



Identifying Common Themes in Customer Feedback: A Content Analysis on the Outlook of Consumers Towards Coffee Shops in Sta. Catalina Sur

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Abstract

This research study explores customers' underlying standards of business strategy within the context of coffee shops. It investigates leveraging customer feedback to improve the products, services, and overall customer experience. Specifically, the paper identified the occurrence of prominent themes and patterns from consumers' outlooks and developed a strategical framework reflecting contemporary business strategies. The study employed a qualitative research design, occupying a content analysis approach. The research is centred on the local coffee shop and was selected based on its significant upswing in sales performance. The corpora of the study were creatively collected from customers who made purchases at the selected coffee shop, while the researchers used Miles and Huberman's (2013) steps in the analysis. The results revealed comments and suggestions as the two main themes reflected in the consumers' outlook, while patterns were classified in terms of price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, space and overcrowding, and taste balance. This study provided invaluable recommendations not alone for coffee shop owners, managers, and consumers but also for students, educators, and stakeholders in the business field. These insights offered actionable strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the study's implications extend beyond the coffee shop context, contributing to the broader understanding of consumer behaviour, and effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: *consumer outlook, business strategy, feedback, comment, and suggestion*

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Introduction

Customer feedback offers a wide range of insights regarding the satisfaction level of consumers in products. These ranges involve consumer engagement with products, enhanced marketing strategies defined by consumer's needs and preferences, and the like. By listening to these insights, issues are prevented, and loyal customers are made. Due to the competitive nature of coffee shops nowadays, customer feedback holds immense significance in this industry. According to Duman (2020), it could offer a compass to local businesses, particularly in tailoring menus, considering quality product control, exploring innovative and special offerings, and optimizing pricing.

However, in the current post-pandemic era, the consumer's outlook has significantly impacted the coffee shop industry (Ismoyowati, 2021). These changes involve the consumer's behaviour and preferences, environmental safety concerns, shifting to online strategies, and fluctuating demands (Schaefer, 2021). In short, the stipulations, expectations, and satisfaction levels of consumers have possibly emerged greatly as a response to economic changes.

Since the coffee shop is one of the most outgrowing businesses in the chosen locale, this has increased the avenue to deal in this context of business. Moreover, a considerable amount of research is found to justify the claim of the importance of customer satisfaction identified through feedback as reflected on one's outlook in the coffee business. A significant relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty is found in Lee and Moon (2018) in the exploration of attributes of the coffee shop business to customer satisfaction. Duman (2020) considered this [customer satisfaction] as the factor that consists of both tangible and intangible elements that greatly affect coffee shops' food quality, service quality, and ambiance. With these gaps, it has been the keen interest of the researchers to explore and establish a baseline understanding of what and how customer preferences and feedback could influence or be of any help to develop a proposed framework reflecting the contemporary business strategy in local coffee shops.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the different common themes reflected in the consumer's outlook and determine the patterns that can be found in the consumers' outlook that identify and develop strategies to meet consumers' needs. By this, it yields to construction of proposed framework that reflects contemporary business strategies of coffee shops.

Theoretical Framework

The framework of this study draws upon key theories and models to support its central purpose. The following are: User Feedback Iceberg Theory, SWOT Analysis for Decision Making and the concept on the Significance of Business Strategy. These theories and concepts collectively inform the construction of a contemporary framework tailored to consumers' outlook on coffee shop operations.

Choi's User Feedback Iceberg Theory serves as the foundational pillar of this study. This theory posits that customer feedback, analogous to an iceberg, consists of both overt and covert elements. It emphasizes that feedback from customers contains valuable insights that can guide businesses in meeting consumer demands effectively. Given the study's objective of uncovering latent themes in consumer outlook, these proves highly relevant. It underscores the belief that customer input significantly contributes to business enhancement.

Steffens' SWOT Analysis for Decision Making offers a strategic framework essential for the development of contemporary business strategies. The pursuit of a sustainable competitive edge drives this framework, requiring organizations to formulate business plans that optimize internal strengths while addressing weaknesses. SWOT analysis connects internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, providing an effective strategy formulation method. This aligns seamlessly with the focus of the study, highlighting the need for coffee shops to align operational strengths with consumer needs while addressing vulnerabilities and external challenges. Lastly, Boyles emphasizes the critical importance of a well-defined business strategy. This theory asserts that without a clear business strategy, companies struggle to create value and face challenges in achieving success. In the competitive landscape, a coherent framework that encompasses the business strategy is vital for coffee shops in Sta. Catalina Sur to thrive and meet the evolving demands of consumers.

In a nutshell, the aforementioned frameworks collectively guide the present study to identify common themes in customer feedback and construct contemporary business strategies for coffee shops. The framework underscores the value of customer input, the need to align operational strengths with consumer needs, and the imperative of a well-defined business strategy for the success and competitiveness of coffee shops in Sta. Catalina Sur.

