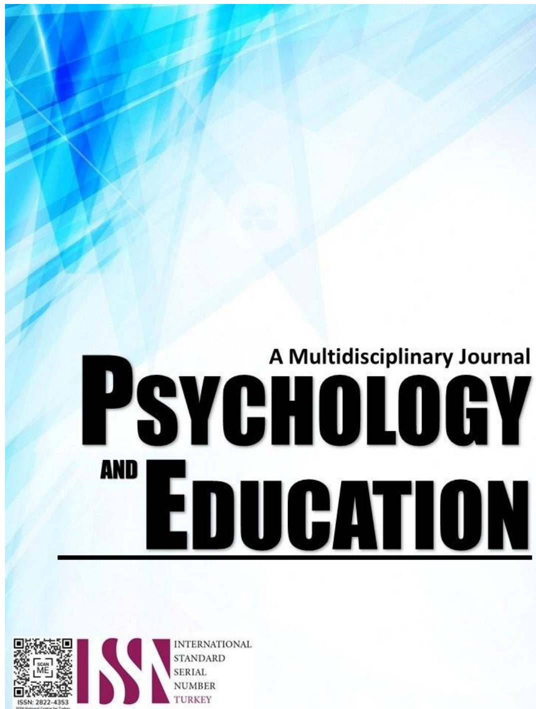
DYNAMICS OF FOOD CART BUSINESSES: ANALYZING THEIR IMPACT TO TRADITIONAL FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IN LOCAL MARKETS OF SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES IN QUEZON PROVINCE



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Research Article

Dynamics of Food Cart Businesses: Analyzing their Impact to Traditional Food Establishments in Local Markets of Selected Municipalities in Quezon Province

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Abstract

The food service industry has experienced a remarkable shift due to the emergence of food cart businesses, outpacing the growth rates of traditional restaurants. Recent data reveals a significant 7.9% annual growth in the food cart industry, in contrast to the more modest 2% expansion in the overall food establishment industry. The multifaceted nature of food cart businesses is highlighted in existing literature, showcasing their mobility, lower overhead costs, and unique selling strategies that defy traditional market norms. The distinctiveness of these products adds to their appeal and financial success, establishing a clear presence in the market. The influence of food carts reaches far and wide, affecting areas such as increased competition, changing consumer tastes, and transforming market dynamics. Grasping the significance of these implications is of utmost importance, leading traditional local markets to reassess their strategies, develop innovative offerings, and improve their marketing approaches to stay competitive. This study seeks to thoroughly investigate the effects of food carts on traditional food establishments in specific municipalities of Quezon Province. A sample size of 35 customers and 15 food establishment owners was selected using purposive sampling. Data collection was done using questionnaires. The result shows that food cart enterprises negatively impact the number of customers and price changes but positively impact the food quality of traditional food establishments. Findings also show that customers prefer food carts to food establishments in terms of affordability and accessibility but not food quality.

Keywords: *food cart, local market, transforming market*

Introduction

The landscape of the food service industry has witnessed a transformative shift with the emergence and escalating popularity of food cart businesses (Yoon & Chung, 2018). The food cart sector has experienced a remarkable growth trajectory, outpacing the annual expansion of the traditional restaurant industry. Recent data indicates that the food cart sector has seen an impressive annual growth rate of 7.9%, contrasting with the more modest yearly growth of approximately 2% observed in the food establishment industry (Kumar, 2019). Defined as small vehicles equipped with cooking and selling food facilities, food carts have become synonymous with food mobility, offering the flexibility to operate strategically in any location. This dynamism has propelled the growth of the food cart industry, influencing social, cultural, and economic opportunities for both vendors and consumers. As noted in various studies, the appeal of food carts lies in their convenience and ability to cater to diverse consumer preferences with unique strategies. The food cart phenomenon is characterized by its flexibility and adaptability, presenting a unique business model in a competitive food industry.

