menu is customer-friendly and offers a variety of choices.	3	100
Informing the customer about any special offers or food available that day.	2	67
Free sweets for people celebrating their birthdays, or innovative ways to serve classic dishes.	2	67
Prepare dishes with fresh, high-quality ingredients.	2	67

Similarly, informing the customer about any special offers of food available that day, free sweets for people celebrating their birthdays, innovative ways to serve classic dishes, and preparing dishes with fresh, high-quality ingredients obtain a percentage of 67% and a frequency of 2. Food business owners believe that informing customers about daily specials and offering them the option to personalize classic dishes is important to customer satisfaction. Specials and customization options can spark diners' interest and encourage them to explore new dishes or familiar favorites with a twist. Daily specials can be perceived as a good deal attracting customers who are looking for ways to save money. Customization options allow diners to tailor their meals to their preferences, potentially increasing their perception of value. Not everyone enjoys the same flavors or ingredients by offering customization options empowers diners to create a meal that perfectly suits their taste reducing the chance of them feeling disappointed with limited choices. As per the business owner or manager of the store, daily specials can be a great way to move excess inventory, promote dishes, or offer higher-margin items at a slightly discounted price. It also creates a sense of excitement and novelty enticing diners to try something new. By highlighting specific ingredients in specials

they can strategically use up inventory before it spoils minimizing waste and saving cost. Small gestures like a free birthday dessert show that the management cares about the customer and celebrates their special day. This strategy fosters loyalty and encourages them to return for future celebrations of just a regular meal. Based on their experience, diners who receive a birthday treat are more likely to share their positive experience with friends and family this is where word-of-mouth marketing can attract new customers to the business. Another, putting a creative twist on classic dishes can arouse the interest of diners seeking something new and exciting in a familiar dish with a surprising twist that can spark curiosity and conversation among diners. This fosters a more engaging dining experience and keeps them coming back to see what new interpretations they offer next. Lastly, fresh and high-quality ingredients are the foundation of delicious food. Using premium ingredients allows the management to confidently price the dishes accordingly. Customers who appreciate quality are more likely to be satisfied with a higher price point when they can taste the difference. Identified strategies help them in creating a winning formula for their food business. They can attract new customers, build loyalty to existing ones, and establish the business as a leader in culinary innovation and quality.

Table 2.2. How food business owners ensure customers' satisfaction along with product price

Indicators	Frequency	Percent (%)
Lunchtime specials include beverages, a meal, plus a dessert or side dish for one price.	2	67
Reasonable pricing that is competitive and consistent with the quality of the food and services provided.	2	67
Displaying prices and an additional charges for every food item for transparency purposes.	2	67
Surprise and thrill customers with themed dining events or unusual menu items with minimal add fees or sometimes free.	2	67

A mixed plate that consists of multiple dishes that can be consumed as snacks or shared by friends within their budget.	2	67
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Table 2.2 How Food Business Owners Ensure Customers' Satisfaction Along with Product Price shows five strategies that food businesses use to attract customers. Most common strategies include beverages, a meal, and a dessert or side dish for one price in a lunchtime special. Inoncencio et al. (2016) showed that combination of food and beverages attract more customers to dine especially in resto-bar food business. Followed by having reasonable pricing that is competitive and consistent with the quality of the food and service gather 67% of the frequency. First, lunchtime specials combine a beverage, meal, and dessert side dish into a single price point which can be attractive to customers because they perceive and get a good value. Second, reasonable pricing acknowledges

that customers are conscious of price and look for food that is competitively priced relative to the quality they receive. Third, Transparency with pricing involves displaying prices to avoid any surprises at checkout and build trust with the customer. Fourth, surprise and Delight offers unexpected extras or events like themed dining events or unusual menu items to keep customers engaged and interested. Lastly, mixed plates cater to customers who want to try a variety of dishes or want to share with friends. According to the owner or manager, the best strategy for a particular food business will depend on its target market, competition, and other factors.