Methodology

Research Design

This paper employed a qualitative research method and utilized a content analysis approach. The combination of the two allows the researchers to gain insights and determine words, themes, patterns, or concepts in qualitative data with an in-depth examination of their importance and connections in consumer feedback on coffee shops (Bernard, 2012). The discovery in this study produced a proposed framework that visualizes strategies in business reflected from consumer outlooks.

Research Locale

This study examined consumer outlooks in a coffee shop in Sta Catalina Sur Candelaria, Quezon, focusing on the coffee shop's ongoing trend and increased sales. The study provided a baseline understanding of customer preferences and feedback, which can serve as a starting point for local entrepreneurs in the field.

Corpus of the Study

The study utilized customized note papers with diverse consumer feedback to analyze coffee shop perspectives, identify themes and patterns, and categorize customer opinions. The following criteria are used in choosing the collected corpus of the study: (a) It should contain feedback, comments, and suggestions regarding the consumers' outlook on that coffee shop. (b) The corpus should not contain personal letters. (c) The data is willingly given as a sign of the participation of the consumers.

Data Gathering Procedure

With the owner's permission, researchers performed a study in a coffee shop, where they set up a "Feedback Wall" for patrons to express their thoughts. High internal validity and a regulated setting for the analysis of variables were made possible by this method. Customers consented, and the researchers visited the store every other day to read the reviews. After three weeks, researchers collected all of the written comments and did an analysis.

Data Analysis

In this section, we provide an in-depth overview of the data analysis process employed in this study. The research utilized the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (2013) to systematically analyse the collected data. This process encompassed four key steps: generation of raw data, chunking or coding, grouping, and deriving meaning from the data.

(a) Generating raw data: The researchers collected written feedback from customers through a "Feedback Wall" in a coffee shop. (b) Chunking or coding: They used a manual coding process to categorize the data, identifying key phrases and coding them as codes. (c) Inter-coder reliability checks were conducted to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. (d.) Grouping and deriving meaning: The researchers then grouped the data into categories to understand common themes and patterns in customer feedback. (e.) Data interpretation and error handling: The final stage of data analysis assessed the categories to understand customer perceptions of product flavor, cost, and atmosphere. The researchers maintained a rigorous coding procedure and inter-coder reliability checks to improve the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Ethical Consideration

To assure validity and safeguard participants' intellectual property, privacy, and confidentiality, the researchers made clear the purpose of the study and its difficulties. Participants weren't coerced into participating and were informed about their needs for participation. The contributions of other researchers or pertinent material were acknowledged, and feedback was kept anonymous. The names of the participants were not revealed.

Findings and Discussion

Common themes reflected on consumers' outlook

Outlook is the information given by customers that reflects one's experience to a product or service. It helps coffee shops improve their products and services, identify areas for improvement, and build customer relationships. The discussion of these findings is pertinent to both consumers and businesses. The following exemplars in this section contain

the identified themes and patterns that reflects the outlook of the consumers towards coffee shop in Sta Catalina Sur.

Theme 1.1. Comments on Product Taste

There are several statements which reflect the comments of the participants about the taste of the product. The words used to emphasize the theme are highlighted such as, “*mangocheesecake, maasim*”; “*hindi matamis, hindi matabang*”; “*pagakatamis*”; “*masarap*”. The descriptions reflect flavors, quality of taste and features referring to the gustatory senses of the participants. On the other hand, the way the statements are expressed exhibits an expression of opinion or comment on the product quality [taste]. Cambridge University Press and Assessment (2012) states that comments are remarks of expression from one’s opinion. Since the statements are made based on the personal expression of the participants yielded from the experience of trying the product, it justifies the point of the statements made as themes reflecting comments to taste. Nadathur and Carolan (2017) state that flavor and taste are important factors for food enjoyment. It is then a reliable sign that most of the data gathered speaks about the taste of the product. It could, therefore, be considered as impactful to the success of a business. In addition to this, Suchánek et al. (2015) further imply that customers’ satisfaction is the feeling for a product that can be met. Customers comments are important to know their feelings and thoughts so that the coffee shop can meet their wants for the product. Aggarwal et al. (2016) implied in his study that taste was evaluated as “very important” by 77 percent. Therefore, product taste has a significant impact to the food preference of consumers.

Theme 1.2. Comments on Place

Words that are used to accentuate the customers’ comments are highlighted including: **perfect, maliit, “magabok at medyo maingay”**. These descriptions show the consumers’ negative feedback on the place and a word of way in describing mostly the expected ambiance. Hutchinson (2012) discussed that customers will be able to look around and enjoy themselves, socialize, feel good, and even stay longer than anticipated when soak up in the vibe of the area. Cafes with a pleasant store environment are more likely to attract customers, which increases their likelihood of revisiting. Satisfaction of the customer is not always about the product or service, but also about place satisfaction.

