

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION OF FRANCHISE FOOD CART  
BUSINESSES OFFERING COCONUT PRODUCTS IN  
MANILA AND QUEZON CITY

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A franchised food cart businesses has its benefits and downsides. Product Quality and Service Quality are the two primary concerns of the consumers which can influence their post buying behavior that can make or break the any businesses. This study examined the level of satisfaction of customers offranchised food cart business in the City of Manila and Quezon City in terms of product and service quality. The customer's level of agreement on their post-purchased behavior werealso measured which was also used as the basis for the food cart business improvement in terms of product and service.

*Keywords: Product Quality, Service Quality, Franchised Food Cart Business, Customer Satisfaction*

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In the Philippines particularly in Metro Manila, different food and beverage carts are on the rise nowadays. Different types of food and beverage carts are everywhere. Snacks, delicacies, etc. name it and any kind of foods or beverage cart shows up. But, these customers never express their thoughts about the product that they have experienced. We want to find a way to integrate the product and service quality and prolong the relationship of customers and to increase profit for the business.

Customer loyalty and satisfaction have always been a factor in a business and studies have been conducted to identify relationships between them (Srivastava, Rai, 2013). Since customers greatly affect the status of the business, service is seen as a subjective aspect of the business (Srivastava, Rai, 2013). Brand image is also a great factor in determining satisfaction and post evaluation helps so much in the contentment of customers (Srivastava, Rai, 2013).

The researchers wished to understand the views of the customers toward franchised food carts. We took a closer look into the product quality and the service quality of food and beverage carts.

### ***Background of the Study***

Most franchises have pretty similar products. However, the satisfaction of the customers has different variations. These differences made the businesses compete for every cent that the customers wanted to spend.

The food cart business has been alive since the old days and it is still booming here in the Philippines. The particular company started early, in the year 2000. The intentions to accommodate other struggling starting entrepreneurs sparked the idea to franchise. The company aimed to help Filipinos have their own businesses and allow fellow Filipinos to acquire a job worldwide. They had a goal of having a successful enterprise with the opportunities given to Filipinos.

The food cart concept was basically made basic in terms of service and product. The customer comes to the food cart and orders, the employees will receive the order, they make the product, and then give the product to the customer. In the modern days, people added things beyond the basic when criticizing food carts such as the tangibles and intangibles like time of service, the size of the product, the look of the product, the attitude of the employees, and the like.

Food Carts were also prominent in other parts of the globe, for so many years, behavior of creating a food business has revolutionized in accordance with how people lived most especially

if it is well-situated for them. In that manner, it has become an easy way for many people to acquire a business.

The researchers intended to find out the satisfaction level of customers in terms of products and services offered by the food cart businesses in Manila and Quezon City LRT Line 2 stations. By doing this, owners as well as customers of the food cart business may use this as a basis for improving their overall business operations, which in turn can lead to more opportunities to earn and to achieve its greatest potential.

Metro Food Cart Corporation is a full service consultancy firm for franchise business. They develop and promote different food concepts with strong market impact for business enterprise. They focus on the needs of franchisees and consumers with proper training and full support. They help entrepreneurs with potential to improve and they quantify the benefits of it.

According to Ackaradejruangsri (2013) Intrinsic cues' distinctive indicators are taste, color, consistency, and amount of freshness; these are intrinsic cues that can be used in assessing the quality of food. Intrinsic cues also have immense effects on the psychological assessment of customers of products whether they will buy or not. In the field of marketing research, most of the time they made use of these product indicators like flavor of quality, through the use of food or beverage product itself, which were tested by the market regardless of the knowledge of the brand. There are Extrinsic hints that attribute to the product, but are not seen in the product. Some examples of extraneous hints are the price, brand name, origin country, preparation, etc. A lot of researchers have been conducted to study the relation of the evaluation of quality product, buying decisions of customers and essential/extraneous hints. There are some product qualities indicators such as brand name, price, store name, and the country where it came from that are used to tell the quality of a product. The most common indicator used by consumers to determine the product quality is price.

Product quality is a multidimensional topic. Internal and external factors contributed to the study of psychological decisions of consumers. There are not many papers about the relationship of internal and external factors and the product itself. They also contained different varieties of criterion for the choices that consumers make where they buy products (Ackaradejruangsri, 2013).