Table 2.3 How food business owners ensure customers' satisfaction along with product promotion

Indicators	Frequency	Percent
Integration of social media in product promotion and the use of social media influencer	3	100
Active social media platforms that cater to queries or suggestions and can easily access product launches.	2	67
Well-trained personnel to assure high-quality service delivery.	2	67
Offer choices such as combo meals, reward programs, and complimentary items.	2	67
Offering rewards and loyalty programs to regular diners.	1	33

Table 2.3 How Food Business Owners Ensure Customers' Satisfaction Along with Product Promotion conveys ensuring customer satisfaction through excellent food service while simultaneously using creative promotions to attract customers. Dinc (2023) provided some information that social media marketing is effective in advertising the product to customer. Social media is the most common way that food business owners ensure customer satisfaction and promote their products achieving 100% and a frequency of 3.

product promotion by using their credibility and reach to generate interest. By combining social media promotion with influencer marketing the business can reach a wider audience generate excitement for new products and build trust with potential customer.

Integrate social media into their product promotion strategy and leverage social media influencers to offer a variety of ways to promote the product. A strong social media presence is almost expected by actively engaging in it the business showcases the brand's modernity and keeps pace with competitors. Compared to traditional advertising, social media offers a much more cost-effective way to promote the products. May platforms allow organic reach through engaging content creation and paid advertising can be tailored to the owner's budget. Social media influencers can further amplify

Whereas, consider having active social media platforms that address customer inquiries and suggestions along with employing trained staff and offering a variety of deals to attract customers collected 67% that and a frequency of 2. Social media platforms can be used to provide customer service by directly responding to questions and concerns. It is also a great way to generate excitement for new products. Owners as well as managers use social media to tease new products before they are released to create a sense of urgency by announcing limited-time offers. Having a well-trained staff can contribute to high-quality service delivery as well as having a good understanding of the menu, preparation process, and how to handle customer inquiries can help to ensure that customers have an excellent dining experience. Investing in staff training can be a wise decision for food business owners to

improve customer satisfaction, increase efficiency, and protect customers from food-borne illnesses. Offering choices such as combo meals, reward programs, and complimentary items is a way to attract customers. Combo meals can make it seem like customers are getting more for their money, which can be appealing. Reward programs can incentivize repeat business, and complimentary items can add a perceived element of surprise and delight.

Finally, offering rewards and loyalty programs to regular diners obtained a percentage of 33. This suggests that it is less common than other strategies listed in the table like using social media or offering combo meals. Loyalty programs can still be a valuable tool to increase customer retention and encourage repeat business. It shows that the customers appreciate the business and encourage them to return. They feel valued when they are rewarded for their continued patronage. It's important to weigh the costs of implementing and maintaining a program against the potential benefits for your business.

In the fiercely competitive world of food businesses, keeping customers happy is no small feat. It requires a delicate dance between delivering exceptional customer service and ensuring patrons leave with a smile on their faces after a delicious meal.

Table 2.4 shows how food business owners ensure customer satisfaction along with customer service. The

table indicates that all three respondents (100%) created a cleaning rota and timetable to maintain a sanitary atmosphere. A clean restaurant is essential for creating a positive customer experience and a strong focus on cleanliness among the food business owners surveyed. Castillo (2019) assessed that cleanliness and proper sanitation are the topmost concern in food serving business. Every business offers food and drinks need to be examined by government agencies for safety purposes. Customers are more likely to return to a restaurant that is clean and well-maintained. All three respondents (100%) said they greet customers as they enter the store with a smile. This simple act of acknowledging customers and making them feel welcome can set the tone for their entire dining experience. A warm greeting can help to make customers feel comfortable and relaxed. Another result shows that all three respondents (100%) organize special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. Business owners go the extra mile to create a memorable experience for their customers. Recognizing special occasions can help to make customers feel valued and appreciated. Food business owners surveyed focus on several key strategies to ensure customer satisfaction alongside customer service. These strategies include maintaining a clean and sanitary environment, greeting customers warmly, and recognizing special occasions. By following these strategies, food business owners can create a welcoming and memorable dining experience for their customers.