The existing literature points to the multifaceted nature of the food cart businesses. Food carts, known for their mobility, lower overhead costs, and unique selling strategies, introduce a new level of competitiveness that challenges the conventional norms of the local market. This uniqueness contributes to their popularity and profitability, fostering a distinct identity in the landscape. This impact is multifaceted and extends across various dimensions, such as increased competition, changing consumer preferences, and altered dynamics in the market industry. Understanding the implications of this shift, if there is any, is essential for several reasons.

First and foremost, the heightened competition may necessitate traditional local markets to reevaluate their strategies, innovate their offerings, and enhance their overall marketing strategies to remain competitive. The changing consumer landscape, driven by preferences for unique experiences and the influence of social media, further underscores the importance of evaluating these business trends. Additionally, insights gained from this can inform the national market on potential collaborative opportunities or adjustments to business models to effectively navigate this evolving industry. In essence, a comprehensive examination of the impact of food carts on traditional food establishments is crucial to strategic planning for better market competition.

By understanding the intricate interplay between consumer preferences and the food cart model, this research aims to evaluate the dynamics of food cart businesses, analyzing their impact on traditional food establishments in local markets of selected municipalities in Quezon Province.

Research Questions

Generally, this study aims to describe the dynamics of food cart businesses analyzing their impact traditional food establishments in local markets of selected municipalities in Quezon Province. However, this study will also try to:

1. Determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
    1.1. food establishment owner in local market; and
        1.1.1. years in food industry; and

        1.1.2. type of food establishment?
    1.2. Customers?
        1.2.1. age; and
        1.2.2. civil status?
2. What is the impact of food cart businesses on respondents' food establishment in terms of: (Food Establishment Owner's Perspective)
    2.1. numbers of customers;
    2.2. changes in food prices; and
    2.3. food quality competition?
3. What is the customer's preference in terms of patronizing food cart vs. traditional food establishment in local markets in terms of:
    3.1. food quality;
    3.2. affordability; and
    3.3. accessibility?
4. Is there any significant relationship between the profile of the respondents (customers) and their preference between food cart and traditional food establishment?

Methodology

Research Design

For this study, a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design will be utilized to comprehensively analyze the impact of food cart businesses on traditional food establishments in local markets. The main goal is to offer a thorough depiction of the present state of food cart enterprises and explore their influence on the local food market. At the same time, the study seeks to investigate possible connections between participants' profile and their preferences between food carts or traditional food establishments. The research design's descriptive nature provides a comprehensive perspective on how food cart businesses impact food establishments, especially from the viewpoint of food establishment owners. The study focuses on analyzing the customer base, fluctuations in food prices, and the competitive environment in terms of food quality. In addition, the study will explore possible connections between participants' profiles and their levels of satisfaction, specifically examining factors like age and marital status that may influence these relationships. In order to discover significant relationships and patterns within the data, we will utilize statistical tools such as correlation coefficients. These analytical tools are essential for providing a deeper understanding of the various factors involved in the intricate dynamics between food cart businesses, traditional food establishments, and the preferences and satisfaction levels of the respondents.

Respondents

For the proposed study, participants will be drawn from two distinct groups: food establishment owners and customers. The sampling approach will be stratified random sampling, with the strata being defined by seven selected municipalities in Quezon Province: Pagbilao, Mauban, Tiaong, Sariaya, Candelaria, Lopez, and Catanauan. These municipalities were chosen based on the criteria of having the most developed food establishments, making them particularly relevant for the study. Each municipality will serve as a stratum.

The selection process within each stratum will employ stratified random sampling to ensure diversity and representation. Within the strata, food establishment owners will be chosen if they operate near food cart enterprises, facilitating a meaningful comparison. A total of 15 food establishment owners will be selected from these municipalities.

Simultaneously, the second group of participants, comprising customers, will also be selected through stratified random sampling within the same municipalities. The aim is to include customers from food establishments that face near competition from food cart enterprises. A total of 35 customers will be included in the study.