**Research Objectives**

The research objectives were divided into 5 parts. The first part was about the profile of the customers of franchised food cart business offering coconut products in terms of age, gender, and employment status. Second, was about the level of customer satisfaction in the products offered by franchised food cart business in terms of the Presentation, Taste, and Serving Size. Third, was about the level of customer satisfaction in the quality of service offered by franchised food cart business in terms of the employee courtesy, employee attentiveness, employee uniform and Grooming, serving time and food cart cleanliness. Fourth was about the level of agreement on the post-buying behavior of customers and fifth is about the proposed improvement in the product and the services of franchised food cart business.

**Conceptual Framework**

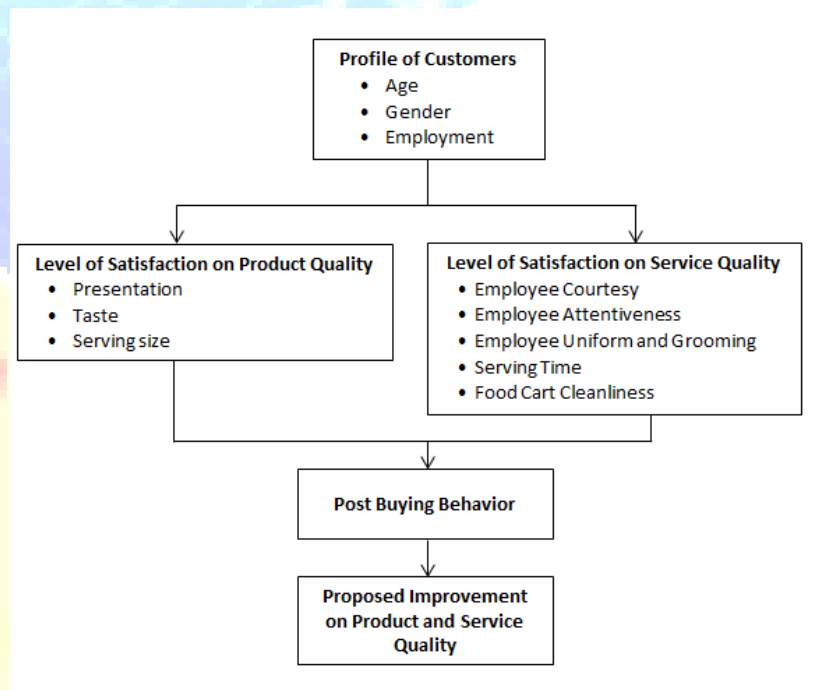


Figure 1

**Assessment of the Level of Customer Satisfaction of Franchised Food Cart Businesses Offering Coconut Products**

Figure I shows that customer satisfaction is one the most important parts in any business. It has controlled factors which include product quality and service quality. It also has unpredictable

aspects like the subjectivity of the customer's perspective. As unpredictable and hard to study as it may seem, customer satisfaction is still continuously being researched because of the changing trends of the general human population.

A food product is characterized with the way it was packaged, the label messages, etc (Domnica, 2014). Product quality has three main factors which may include presentation or the overall look of the final product, the taste or the flavor that fills your tongue and the serving size which is a key factor with what the customers expect.

### *Significance of the Study*

Franchising Company could take advantage from our study through the information from our surveys. The results from our surveys could help them evaluate their franchises and analyze the standards and the actual quality that their franchises were rendering to the customers. They might also develop innovative and efficient ways of managing quality to maintain consistency.

Franchisees would be able to know the strengths and weaknesses of their business. They would be able to identify where they can improve the service and product quality of their business.

Employees would be able to evaluate themselves as to what they needed to develop as a part of the organization. In addition, they would be able to identify what aspects the employers need them to focus for the best possible service.

Customers would be able to identify the difference in the product and service quality of the food cart business in Manila and Quezon City.

Future Owners could have feasibility study of putting up a food cart business like those that sell buko shakes in Manila and Quezon City. They would be able to plan ahead of time to improve on the weaknesses of the business if there were any.

Future Researchers could study the results of this paper in order to analyze the difference between the customers' preferences and observations for franchised food carts in Manila and Quezon City.