Table 2.4. How food business owners ensure customers' satisfaction along with customer service

Indicators	Frequency	Percent (%)
Create a cleaning rota throughout the establishment and a timetable for who will clean that day to maintain a sanitary atmosphere.	3	100
Recognizing customers as they enter the store and greeting them with a smile to make they feel comfortable.	3	100
Organizing special occasions like birthday celebrations or anniversaries to provide customers with unforgettable experiences.	3	100
Staff check on customers once or twice during meals to verify that they are satisfied or enjoying their meal.	2	67
Unique entertainment or interactive activities that improve the enjoyment of dining.	2	67

Two out of three respondents (67%) said that staff check on customers once or twice during meals to see if they are satisfied with their meal. This is a common practice in the restaurant industry, and it can be a good way to ensure that customers are having a positive experience. If a customer is having a problem with their meal, such as if it is not cooked correctly or if they are missing an

item, a staff member can address the issue quickly and efficiently. By checking on customers and making sure they are satisfied, staff can show that they care about the customer experience. This can help to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. The table also shows that two out of three respondents (67%) offer unique entertainment or interactive activities to improve the

enjoyment of dining. Offering unique entertainment or interactive activities can be a great way to set the restaurant apart from the competition and create a memorable dining experience for customers.

III. The Facilitating and Hindering Factors Affecting Customers' Preferences on Food Servings

Understanding what influences customer choices is crucial for success. By exploring the elements that make a dining experience positive and those that detract from it, we aim to shed light on the complex decision-making process customers undergo when choosing a restaurant. This analysis will not only focus on the size and quality of the food itself, but also encompass the broader dining experience, including service, pricing, and the overall atmosphere. Through a closer examination of these

facilitating and hindering factors, restaurants can gain valuable insights into how to tailor their offerings to better meet customer expectations and ultimately drive satisfaction and loyalty.

Beyond the deliciousness of the dishes themselves, a variety of factors influence how patrons perceive their dining experience. Table 3.1 titled Facilitating Factors Affecting Customers' Preferences on Food Serving lists factors that influence customer preferences.

The most frequently mentioned factor is "Providing budget-friendly menus," followed by "Responding promptly to queries," and "Providing friendly and personalized services." These results suggest that customers prioritize affordability, efficiency, and a welcoming atmosphere.

Table 3.1. Facilitating Factors Affecting Customers' Preferences on Food Serving

Facilitating Factors	Frequency	Rank
Providing budget-friendly menus	46	1
Responding promptly to queries	39	2
Providing friendly and personalized services	38	3
Allowing customers to choose from budget-friendly options to more expensive choices	37	4
Integration of ICT or social media apps in food ordering and payment to expedite	35	5
Offering foods of varying prices through diverse range of dining options	32	6
Offering the experience of farm-to-table dining	31	7
Allowing customers to choose from budget-friendly options to more expensive choices	30	8
Offering competitive food prices	29	9
Talking to clients about the nutritional and health benefits offered by the menus served	27	10
Discussing with clients the cultural significance of the dishes served	25	11
Joining in food festivals	16	12

Further down the list, we see factors like "Offering the experience of farm-to-table dining" and "Talking to customers about the cultural significance of the dishes served." These indicate a growing interest in understanding where food comes from and the stories behind the dishes. Customers ranked "Providing budget-friendly menus" as the most important factor. This is followed by features that indirectly affect price, like offering a range of choices from budget-friendly to expensive and competitive pricing. "Responding promptly to queries" is ranked second, indicating that customers value restaurants that can answer questions and take orders quickly. Alvarez (2020) stated that integration of training program to employees for the purpose of improvement of work efficiency in food serving business. Providing friendly and personalized services" also ranks high. Customers appreciate a welcoming atmosphere and feel valued when restaurants take the time for interaction. Factors like "Offering the

experience of farm-to-table dining" and "Discussing with clients the cultural significance of the dishes served" show a growing interest in the experience and story behind the food. Customers are not just interested in price and service rather they want to connect with the food they are eating. The table highlights that customers today have a complex set of priorities when choosing a restaurant. While price remains a major concern, diners are also increasingly looking for efficient service, a welcoming atmosphere, and unique experiences that connect them to the food.