By employing this stratified random sampling method, the study aims to ensure that food establishment owners and customers are adequately represented across the selected municipalities, contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the impact of food cart businesses on local food establishments. The final sample of 50 respondents, with 15 food establishment owners and 35 customers, will provide valuable insights into the perspectives of both key stakeholders in the local food market.

Instrument

The questionnaire design is structured with a clear emphasis on simplicity to ensure optimal understanding and participation by the respondents. The initial section focuses on gathering personal information, allowing respondents to include their names while requesting essential details mentioned in the study's objective. Sections 2 and 3 of the questionnaires serve as the core assessment point prompted to evaluate the perspective of the two sets of respondents. The instrument utilized a simplified Likert scale to facilitate a quick and straightforward expression of agreement from the respondents. The deliberate use of straightforward language and a concise structure underscores the researchers' commitment to creating a questionnaire that resonates with the respondents' diverse backgrounds and educational levels.

The validation of the survey questionnaire is a critical step in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data collected. Before the survey is administered to the participants, the research adviser will thoroughly validate the questionnaire. This involves a comprehensive questions review, ensuring clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Additionally, pilot testing may be conducted with a small sample of participants to identify potential issues or ambiguities in the questions.

Procedure

The data-gathering procedure involves a systematic approach to approaching the food establishment owners, obtaining permission to conduct the study, and collecting responses. The researchers will visit the selected food establishment owners and customers to conduct the data-gathering procedure. The researchers will introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the study, and seek formal permission to conduct the procedure. The researchers will emphasize the voluntary nature of participation, assuring that involvement in the study is entirely optional. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and the use of data solely for research purposes. Once permission is granted, the researchers will distribute the survey questionnaires to eligible participants. A clear explanation of completing the questionnaire will be provided, ensuring that participants understand each question and the rating scale. The researchers will collect the completed questionnaires personally to emphasize ethical considerations and participant confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Various statistical tools will analyze the collected data and uncover valuable insights. We will utilize frequency distribution and percentage calculations to provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' socio-demographic profile. This will help us present and describe the key demographic characteristics. In addition, we will be using ranking and Likert Scale to display the ratings given by the respondents. A 4-point Likert scale, selected for its accuracy in description, will be utilized for this purpose, offering a detailed comprehension of the participants' viewpoints. In addition, the Weighted Mean (WM) will be used to describe the data scale on the questionnaire. The Weighted Mean is especially valuable as it enables interpretation based on corresponding legends, making it easier to conduct a thorough and precise analysis of respondents' opinions. In order to investigate the connections between variables in the study, we will utilize the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The researcher will use Pearson's r, a bivariate statistical model, to assess a significant relationship between variables in this study. This method will be utilized to evaluate the relationship between the profile of the customers and their preferences for food carts and traditional food establishments.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the data collected for the study have been thoroughly analyzed and interpreted through the application of appropriate statistical tools. The presentation is structured in a manner that aligns with the specific questions outlined in the rationale of this study. To enhance clarity and comprehension, the data have been systematically organized and presented in tabular form.

Profile of the Respondents (Food Establishment Owners)

Table 1.1. *Type of Food Enterprise*

Types	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Rank*
Fast Service Food Enterprise	4	26.67 %	2
Self-Service Food Enterprise	6	40 %	1
Café/Pastry/Bakeshop	1	6.67 %	4
Pizza and Pasta	2	13.33 %	3.5
Drinks and other Beverages	2	13.33 %	3.5
Total	15	100 %	

Table 1.1 presents a detailed analysis of the demographic characteristics of food establishment owners in various municipalities of Quezon Province. The table specifically highlights the different types of food businesses they are engaged in. According to the data, there is a significant majority in the Self-Service Food Enterprise category, with 40% of the respondents. It is evident that a significant number of food establishment owners surveyed opt for self-service models, with a frequency of 6 indicating a noteworthy prevalence in this category. Fast Service Food Enterprises make up 26.67% of the respondents, with a frequency of 4. These findings indicate a notable presence of businesses that place a high value on efficiency and promptness.