### *Scope and Limitation of the Study*

The scopes of this study were the aspects in determining the product and service quality of beverage franchised food carts through the demographic profile of the customers in terms of their age, sex, and employment status. It also included the Product Quality in terms of presentation,

taste, and serving size. For Service Quality in terms of employee courtesy, employee attentiveness, employee uniform and grooming, serving time, and food cart cleanliness.

It also covered the Post-Buying Behavior of the customers. If there any variations of level of satisfaction between Manila City and Quezon City in terms of Product and Service Quality of franchised food carts. Lastly, were about the Proposed Improvements for the Product and Service Quality.

The limitations of this study were the data collection was set and accomplished in September 2014 only. The location of the data gathering was in LRT Line 2 stations in Manila and Quezon City. Most of the respondents were most students from the general public. One of the limitations of this study was schedule conflicts and also financial considerations for vast scope of research. Time constraint was one of the problems when we conducted the survey due to academic activities that were scheduled prior target schedule and the area that was covered was larger than expected.

### ***Literature Review***

Customer satisfaction has always been a huge part of a business. It is the mediator in the relationship of success and the business. It is a favorable reaction, which satisfy customer expectations (Po, Ching, Cheng, 2014). Customers are impressed when service exceeds their expectations, and this will result to frequent visits. If the service is more consistent, the customer will like it and they will advertise with confidence, that the product of the business is good. Customer satisfaction is widely accepted as a bridge that connects service quality and purchase intention relationship. Customers judge the service experience based on one-on-one interactions and is significant in determining satisfaction (Srivastava, Rai, 2013).

Customers may show positive attitudes and encouraging actions hint that they prefer a certain level of service over others. Customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by the great service quality. If a customer feels the fulfillment of the product that they have bought or experienced, it is their greatest response to the business' service rendering quality. Such rewards give the business an idea of success. It may also provide different levels of satisfaction (Srivastava, Rai, 2013).

Concepts are also presented in customer satisfaction; service or product transactions are bases for measuring customer satisfaction, and the total experience of a customer is a measurement of satisfaction as cited by (Srivastava, Rai, 2013). Feelings, cognitive perception, and attitude help

the business gauge the customer's satisfaction, especially in post-buying behavior. In addition, it may express the attitude that the customers have towards a business. Satisfaction can also indicate the link between the pre-purchase and post-purchase evaluations. Furthermore, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty share a fragile relationship when satisfaction is low, reasonable when satisfaction is intermediate and heavy duty when satisfaction is high. Skyrocketing levels of satisfaction lead to upgraded loyalty levels for the business and will also decrease customer's attention towards other contenders.

Quality is in accordance to the requirements (Atrek, Bayraktaroglu, 2012). High quality products must meet the expectations of the customers because quality has a relationship with satisfaction of customers leading to the definition of service quality by Lewis (1983) that service quality should accord to the customer expectations consistently. Quality is divided into two: technical and functional. Technical quality tackles what the customer is actually receiving, and functional quality refers to the way of delivering services. The quality is said to be high if the discernments on the performance outweighs the expectations (Atrek, Bayraktaroglu 2012).

Multi-market competition can affect the product quality judgment of the customers. This can facilitate minimized actions from a business, which can hide their plans from another competitor, but only when the parts of the market are not equal. Quality is observed after a customer experiences the product. When quality is inspected, uproar happens and this allows customers who do not like the quality to bash the business and find another replacement.

Product quality is one of the best ways to identify if a business is good or not, or if the business can compete. The quality of products defines the satisfaction and the post-purchase behavior of customers. There are two catalogs for the framework of product quality, namely; extrinsic cues (external quality) and intrinsic cues (internal quality) (Francisco-Jose et.al, 2012). External is pertaining to the likes of the brand image, the external design of the store of the business, and price. There are cases in which the customers only rely on external quality for evaluation such as issues with familiarity with the type of product that they have limited to no chance of evaluating the quality. Maybe the data that the business shares about the product provides insufficient knowledge for the customers. These are only some of the complications in dealing with external quality. On the other hand, internal quality pertains to the product itself, for it cannot be changed unless the product is changed. It is further identified as Objective, as to whether the product

executes, the way it is intended to, and Subjective which pertains to the impact of customer perception on details such as product design image (Francisco-Jose, et.al, 2012).

