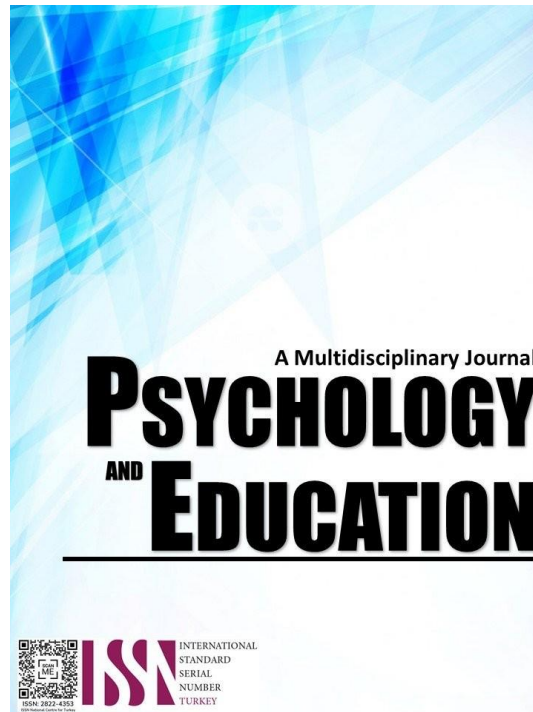


**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING FOOD PREPARATION
PRACTICES IN A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN MANILA
CONCESSIONS: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR
IMPROVEMENT**



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Students' Perceptions regarding Food Preparation Practices in a Private School in Manila Concessions: Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

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Abstract

This study explores how students perceive the food preparation practices of a concessionaire in a private school in Manila to identify areas for improvement and uncover opportunities for a better dining experience. Since students rely on school-based food services for convenience and nutrition, their insights are essential in shaping a food environment that supports both their health and satisfaction. Using surveys and informal discussions, the research gathered feedback from senior high school students on important aspects such as food safety, cleanliness, taste, variety, and value for money. The results showed that while many students appreciate the variety and accessibility of meals offered, they also expressed concerns about hygiene practices. Specific issues mentioned include inconsistent food quality, questionable sanitation during food handling, and the lack of visible cleanliness in preparation areas. Students noticed that staff do not always wear gloves or hairnets, which led to doubts about food safety. Despite these concerns, students remain hopeful and eager for change. They suggested practical solutions like more transparent food preparation areas, regular health and safety checks, and healthier meal options. Many also expressed a desire for their feedback to be considered in future improvements. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the importance of listening to students' voices when it comes to school food services. By addressing their concerns and acting on their suggestions, schools and concessionaires can create a more positive, safe, and student-friendly food experience—one that not only fills stomachs but also builds trust and well-being in the school community.

Keywords: *food preparation, school concessionaires, hygiene, food safety, nutrition, student health, training, resources, policy compliance, collaboration*

Introduction

For many students, the school canteen isn't just a place to grab a quick meal — it's part of their daily routine, a space where they refuel, socialize, and take a break from academics. In private schools, where students often spend long hours on campus, the food served by the school concessionaire becomes a big part of their daily lives. That's why it's important not only that the food tastes good but that it's prepared safely, handled with care, and served in clean conditions.

More and more, students are becoming mindful of what they eat and how it's prepared. They notice whether food handlers wear gloves and hairnets, whether the preparation area is clean, and whether the food feels fresh and consistent. When these standards aren't met, it affects not only their appetite but also their trust in the food being served. On the flip side, when students feel confident in the canteen's food preparation, they're more likely to eat well and feel good throughout the day.

This study investigates how students in a private school in Manila view the current food preparation practices in their school concessionaire. It aims to uncover what's working, what's not, and what could be improved. By listening to their thoughts and experiences, we hope to highlight ways the school can provide a safer, healthier, and more enjoyable food experience for everyone. After all, who better to ask about school food than the students who eat it every day?