Upon further examination of the data, it becomes evident that Pizza and Pasta businesses hold a significant level of importance, as do establishments that focus on Drinks and other Beverages. Both categories have an equal number of 4 respondents, suggesting a similar presence within the sampled group. Lastly, a smaller proportion of the respondents, specifically 6.67%, are involved in Café/Pastry/Bakeshop businesses. It appears that this specific type of food business is not as common among the food establishment owners surveyed in the specified region.

Table 1.2 provides a detailed overview of the respondents' characteristics, specifically their experience in the food business industry. It focuses on traditional food establishment owners in selected municipalities of Quezon Province. The data uncovers an interesting pattern in the distribution of years of experience among these owners. A significant portion of the sample is made up of individuals who have accumulated 6-10 years of experience, accounting for 33.33% of the respondents. There seems to be a significant number of long-standing traditional food establishments in the area. The prevalence of 5 within this category further highlights its significance.

Table 1.2. *By Years in Food Business Industry*

Years in the Industry	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Rank*
Below 1 year	3	20 %	2.5
1-5 years	2	13.33 %	4.5
6-10 years	5	33.33 %	1
11-15 years	2	13.33 %	4.5
More than 15 years	3	20 %	2.5
Total	15	100 %	

Additionally, the data reveals an intriguing pattern, as both the category of less than 1 year and the category of over 15 years each account for 20% of the participants. One observation points to a noticeable influx of new players in the field, while the other highlights a substantial number of well-established, long-standing food establishments. The variation in percentages highlights the range of operation durations among the traditional food establishment owners surveyed.

Table 1.2 provides insights into the diverse group of individuals who own traditional food establishments in Quezon Province. It highlights how respondents are distributed according to their years of experience in the food business industry. The prevalence of individuals with 6-10 years of experience, along with the equal representation of those with less than 1 year and over 15 years, offers a comprehensive insight into the temporal dynamics within the traditional food sector in the chosen municipalities.

Profile of the Respondents (Customers)

Table 2.1. *By Age*

Age	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Rank*
20 years old and below	13	37.14 %	1
21- 30 years old	11	31.43 %	2
31-40 years old	6	17.14 %	3
41-50 years old	4	11.43 %	4
51 years old and above	1	2.86 %	5
Total	35	100 %	

Table 2.1 offers a detailed overview of the customer demographics in certain municipalities of Quezon Province, with a specific focus on the age distribution of the respondents. The data reveals a significant focus on customers who are 20 years old and younger, making up a substantial portion of 37.14% with a frequency of 13. It appears that a considerable number of the customers surveyed belong to the younger age group, highlighting the popularity or ease of access of food businesses among the youth in the area.

Notably, the age group of 21-30 years old makes up 31.43% of the respondents, with a frequency of 11. This indicates a significant number of customers in their twenties. The following age groups demonstrate a gradual decrease in percentages, with 17.14% for individuals aged 31-40 and 11.43% for those aged 41-50. This suggests a decline in the number of customers in these age groups, emphasizing the higher concentration of customers in the younger demographics.

In contrast, the data shows that a smaller proportion of customers are aged 51 years and above, making up only 2.86%. It appears that the customer base of food enterprises in the surveyed municipalities is skewed towards younger demographics.

To summarize, Table 2.1 provides an overview of the age distribution of customers in food enterprises in Quezon Province. It highlights the significant presence of the younger population, including individuals aged 20 and below and those in their twenties. This information can provide valuable insights for businesses looking to customize their offerings and marketing strategies to meet the needs of the most prevalent age groups in the region.