This study presents the aspect of improvement in the products and service of a coconut shake food cart which is also classified as a quick service establishment. The product should be consistent with its taste, appearance, packaging, and portion size. The service however should be consistent with the overall performance. It starts with the cleanliness of the food cart, the uniforms of the employees, the equipment used, the attitude of the employees, and the timeliness of the orders. In order for improvement to occur, they must exceed what their customers expect from them. Their products and services should go beyond their standards.

### **Methodology**

The nature of this research was in quantitative, since the research focused on the product quality and service quality of franchised food carts that sell beverage products. This is to have better understanding on how to improve satisfaction on customers through gathered data specifically by the use of prearranged questionnaires that determined their service quality and product quality versus the actual performance of the staff and the product itself.

### **Research Design**

The research design in this study is a descriptive-evaluative. This design is to appraise carefully the worthiness of the current study (Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin, 2007). The study used to evaluate the level of customer satisfaction in terms of product and service quality.

### **Sampling Design and Samples**

The study used the quota sampling design. This is a non-probability sampling method which involves the selection of prospective participants according to specified quotas (Pagaduan, 2006). This technique was used since most of the food carts that sell beverage products were accessible and available for most or in almost every consumer who were also the possible respondents.

The respondents of the study are 50 customers of franchised food cart businesses offering coconut products from LRT Line 2 stations in Manila City and 50 customers in Quezon City or a total of 100 customers.

### **Data Collection Method**

The data collection method in this research was the Questionnaire Method as it was in line with the purpose of this research. According to Zeiger (2014), we had used surveys in this data



gathering because of the fact that it was cost-effective and could easily accommodate a larger group of people. We believed that surveys were the best method because we had gathered data quickly within a short time span. A survey, which was a set of questions, was used to gather information within a short period. It was the most common method of gathering information.

The pre-test was conducted on August 26, 2014 in the LRT Line 2 stations in Manila and Quezon City. Survey questionnaires were used to conduct the data collection. The duration of the self-administered questionnaire was only 10 minutes per respondent

During the data gathering, some problems were encountered like the consent to conduct surveys in our chosen locales. Aside from that, chosen respondents had been timid in participating in the interview. Other reasons were the lack of time to answer, lack of interest, and interference of the management or guards in the area.

The questionnaire was divided into 4 parts. The first part was all about the Demographic Profile of a respondent which included their name, age, sex, and employment status. The second part was about the Product Quality which consisted of indicators of good product quality. The third part was about the Service Quality which consisted of measures of good service quality. The last part was about the Post-Buying Behavior which came from the feedback of customers who had tried or bought buko shakes from franchised food carts and that determined the Proposed Quality Improvements. It also determined if there were any variations between the two locales in terms of Product and Service Quality. The questionnaire contained the 4 Point Likert Scale; one for Level of Satisfaction and the other one for Level of Agreement for Post-Buying Behavior; they were all closed-ended questions. We had formulated structured questions based on the categories from our conceptual framework which helped us identify the perception of the customers toward actual service that they had experienced through franchised food carts.

### ***Data Presentation and Analysis***

The data presented was an assessment of the level of customer satisfaction in terms of product quality and service quality in Manila City and Quezon City. The gathered data served as basis for improvement for the quality of product and service. The respondents who answered the survey are located in LRT line 2 stations located in Manila City and Quezon City.

### ***Customer Profile***

In table 1 below, customers' were between the ages of 15-55 years of age. Most respondents were in the age bracket of 15-25 years old. Few of the respondents were in the brackets of 36-45 years old and 46-55 years old.

Table 1  
Customers profile in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-25	86	86%
26-35	10	10%
36-45	2	2%
46-55	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 also shows that more than three quarters or 86% of the respondents were teenagers and young adults. They were very interested in trying coconut beverage products. Less than a quarter of our respondents were young adult professionals in the ages of 26-35 years old, while 4% were in the ages of 36-45 and 46-55 years old.

Table 2  
Customers profile in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	54	54%
Female	46	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table 2, there was a small difference between the number of male and female respondents. More than half or 54% of our respondents were male and less than half or 46% of the respondents were female.

Table 3

**Customers profile in terms of Employment Status**

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employed	25	25%
Student	75	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table 3, the students represent 75% of the total respondents while employed represents quarter or 25% of the respondents.