Research Questions

This study assesses the Students' Perceptions regarding Food Preparation Practices in a Private School in Manila Concessions: Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement. It sought to answer the following questions:

1. Profile of the student respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Course
2. What is the demographic profile of the participating food concessionaires' variables?
 - 2.1 Number of years of operation
 - 2.2 Type of food sold
 - 2.3 Location of the store
 - 2.4 Schedule of observation conducted by the researchers
3. To what extent do the concessionaires follow hygienic practices, particularly in the following areas?
 - 3.1 Personal Hygiene

- 3.2 Storage of Food
- 3.3 Utensils and Equipment
- 3.4 Facilities
- 3.5 Cleaning and Sanitizing Food
4. What were the challenges in adhering to guidelines on food safety and sanitation?
 - 4.1 Space
 - 4.2 Availability of hand-washing facilities

Literature Review

Foreign Literature

Henriques (2021) conducted a study comparing the types of food sold around 30 private and 26 public elementary schools in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. Researchers used a checklist-based audit to document whether the food vendors were formal or informal and to classify the foods and beverages by their level of processing—fresh, processed, or ultraprocessed. Statistical analysis was done using the Mann-Whitney test to assess differences in vendor types and food categories, and the Kruskal-Wallis test to analyze the quantity of food items sold.

Jabri (2021) examined breakfast habits and lifestyle behaviors among Saudi children enrolled in public and private elementary schools. The study used a multistage stratified cluster sampling method to select a random sample of 1,149 students (54.4% girls). Data collection involved measuring students' height, weight, BMI, and having parents complete self-reported questionnaires. The study found no significant difference in daily breakfast consumption between students in public (20.6%) and private (19.4%) schools ($p = 0.44$). However, a notable interaction between gender and school type was observed: boys in private schools had a significantly higher daily breakfast intake (26.3%) than girls (13.3%) ($p = 0.006$), a pattern not seen in public schools.

Noor (2023) explained that shifts in eating patterns, reduced physical activity, modernization, and growing urbanization have contributed to the rise of chronic diseases, now a major health concern for children. In Pakistan, notable differences exist between the nutritional habits, lifestyles, and socioeconomic status of students in government versus private schools, as well as between boys and girls. Since early-life habits significantly influence long-term food choices, the study aimed to evaluate and compare the eating behaviors of students from both types of schools.

Perignon (2023) reported that globally, around 388 million school children—about one in two—receive meals through school feeding programs daily (WFP, 2020). These programs aim not only to boost school enrollment but also to enhance children's nutritional health by providing meals that align with dietary standards (CNA, 2017). School canteens are especially vital in promoting health equity by offering affordable, nutritious meals, particularly for students from low-income families.

Rathi (2020) found that adolescents identified several key factors that either support or hinder healthy eating and meal preparation. Choosing water over sugary drinks was the most commonly mentioned enabler of healthy eating, with 65.7% of participants citing it. On the other hand, the biggest challenge reported was the difficulty in staying motivated to maintain a healthy diet, noted by 56.1% of respondents. When it came to meal preparation, the use of fresh ingredients was considered the most important element (76.5%), while using food lists was seen as the least important (54.2%). Overall, female adolescents demonstrated more favorable attitudes toward healthy eating and preparing meals than their male counterparts.

Shah (2022) found that the participants had a mean knowledge score of 5.80 with a standard deviation of 1.26, and an average practice score of 7.07 with a standard deviation of 1.20. The study involved 60 participants. Results showed that 31.7% of participants had good knowledge, 31.7% had average knowledge, and 36.7% had poor knowledge. Regarding practices, 35.0% performed well, while 65.0% showed poor practices.

Vilela (2023) examined six companies managing 36 canteens in private schools—30 following a traditional model and six adopting a healthy model. Healthy canteens offered a significantly higher proportion of natural and minimally processed foods (87.9% vs. 60%), while traditional canteens sold more ultra-processed and prohibited items (40% vs. 12.1% and 10% vs. 0%, respectively). Interestingly, healthy canteens also reported greater profitability compared to traditional ones ($p < 0.001$).

Local Literature

Lim (2024) explored the eating habits of students in a Chinese private school in Cebu City using interviews and focus group discussions. The study revealed three main themes: students' food preferences, factors influencing their eating habits, and their awareness of nutrition. The findings aim to help researchers, nutritionists, schools, and entrepreneurs promote healthier eating among students. The study highlights the school's role in food education and the importance of offering nutritious, balanced meals in canteens to support students' long-term health and reduce risks of diet-related diseases.

Limon (2021) noted that foodborne illnesses among school-aged children are frequently reported, largely due to improper food handling and preparation. These unsafe practices are carried out not just by students, but also by school-affiliated businesses and staff. The study aimed to examine how food safety education (FSED) is represented within the Philippine K to 12 Curriculum. It specifically analyzed

the 2016 curriculum guides (CGs) for content related to food handling and preparation across Intermediate (Grades 4–6), Junior High (Grades 7–10), and Senior High School (Grades 11–12).