Table 2.2. *By Years in Food Business Industry*

Status	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Rank*
Single	22	62.86 %	1
Married	10	28.57 %	2
Divorced	1	2.86 %	4
Widowed	2	5.71 %	3
Total	35	100 %	

Table 2.2 provides a detailed insight into the demographic profile of customers patronizing food enterprises in selected municipalities of Quezon Province, with a specific focus on the marital status of the respondents. The data highlights a notable predominance of single customers, constituting 62.86% of the surveyed sample with a frequency of 22. This suggests a significant majority of customers within the region's food establishments are unmarried. The higher frequency in the single category underscores the importance of targeting and tailoring services to meet the preferences and needs of this demographic.

On the other hand, the data indicates that married individuals also represent a substantial portion of the customer base, accounting for 28.57% with a frequency of 10. Although a smaller percentage, the significant frequency emphasizes the importance of considering the preferences and requirements of married customers in the planning and execution of food enterprises' offerings and services.

Impacts of food cart businesses on food establishment

Table 3.1. *In terms of Numbers of Customers*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
I have observed a noticeable decline in the number of customers at my traditional food establishment due to the competition from nearby food cart businesses.	3.33	Agree	1
I believe that the presence of food carts has led to a negative shift in the number of customers choosing my traditional food establishment.	2.61	Agree	2
The presence of food cart businesses in the local market has significantly lessen the number of customers visiting my traditional food establishment.	2.37	Disagree	3
Overall Mean	2.77	Agree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 3.1 presents insights into the perceived impacts of food cart businesses on traditional food establishments, as reported by respondents. The table ranks statements based on the level of agreement expressed by the respondents.

The top-ranked statement, with a score of 3.33, indicates that a majority of respondents agree that they have observed a noticeable decline in the number of customers at their traditional food establishments due to competition from nearby food cart businesses. This suggests that the presence of food carts has had a tangible impact on customer traffic for traditional establishments, leading to increased competition in the local market.

The second-ranked statement, scoring 2.61, reveals that respondents also agree that the presence of food carts has led to a negative shift in the number of customers choosing their traditional food establishments. This further underscores the perception among respondents that food cart businesses are affecting the customer preferences and choices in favor of more mobile and convenient options.

However, the third-ranked statement, with a score of 2.37 and expressing disagreement, indicates that a portion of the respondents do not believe that the presence of food cart businesses has significantly lessened the number of customers visiting their traditional food establishments. This suggests a diversity of opinions among respondents regarding the extent of the impact.

The overall score of 2.77 indicates a general agreement among respondents that food cart businesses do impact traditional food establishments in terms of the number of customers. This synthesis reflects the collective perception that the competition from food carts has resulted in observable changes in customer behavior and patronage towards traditional food establishments in the surveyed area.

Table 3.2. *In terms of Changes of Food Prices*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
I utilized significant decrease in the prices of my food items at my traditional food establishment to deal with competition from nearby food cart businesses.	2.29	Disagree	3
The introduction of food cart businesses has negatively impacted the pricing strategy at my traditional food establishment, making it more competitive in the local market.	2.52	Agree	1
I perceive that the coexistence of food cart businesses has significantly influenced the pricing of food items at my traditional food establishment.	2.34	Disagree	2
Overall Mean	2.83	Agree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 3.2 provides insights into the perceived impacts of food cart businesses on traditional food establishments, specifically in terms of changes in food prices. The table ranks statements based on the level of agreement expressed by the respondents.

With top-ranked statement, with a score of 2.52, indicates that a majority of respondents agree that the introduction of food cart businesses has negatively impacted the pricing strategy at their traditional food establishments, making it more competitive in the local market. This suggests that the presence of food carts has influenced traditional establishments to adjust their pricing strategies to remain competitive in response to the new market dynamics.

With second-ranked statement, scoring 2.34 and expressing disagreement, suggests that respondents do not perceive a significant influence of the coexistence of food cart businesses on the pricing of food items at their traditional food establishments. This indicates a divergence in opinions among respondents regarding the extent to which food cart businesses impact the pricing of traditional establishments.