Table 4

**Level of Customer Satisfaction in terms of Product Quality**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Presentation	3.04	Satisfied
Taste	3.10	Satisfied
Serving Size	3.19	Satisfied
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>

**Legend:** 3.26 – 4.00 = *Very Satisfied*; 2.51 – 3.25 = *Satisfied*; 1.76 – 2.50 = *Dissatisfied*;  
1.00 – 1.75 = *Very Dissatisfied*

In Table 4, Respondents were generally satisfied with the overall product quality of product (x=3.11). Their highest satisfaction rate was with the serving size (x=3.19). They are also satisfied with the presentation (x=3.04) and taste (x=3.19) of the product even though it provided lower scores.

The respondents were satisfied because they have experienced the product many times and it was proven that they want to try it again. As stated by Molina-Castillo, et.al (2013), using different components or dimensions of product quality externally and internally greatly affects and contributes to the judgment of the customers towards the business.

Table 5

**Level of Customer Satisfaction in terms of Service Quality**

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Employee Courtesy	3.23	Satisfied
Employee Attentiveness	3.06	Satisfied
Employee Uniform and Grooming	3.03	Satisfied
Serving Time	3.15	Satisfied
Food Cart Cleanliness	3.05	Satisfied
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>

**Legend:** 3.26 – 4.00 = *Very Satisfied*; 2.51 – 3.25 = *Satisfied*; 1.76 – 2.50 = *Dissatisfied*;  
1.00 – 1.75 = *Very Dissatisfied*

In Table 5, the customers value employee courtesy ( $x=3.23$ ) the most, followed by serving time ( $x=3.15$ ), employee attentiveness ( $x=3.06$ ), food cart cleanliness (3.05) and employee uniform and grooming (3.05). Wu, Huang (2014) stated that in order to have loyal customers and success, the business must balance anticipations and actual experiences such that both of these are affected by different factors such as physical environment, psychological experiences, etc. and they must provide and exceed expectations.

Table 6

**Level of Agreement on Post-Buying Behavior**

Post-Buying Behavior	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Recommend the product	3.12	Agree
Purchase the same product	3.14	Agree
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Legend:** 3.26 – 4.00 = *Strongly Agree*; 2.51 – 3.25 = *Agree*; 1.76 – 2.50 = *Disagree*;  
1.00 – 1.75 = *Strongly Disagree*

Table 6 shows that respondents agree that they will purchase the same product ( $x=3.14$ ) and will recommend the product ( $x=3.12$ ). Since quality is very much related to post-buying behavior, it is broken down into three processes named by Golder, Mitra, Moorman (2012) which are production, experience and evaluation. Customers decide whether they will come back for another try or go beyond what they know to expand their knowledge about different products that are available within their area. This psychological after-effect is an important part in assessing the quality that the business provides its customers.

Table 7

**Proposed Product and Service Quality Improvement**

<b>Product Quality</b>	<b>Proposed Improvements</b>
Presentation	Redesign new packaging for the products.
Taste	Ensure that the staffs consistently follow the standardized recipe.
Serving Size	Bottles and cups should be filled correctly by staff by following standard portions.
<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Proposed Improvements</b>
Employee Courtesy	Managers should consistent ensure that the staff consistently smiles and greets the customers
Employee Attentiveness	Managers should ensure that the staff attends to guest needs within 5 seconds.
Employee Uniform and Grooming	Regular inspection for uniforms, make sure that they have complete sets of uniform, impose a minimal penalty if not wearing hairnets, and gloves if needed. Change the design of the staff uniform every 2 years.
Serving Time	Orders should be prepared within 5 minutes to avoid long waiting time and ensure high guest turn over.
Food Cart Cleanliness	Managers should always ensure that the food cart including cabinets is well-maintained and cleaned by the staff. Ensure also the availability of cleaning materials.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusion

This study concludes that the customers were generally satisfied with the overall product quality of product in terms of serving size, presentation and taste. They were also satisfied in the quality of service in terms of employee courtesy, serving time, employee attentiveness, food cart cleanliness and employee uniform and grooming. They agreed that they will purchase the same product and will recommend the product offered by the franchised food cart business to other customers.

### Recommendations

Food cart franchise owners may add more food carts in Manila and Quezon City. The company may change the design the presentation of the product since there are consumers to ensure higher satisfaction. They may also add extra ingredients to their product to make it look more appetizing and enjoyable so that customers will consistently recommend their product to other customers.

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