Table 3.2 has a list of the hindering factors affecting the food preferences of the consumers. The topmost most hindering factors were the poor location of the food establishment, lack of marketing strategy, and lack of innovation skills on the part of management and staff. Perez et al (2017) stated that Owner or Manager needs to maintain the quality standard of the business by

adopting accreditation in different agencies to ensure the quality of food serving business.

Some restaurants may not be effectively communicating their offerings to potential customers, and that menus may be stagnant or unexciting. Insufficient capital or funding” and “Inflation/High prices of essential commodities are also ranked fairly high. This indicates that some restaurants may be struggling to keep up with rising costs, which can make it difficult to offer competitive prices or invest in improvements. Difficulties sourcing out raw materials and ingredients and Unhealthy/Tight competition in the sector are mentioned as challenges as well.

This suggests that some restaurants may have trouble getting the ingredients they need, or that they are facing stiff competition from other restaurants in the area. A number of factors can make it difficult for customers to choose a restaurant that includes a lack of marketing, a lack of innovation, financial challenges, difficulties getting ingredients, and strong competition.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the given findings, the following are the formulated conclusions.

1. Customers preferred to be served local cuisines and classic recipes fused with a modern twist cordially from the staff and at reasonable prices.
2. Food business owners ensure customers’ satisfaction by providing a customer-friendly menu consisting of a variety of choices, offering food freebies, and observing transparency in food prices.
3. Providing a budget-friendly menu and responding promptly to customers’ needs are the topmost facilitating factors affecting customers’ food serving preferences while the poor location of the food establishment and lack of marketing strategies are considered as the hindering factors.
4. The proposed strategic business plan is needed to ensure efficient food servings thereby satisfying the customers’ preferences.

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following are the offered recommendations;

1. Promotion of a gastronomic adventure be done by the food establishment by offering local cuisine as a main course.
 - 1.1 Season specials, rotating dishes, and customizable options be offer to cater different choices.

- 1.2 Clear and competitive rates without hidden fees be considering for affordability and transparent pricing.
- 1.3 Robust loyalty program be enhancing for customer retention and satisfaction.
- 1.4 Personalized attention and address complaints promptly be prioritizing to foster loyalty and positive brand reputation.
2. The integration of technology be made part of food business operations to further provide satisfaction to the customers.
 - 2.1 Regularly update the menu be practice to reflect customer feedback and current market trends for enhance dining experiences.
 - 2.2 Conducting taste test or surveys be practiced to gauge age preferences effectively.
 - 2.3 Review pricing be done regularly to maintain market competitiveness and introduce value meals and combos to optimize profit while preserving quality.
 - 2.4 Integration of social media be made for marketing purposes.
 - 2.5 Implementation of effective conflict resolution strategies like training staff in hospitality excellence and properly addressing complaints be the system to swift complaint resolution for positive customer experiences
 - 2.6 Feedback from comment cards and online reviews be aggregate to gain valuable insights and enhance service quality.
3. Affordable options and quick service be consistently delivered to improve customer preferences and overall dining experience.
 - 3.1 Appropriate location for food business be the primary consideration in starting and operating the business.
 - 3.2 Cultural influences be incorporate to enrich customer experience and appeal diverse taste.
 - 3.3 Allergen-free alternatives be providing to cater customers with food sensitivities or allergies.
 - 3.4 Social media trends and Instagram-worthy dishes be significant to attract more customers and boost brand’s visibility.
 - 3.5 Local sourcing and resource ingredients be enhancing with fresher and more sustainable products while supporting the community and reducing environmental footprint.
4. Training on marketing strategies be provided to food business owners, those in charge, and staff through a partnership with the Department of Industry and other relevant entities.

- 4.1 Menu optimization be done regularly by removing underperforming items and highlighting dishes with seasonal specials.
- 4.2 Strengthening supplier partnership be enhancing for fresh ingredients and optimize inventory management to minimize waste.
- 4.3 Staff be equipping with new knowledge, upselling techniques, and exceptional customer service skills and empowering to confidently handle complaints through effective management and conflict resolution strategies.
- 4.4 Collecting customer's insight be implement through surveys, social media, and comment cards to drive continuous improvement.
- 4.5 Actively participation in local events be strengthen to foster partnership and build stronger connections to support vibrant local network.

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