The third-ranked statement, with a score of 2.29 and expressing disagreement, suggests that respondents do not believe they have utilized a significant decrease in the prices of their food items at traditional food establishments to deal with competition from nearby food cart businesses. This indicates that not all respondents feel the need to resort to significant price reductions as a competitive strategy against food cart businesses.

The overall score of 2.83 suggests that, on average, food establishment owners agree that food cart businesses impact traditional food establishments in terms of changes in food prices. This synthesis implies a general acknowledgment that the presence of food carts has influenced pricing strategies among traditional food establishments in the surveyed area, although individual opinions on the extent of this influence may vary.

Table 3.3. *In terms of Changes of Food Quality Competition*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
The presence of food cart businesses has intensified competition in terms of food quality, compelling my traditional food establishment to enhance its offerings.	3.37	Strongly Agree	3
I believe that the presence of food carts has positively influenced the food quality competition, encouraging my traditional food establishment to maintain high standards.	3.76	Strongly Agree	1
The introduction of food cart businesses has positively impacted the food quality competition, motivating my traditional food establishment to innovate and stand out in the market	3.58	Strongly Agree	2
Overall Mean	3.57	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 3.3 offers insights into how traditional food establishment owners perceive the impacts of food cart businesses on food quality competition. The table ranks statements based on the level of agreement expressed by the respondents.

The top-ranked statement, with a score of 3.76, strongly indicates that a significant majority of respondents strongly agree that the presence of food carts has positively influenced food quality competition. This suggests that food cart businesses have played a constructive role in encouraging traditional food establishments to maintain high standards in terms of food quality.

The second-ranked statement, scoring 3.58 and also strongly agreed upon, indicates that respondents believe the introduction of food cart businesses has positively impacted food quality competition. This positive influence is attributed to the motivation for traditional food establishments to innovate and distinguish themselves in the market.

The third-ranked statement, with a score of 3.37 and a strong agreement, suggests that the presence of food cart businesses has intensified competition in terms of food quality. This, in turn, has compelled traditional food establishments to enhance their offerings to meet the heightened standards of competition.

The overall weighted mean (WM) of 3.57 strongly signifies that, on average, traditional food establishment owners strongly agree that food cart enterprises have a significant impact on food quality competition. This synthesis suggests that food cart businesses are viewed as positive influencers, driving traditional establishments to elevate their food quality standards, innovate, and intensify their offerings to stay competitive in the market.

Customer’s Preference in Terms of Patronizing Food Cart vs. Traditional Food Establishment in Local Markets

Table 4.1. *In terms of Changes of Food Quality*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
Food cart products in terms of quality are appealing to me, than those from traditional food establishments in local markets.	1.72	Strongly Disagree	1
I perceive food carts in local markets to maintain a satisfactory level of food quality compared to traditional food establishments.	1.36	Strongly Disagree	2
The cleanliness of food carts products in local markets meet or exceed my expectations, making them a preferable choice over traditional food establishments.	1.23	Strongly Disagree	3
Overall Mean	1.44	Strongly Disagree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 4.1 reflects the customer preferences regarding patronizing food cart businesses versus traditional food establishments in local markets.

The top-ranked statement, with a score of 1.72 and indicating "Strongly Disagree," indicates that, on average, customers strongly disagree that food cart products, in terms of quality, are more appealing to them than those from traditional food establishments in local markets. This suggests a clear preference among customers for the quality of products offered by traditional food establishments over food carts.

The second-ranked statement, with a score of 1.36 and also expressing "Strongly Disagree," reinforces the notion that customers strongly disagree with the idea that food carts in local markets maintain a satisfactory level of food quality compared to traditional food establishments. This further emphasizes the prevailing preference for the perceived higher quality of products from traditional establishments.

The third-ranked statement, scoring 1.23 and expressing "Strongly Disagree," indicates that customers strongly disagree with the notion that the cleanliness of food cart products in local markets meets or exceeds their expectations, making them a preferable choice over traditional food establishments. This underscores the importance of cleanliness in customer preferences and suggests that traditional establishments are not perceived as inferior in this aspect.