Ramos (2025) emphasized that food safety is a major public health issue worldwide, involving the control of various hazards that can harm people through unsafe food. In school settings, ensuring food safety is particularly important as it directly affects students' health. The study focused on 43 school canteen vendors in Maria, Siquijor, examining their knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding food safety using a descriptive- correlational design and a validated questionnaire. Statistical tools like weighted mean, multiple regression, and Spearman rank correlation were applied.

Van (2022) discusses the role of local government units (LGUs) in addressing childhood undernutrition in the Philippines, particularly through decentralized school feeding programs (SFPs). These programs, traditionally relying on the national government and private sector, showed mixed outcomes. A central kitchen model for SFPs, developed by two NGOs, was implemented in both urban and rural areas in 2018, aiming for large-scale, multisectoral community involvement. Data from surveys and dietary recalls revealed that undernutrition was a critical issue. Focus group discussions highlighted that locally run central kitchens encouraged community ownership and sustained operations through volunteer networks, even during leadership changes. The model, adaptable to local needs, allowed for flexibility, especially during emergencies like natural disasters and the COVID- 19 pandemic. This case demonstrates how empowering civil society and LGUs can lead to effective, sustainable multisectoral action.

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses mixed-methods research design, specifically a descriptive and exploratory approach. It aims to gather both numerical data and personal insights to better understand how students view the food preparation practices in private school food concessions in Manila.

The descriptive part involves the use of surveys to collect data on students' perceptions of food quality, cleanliness, safety, pricing, and overall satisfaction.

The exploratory part uses interviews or focusses group discussions to dig deeper into the reasons behind those perceptions and to explore suggestions for improvement.

By combining both quantitative (numbers and ratings) and qualitative (opinions and experiences) methods, this study provides a clearer and more complete understanding of the current practices and what can be improved in the private school food services.

Participants

For this study, we'll focus on concessioners inside private schools in Manila that have food concessions on campus. We want to hear from 200 students who eat at these food stalls regularly, as their opinions will be the most valuable in understanding what's working and what could be improved.

Survey Participants

We'll start by reaching out to a broad group of students through an online survey. This will allow us to gather responses from as many students as possible. Our goal is to get a diverse group, so we'll make sure to include students from different courses, year levels, and backgrounds. The survey will focus on students who eat at campus concessions at least once a week, ensuring that the feedback is based on actual experiences with the food offered.

Interview Participants

After the survey, we'll select a smaller group of students for one-on-one interviews. These students will be chosen based on the survey responses—especially those who have strong feelings, whether positive or negative, about campus food. We want to hear more from these students about their personal experiences and get deeper insights into what they think could make the food better.

We'll aim to include a mix of students from different majors and year levels so we get a well-rounded perspective.

Who Can Join

To take part in the study, students should:

- Be currently enrolled at a private school in Manila that has food concessions on campus.
- Be regular users of campus food stalls (eating there at least once a week).
- Be willing to fill out a survey or participate in an interview (or both).
- Be open to giving their consent to participate in the study.

Who Won't Participate

Students who don't eat regularly at campus food concessions or who aren't enrolled in a private school in Manila won't be included in the study. Also, if a student isn't comfortable with the study or doesn't give consent, they won't be involved.

Research Instrument

The researchers gathered the data using a survey questionnaire created with Microsoft Office Forms. The demographics of the respondents will be the first part of the survey, including their Program, Age, and Gender. The other part was done by researchers to determine the effectiveness of the Students' Perceptions regarding Food Preparation Practices in Private schools in Manila Concessions. The survey was done online, which was one of the most efficient ways to collect data without having to use the traditional approach of handing out survey questionnaires.

Procedure

The data was collected through an online platform using Microsoft Office Forms. There were 200 respondents from the selected department inside a private school in Manila.

Questionnaires were created to answer the problem stated in the content under Research Questions. The statistics formula of percentage and weighted mean was utilized by the researchers.

Ethical Considerations

We want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable and respected during the study. Participation will be completely voluntary, and students can choose to withdraw at any point without any consequences. We'll also make it clear that the information they share will only be used for this study and we won't share it with anyone else. Transparency and respect are key to making sure everyone feels safe and valued in this study.