Place as one of the themes found in this study, confirmed to be an important aspect in business as Sherman (2022) states that place and location has a big impact on whether a business succeeds or fails. The study also added that a good place is an attraction to the consumers and its characteristic has significant impact to the customers.

Theme 1.3. Comments on Price

“Pricey”, “**napaka mura**”, and “**very affordable**” are highlighted words which describes the customers’ feedback regarding the cost of the beverage. Chron (2020) asserts that the allure of competitively priced items serves as an enticement for patrons to enter the cafe, by this means, one could exhibit a greater propensity to engage in the purchase of moderately priced items. Price has a direct impact on the cafe's profitability; providing flexible pricing will assist the business in getting consumers. The price has a significant positive effect on consumers’ satisfaction due to the value that is considered very expensive by the target market.

Theme 2.1. Suggestions about Product

Statements represent the consumers’ suggestions about the product quality [taste]. The following are as follows: “**Extra Flavor**”, “**More Flavor**”, “**Sana magka iced coffee na chocolate**”, “**Dapat may milk**”, “**Sana pede ding ipagmix yung milktea at fruittea**”, and “**Mas masarap kung mas matamis**”. The statements suggest adjustments to the formulation of the beverages, as well as additional flavors to the coffee shop’s menu. The responses from the participants directly fall on the product quality. Perzynska (2023) claims that the primary suggestion from the customers is more often related to the quality of products or services. By listening to customers’ suggestion or feedback, it will meet the customer satisfaction and leads to business improvement. Similarly, even previous research claim that buyers prioritized and placed greater value on quality over price. Though both are running in the competition, statistics reported that the quality or value of a product is rated by consumers with 51 percent than the price of the product (The First Insight, 2023).

Theme 2.2. Suggestion

Statements requesting to add more electric fans and to change the place’s ambiance are themes categorized as the suggestions referring to the place. It implies that the coffee

shop should add more ventilation and should change the cafe's theme. Related to this evidence is a finding which reveals that consumers puts a great value and consideration to the physical location, appearance and atmosphere of the stores and business (Ilakya et al., 2020).

Identified Patterns Based on the Consumers' Outlook

The patterns identified from consumers' outlook were categorized. It paves its way to structurally provide, the results showed seven (7) distinct patterns, including price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, repeat visits, space and congestion, and taste balance. Researchers create business plans based on the patterns. Greene (2020) discussed that the reason why having a strategy is so important is because it gives business time to get a sense of how they are performing, what their capabilities are, and if these capabilities are able to help them grow.

Framework of Business Strategies Based on the Consumers' Outlook

Based on the consumers comments, feedback, and suggestions about the product cost and taste, and the place; the coffee shop can create different business strategies to improve their business. The costumers complain about the taste of the products, some customers said that beverages are too bland and does not mixed well. So, the business can improve it by adjusting the flavor to right amount of sweetness. Regarding on the price, the coffee shop can launch another size of drinks that has a lower price so that it can be affordable for everyone. Some customers are requesting to add more electric fans. Since listening to the costumers is important, the business should grant it. They should add more electric fans. These business strategies that can be develop based on the consumer outlooks can help the business to improve and meet the consumers satisfaction. According to Boyles (2022), business strategy is the creation, coordination, and integration of a company's strategic efforts in order to provide it a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Creating a business strategy will help you have a clear plan for achieving organizational goals so that your company can continue to exist and grow.

Conclusion

The study reveals two main themes: comments and suggestions about product, price, and place. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the taste and quality of the products,

as well as the size and suitability of the place. Comments on product taste, price, and place included opinions on the taste, pricing, and physical environment. Participants also suggested improvements to the products and the place, such as adding more flavors, mixing different beverages, and requesting an aesthetic theme. On one hand, seven (7) patterns in customer comments that influence business strategies are identified, namely price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, space and overcrowding, and taste balance. The researchers suggest offering a range of price points, adjusting sweetness levels or adding extra flavors, maintaining high-quality beverages, implementing loyalty programs, improving ambiance and cleanliness, expanding or optimizing space, and ensuring the right balance of sweetness and flavor in drinks. These patterns note the details in developing strategies for different budgets and maintaining customer satisfaction. Strategies are identified based on consumers' outlook, specifically: (a) enhancing the flavor profile of products and beverages and (b) enhancing spatial atmosphere as few of the customers ask for some change in ambiance; (c) flexible pricing tailored to customer preferences.

In a nutshell, the study reveals that customer feedback significantly informs business strategies in coffee shops, prompting a recommendation for ongoing and responsive engagement with customers to enhance product quality, pricing, ambiance, and overall experience. To remain competitive, businesses should refine their feedback systems and prioritize excellent customer service. The strategies uncovered in this study hold valuable recommendations for students, educators, and business stakeholders alike. By understanding the significance of customer feedback and its role in shaping successful strategies, students can gain practical insights into real-world business dynamics. Educators can incorporate these findings into their teachings, illustrating the tangible impact of customer-centric approaches on business success.

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