The overall weighted mean (WM) of 1.44 strongly signifies that, on average, customers strongly disagree with the idea that they prefer food cart products over traditional food establishments in local markets in terms of food quality. This collective sentiment emphasizes the perceived superiority of traditional food establishments in providing appealing, high-quality products to customers in the surveyed area.

Table 4.2. *In terms of Affordability*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
I perceive food carts in local markets to provide a more budget-friendly option than traditional food establishments.	3.54	Strongly Agree	1
I find the cost of meals at food carts in local markets to be more reasonable than those at traditional food establishments.	3.27	Strongly Agree	2
I believe that food carts in local markets offer a more economical dining experience compared to traditional food establishments.	3. 13	Strongly Agree	3
Overall Mean	3.31	Strongly Agree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 4.2 illuminate customer preferences regarding patronizing food cart businesses versus traditional food establishments in local markets, specifically in terms of affordability.

The top-ranked statement, with a score of 3.54 and indicating "Strongly Agree," reveals that customers strongly agree with the perception that food carts in local markets provide a more budget-friendly option than traditional food establishments. This suggests a prevalent belief among customers that food carts offer a cost-effective alternative for meals.

The second-ranked statement, scoring 3.27 and also expressing "Strongly Agree," indicates that customers strongly agree with the notion that the cost of meals at food carts in local markets is more reasonable than those at traditional food establishments. This reinforces the idea that affordability is a significant factor influencing customer preferences.

The third-ranked statement, with a score of 3.13 and expressing "Strongly Agree," suggests that customers strongly agree with the belief that food carts in local markets offer a more economical dining experience compared to traditional food establishments. This emphasizes the perception that food carts are viewed as a financially advantageous choice for dining.

The overall weighted mean (WM) of 3.31 strongly signifies that, on average, customers strongly agree that they prefer food carts over traditional food establishments in local markets in terms of affordability. This collective sentiment emphasizes the perceived cost-effectiveness and economic advantages associated with choosing food carts, reflecting a significant factor influencing customer preferences in the surveyed area.

Table 4.3. *In terms of Accessibility*

Items	*Weighted Mean*	*Verbal Interpretation*	*Rank*
Food carts in local markets are more conveniently located and accessible for me compared to traditional food establishments.	2.71	Agree	2
The convenient locations of food carts in local markets make them a more accessible choice for me than traditional food establishments.	2.52	Agree	3
I believe that food carts in local markets are more strategically placed, providing better accessibility compared to traditional food establishments.	3.22	Strongly Agree	1
Overall Mean	2.82	Agree	

Legend: 1.00- 1.74 (Strongly Disagree) 1.75- 2.49 (Disagree) 2.50-3.24 (Agree) 3.25-4.00 (Strongly Agree)

Table 4.3 outlines customer preferences regarding patronizing food cart businesses versus traditional food establishments in local markets, specifically in terms of accessibility. The table ranks statements based on the level of agreement expressed by the respondents.

The top-ranked statement, with a score of 3.22 and indicating "Strongly Agree," suggests that customers strongly agree with the belief that food carts in local markets are more strategically placed, providing better accessibility compared to traditional food establishments. This emphasizes the perceived advantage of strategic locations for food carts, making them easily reachable for customers.

The second-ranked statement, scoring 2.71 and expressing "Agree," indicates that customers agree with the idea that food carts in local markets are more conveniently located and accessible compared to traditional food establishments. This suggests that convenience plays a role in influencing customer preferences, with food carts being perceived as more accessible due to their strategic locations.

The third-ranked statement, with a score of 2.52 and also expressing "Agree," suggests that customers agree with the notion that the convenient locations of food carts in local markets make them a more accessible choice compared to traditional food establishments. This further underscores the importance of convenient placement in the decision-making process for customers.The overall weighted mean (WM) of 2.82 signifies that, on average, customers agree that they prefer food carts over traditional food establishments in local markets in terms of accessibility.