Results and Discussion

Section 1 - Profile of the respondents in terms of:

Table 1.1. Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18–20	85	42.5%
21–23	40	20 %
24–26	25	12.5%
27–29	35	17.5%
30 – Up	15	7.5%
Total	200	100%

Table 1.1 explains age distribution 200 reveals that most students are in the 18 to 20 age group, with 42.5% of the total falling within this range. This suggests that the majority of participants are likely in their senior high school or early college years.

Following this, 20% of students are in the 21 to 23 age range, while 17.5% of the students are aged 27 to 29, showing that there's a good number of older students as well. Additionally, 12.5% of respondents are between 24 and 26 years old, and 7.5% are aged 30 and above. Though this last group is the smallest, it highlights the presence of non-traditional or returning students who may offer a different perspective.

Overall, the data shows a mix of ages, with the largest portion being in the typical college age range, but also a notable diversity in student age, which could influence their views on food preparation practices in school.

Table 1.2. Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	85	42.5%
Female	65	32.5%
Prefer not to say	50	25%
TOTAL	200	100

Table 1. 2 shows gender distribution 200 shows a mix of male and female participants, with 42.5% identifying as male and 32.5% identifying as female. Interestingly, 25% of students chose to prefer not to say, suggesting that a significant portion of the respondents either identified outside of traditional gender categories or simply didn't feel comfortable disclosing their gender.

While there's a slightly higher number of male respondents, the diversity in responses highlights that gender isn't a one-size-fits-all category, and it's important to consider a range of perspectives when examining opinions on food preparation practices in the school concessionaire.

Table 1.3. *Course*

<i>Course</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Business-related (e.g., Marketing, Management, Accounting, THM)	75	37.5%
Engineering or Technology	30	15%
Related Health Sciences (e.g., Nursing, Pharmacy)	25	12.5%
Arts & Humanities	35	17.5%
Social Sciences & Education	25	12.5%
Other:	10	7.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

Table 1. 3, academic backgrounds 200 show a diverse mix of fields of study. The largest group, 37.5%, consists of students studying business-related courses like Marketing, Management, Accounting, and Tourism and Hospitality Management (THM). This is followed by 17.5% of students in Arts & Humanities, which includes disciplines like literature, history, and philosophy. 15% are pursuing degrees in Engineering or Technology, while 12.5% are in Related Health Sciences, including Nursing and Pharmacy, showing a strong interest in healthcare careers. Another 12.5% are studying Social Sciences & Education, which covers fields like Psychology, Sociology, and Education. Finally, 7.5% of students fall under the other category, representing those in programs that don't fit into the groups. This mix of academic disciplines highlights the wide variety of perspectives among students, and their unique fields of study likely influence their views on food preparation practices in the school concessionaire.

Section 2 - Profile of the participating food concessionaires in terms of:

Table 2.1. *No. Of years of Operation*

	<i>Years</i>
Inside the school cafeteria	5 years
Outdoor food stalls	1 year
Food court	1 year
Other:	1 year

Table 2.1 The years in Table 2.1 indicate how many years the different food services have been operating within the school environment. The cafeteria has been open for 5 years, making it the oldest food service on campus. The outdoor food stalls, food court, and a further unidentified food service have each been open for only 1 year. This suggests that while the cafeteria has had a longer history and likely serves as a primary source of food for students, the other food services are relatively new, perhaps introduced to offer variety and convenience to the school students. The range in years of operation may influence the attitudes of students, as well-established services could have gained a reputation while newer ones could still be in the process of gaining trust and recognition.

Table 2.2. *Type of food sold*

<i>Variety</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Rice Meals	75	37.5%
Snacks (E.G., Sandwiches, Fries)	30	15%
Beverages (E.G., Coffee, Juices)	25	12.5%
Fast Food (E.G., Burgers, Pizza)	35	17.5%
Healthier Options (E.G., Salads, Fruits)	25	12.5%
Other:	10	7.5%
Total	200	100%

Table 2.2 presents the types of food sold in a private school concession, highlighting the variety and distribution of offerings. The most sold items are rice meals, accounting for 37.5% of the total, which suggests that students and staff prefer hearty and filling meals during their time on campus. Fast food items such as burgers and pizza come next at 17.5%, indicating a high demand for convenient and flavorful options. Snacks like sandwiches and fries represent 15% of the food choices, showing that quick, light meals are also popular. Beverages, including coffee and juices, along with healthier options such as salads and fruits, each make up 12.5% of the total, reflecting a balance between indulgence and health-conscious choices. Lastly, 7.5% of the offerings fall under the "Other" category, suggesting that a smaller portion of food items cater to more specific or niche preferences. Overall, the data reflects a diverse range of food options aimed at meeting the varying tastes and dietary needs of the private school community.

Table 2.3. *Location of the store*

<i>Food Concessionaires</i>	<i>No. of Concessions</i>
Inside the school cafeteria	5
Outdoor food stalls	15
Food court	10
Other:	5

Table 2. 3 shows the distribution of food concessionaires based on their location within or around the university premises. Most food concessions are found in outdoor food stalls, with 15 stalls operating in open areas, suggesting that students may prefer easily accessible and informal dining options. This is followed by food courts, which host 10 concessions, indicating a centralized and organized space for food variety. Meanwhile, five concessions are located inside the school cafeteria, showing that traditional cafeteria setups still serve a portion of the student population. Another five fall under the “Other” category, which may include mobile vendors, kiosks, or nearby commercial establishments. Overall, the data highlights a trend toward more flexible and accessible food options outside the traditional cafeteria setting.

Table 2.4. *Schedule of observation conducted by the researchers*

Date / Time	Inside the school cafeteria	Outdoor food stalls	Food court	Other:
March 3 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 1	Researcher 5	Researcher 6	Researcher 3
March 3 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 2	Researcher 4	Researcher 1	Researcher 5
March 4 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 2	Researcher 3	Researcher 4	Researcher 5
March 4 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 6	Researcher 5	Researcher 4	Researcher 3
March 5 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 1	Researcher 4	Researcher 5	Researcher 6
March 5 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 5	Researcher 4	Researcher 3	Researcher 2
March 6 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 1	Researcher 2	Researcher 3	Researcher 4
March 6 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 5	Researcher 6	Researcher 2	Researcher 1
March 7 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 3	Researcher 5	Researcher 1	Researcher 6
March 7 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 6	Researcher 2	Researcher 5	Researcher 4
March 8 / 1 pm-3 pm	Researcher 1	Researcher 5	Researcher 2	Researcher 6
March 8 / 3 pm-5 pm	Researcher 1	Researcher 5	Researcher 2	Researcher 6

Table 2. 4 shows the schedule of observation conducted by the researchers in the different strategic locations where they see the concessionaires as their respondents. The researchers set for a six (6) day observation starting from March 17 – March 22. and during the time of 1 pm – 3 pm and 3 pm-5 pm, respectively.

Section 3: Hygiene and Cleanliness Practices

Table 3.1. *Personal Hygiene*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Staff Do Not Wear Proper Uniforms (E.G., Gloves, Hairnets, And Aprons).	3.53	Strongly Agree
Staff Do Not Wash Hands Regularly.	3.07	Agree
Staff Appear Unclean While Handling Food.	3.52	Strongly Agree
Staff Members Maintain Good Hygiene and Follow Proper Procedures.	3.83	Strongly Agree
No Concerns About Staff Hygiene.	3.37	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.5	Strongly Agree

Table 3.1 the respondents' perceptions personal hygiene practices of food concession staff based on weighted mean scores and their corresponding verbal interpretations. The statement “Staff members maintain good hygiene and follow proper procedures” and many recognize efforts toward proper hygiene practices. However, there are also concerns, as “Staff do not wear proper uniforms” and “Staff appear unclean while handling food” both received high scores, also indicating noticeable lapses in visual cleanliness and uniform compliance. Meanwhile, the statement “Staff do not wash hands regularly” scored a 3.07, interpreted as agree, highlighting a moderate concern regarding hand hygiene. Despite these issues, the statement “No concerns about staff hygiene” still scored a 3.37 with a strongly agree interpretation, reflecting some level of overall satisfaction or mixed experiences. The composite suggests that there is recognition good hygiene practices, there are still significant and observable concerns that need to be addressed to ensure consistent cleanliness and food safety.

Table 3.2. *Storage of Food*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Food Is Sometimes Left Uncovered.	3.87	Strongly Agree
Cold Or Frozen Food Is Not Stored Properly.	3.80	Strongly Agree
Expired Ingredients Might Be Used.	3.62	Strongly Agree
The Storage Seems Clean And Organized.	3.57	Strongly Agree
No Concerns About Food Storage.	3.50	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.7	Strongly Agree

Table 3.2 reflects respondents' perceptions regarding the storage practices of food in university concessions. The highest concern is with the statement “Food is sometimes left uncovered,” significant issue with food being exposed and potentially vulnerable to contamination.