Table 5. *Significant relationship between profile of the respondents and their preference on patronizing food cart over traditional food establishment*

Components	*r-value*	*p-value*	*Decision*
Age	0.43	.009932	Significant at p <.05, Reject Ho
Civil Status	0.29	. 091049.	Not significant at p >.05, Failed to reject Ho

The finding from Table 5 indicates a significant relationship between the age/civil status of respondents and their preferences for patronizing food carts over traditional food establishments. The reported correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.43, coupled with the significance level of $p < 0.05$, implies that the age of respondents has a statistically significant impact on the differences in preferences for these food consumption venues. The positive r-value of 0.43 suggests a moderate positive correlation. This means that as age increases, there is a tendency for a more favorable preference for food cart patronage over traditional establishments. This finding supports the conclusion that age is a meaningful factor influencing the different preferences for food venues among the surveyed individuals.

This finding is valuable for businesses and marketers in the food industry as it indicates that different age groups may exhibit distinct preferences in terms of where they choose to dine. For instance, younger age groups might lean towards food carts, possibly influenced by factors such as affordability, novelty, or convenience, while older age groups may have different priorities, such as tradition, quality, or a familiar dining environment.

On the other hand, the reported correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.29, along with the significance level of $p > 0.05$, suggests that the civil status of respondents does not have a statistically significant impact on the differences in preferences for these food consumption venues. The positive r-value of 0.29 indicates a weak positive correlation. However, the lack of significance at $p > 0.05$ implies that this correlation is not strong enough to be considered statistically meaningful.

For businesses and marketers in the food industry, this finding suggests that when understanding and targeting customer preferences, civil status may not be a critical factor.

Conclusions

Traditional food establishment on local markets agreed that food cart enterprises negatively impact their number of customers. Traditional food establishment on local markets agreed that food cart enterprises impact their pricing strategy in order to deal with the affordability of food cart products. Traditional food establishment on local markets strongly agree that the presence of food cart has positively influenced food quality competition, encouraging my traditional food establishment to maintain high standards. Customers strongly disagree that they prefer food cart products than traditional food establishment products when it comes to food quality. Customers strongly agree that they prefer food cart products than traditional food establishment products when it comes to affordability. Customers agree that they prefer food cart products than traditional food establishment products when it comes to accessibility. There is significant relationship between the age of the respondents and their preference on patronizing food cart over traditional food establishment.

Based on the summary of findings and conclusion mentioned above, the researchers recommend the follow: Create systematic business plan to adapt marketing strategies to counter negative impact on customer numbers: Traditional food establishments in local markets should consider adapting their marketing strategies to counteract the negative impact on customer numbers caused by the presence of food cart enterprises. This could involve highlighting unique offerings, emphasizing the quality of their products, or exploring promotional activities to attract and retain customers. Given the positive influence of food carts on food quality competition, traditional food establishments should continue prioritizing and maintaining high standards in their food quality. Innovations in menu offerings, presentation, and taste can help differentiate traditional establishments and meet the evolving expectations of customers. Acknowledging that customers agree that they prefer food cart products in terms of affordability and accessibility, traditional food establishments should evaluate their pricing structure. Implementing competitive pricing strategies, offering value for money, and promoting affordability can help attract a broader customer base. Also, recognizing that customers agree on preferring food cart products for accessibility, traditional food establishments should focus on improving convenience. This could involve optimizing locations, introducing online ordering options, or streamlining the ordering and pickup processes to make the traditional establishment more accessible to customers. Considering the significant relationship between the age of respondents and their preference for patronizing food carts over traditional establishments, businesses should tailor their offerings to suit the preferences and expectations of different age groups. This might involve adjusting marketing messages, menu options, and overall dining experiences to cater to the diverse needs of various age demographics. Conduct an in-depth study on the moderating factors which affects the competition between food cart enterprises and traditional food establishments.

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