Similarly, “Cold or frozen food is not stored properly” scored 3.80, also interpreted as strongly agree, pointing to possible risks in temperature-sensitive food handling. The concern that “Expired ingredients might be used” also received a high rating of 3.62, further emphasizing doubts about the freshness and safety of food items. Interestingly, despite these concerns, respondents strongly agreed that “The storage seems clean and organized” (3.57) and expressed no major concerns about food storage (3.50), suggesting a contradiction between perceived cleanliness and actual food safety practices. Overall, the composite weighted mean of 3.7, interpreted as strongly agree, highlights a clear and consistent concern among respondents regarding food storage practices, particularly in terms of proper coverage, temperature control, and ingredient quality.

Table 3.3. *Utensils and Equipment*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Utensils And Trays Look Unclean.	3.87	Strongly Agree
The Cooking Equipment Seems Poorly Maintained.	3.80	Strongly Agree
Disposable Utensils Are of Low Quality.	3.80	Strongly Agree
Proper Sanitation Is Followed.	3.53	Strongly Agree
No Concerns About Utensils and Equipment.	3.57	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.71	Strongly Agree

Table 3.3 respondents' perceptions regarding cleanliness and maintenance of utensils and equipment used in food concessions. The statement “Utensils and trays look unclean” concern about the visible cleanliness of items used in food service. Both “The cooking equipment seems poorly maintained” and “Disposable utensils are of low quality” also received high scores of 3.80, suggesting dissatisfaction with both the condition and quality of the tools used for food preparation and serving. Despite these concerns, respondents also strongly agreed that “Proper sanitation is followed” (3.53) and that there are “No concerns about utensils and equipment” (3.57), which may reflect either varying experiences across different concessions or an acknowledgment that while sanitation protocols may exist, their implementation may not always be consistent or effective. weighted, indicates an overall perception that there are notable issues regarding the cleanliness, maintenance, and quality of utensils and equipment that need to be addressed to ensure food safety and customer satisfaction.

Table 3.4. *Facilities*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The dining area is not regularly cleaned.	3.53	Strongly Agree
Kitchen or food preparation areas seem unhygienic.	3.07	Agree
There is a lack of proper ventilation and lighting.	3.52	Strongly Agree
Waste disposal is not properly managed.	3.83	Strongly Agree
No concerns about the facilities.	3.37	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.55	Strongly Agree

Table 3.4 summarizes perceptions regarding condition and cleanliness of facilities used by food concessions. The highest concern is with “Waste disposal is not properly managed,” which received a weighted mean of 3.83, indicating strong agreement and highlighting a significant issue in sanitation practices. This is followed by “The dining area is not regularly cleaned” (3.53) and “There is a lack of proper ventilation and lighting” (3.52), both of which also received strongly agree ratings, suggesting discomfort and dissatisfaction with the overall maintenance and atmosphere of the food service areas. The statement “Kitchen or food preparation areas seem unhygienic” received a weighted mean of 3.07, interpreted as agree, showing moderate concern about cleanliness behind the scenes. Interestingly, despite these issues, respondents still strongly agreed (3.37) with the statement “No concerns about the facilities,” which may reflect inconsistencies in experiences or a general tolerance for the existing conditions. weighted indicates an overall perception that there are significant concerns regarding the cleanliness, sanitation, and functionality of food concession facilities, especially in terms of waste management and environmental conditions.

Table 3.5. *Cleaning and Sanitizing Food*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Food is not properly washed before preparation.	3.70	Strongly Agree
Staff does not follow sanitation practices strictly.	3.70	Strongly Agree
There is no visible evidence of cleaning/sanitizing procedures.	3.73	Strongly Agree
Food preparation areas are cleaned regularly and safely.	3.65	Strongly Agree
No concerns about cleaning and sanitizing practices.	3.63	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.7	Strongly Agree

Table 3.5 highlights respondents' perceptions regarding the cleaning and sanitizing practices of food in university concessions. The statement “There is no visible evidence of cleaning/sanitizing procedures” cleaning and sanitation efforts are either not practiced openly or not properly communicated to customers. Both “Food is not properly washed before preparation” and “Staff does not follow

sanitation practices strictly” followed closely with scores of 3.70, reflecting strong concerns about basic hygiene and food safety protocols. Interestingly, even the more positive statement “Food preparation areas are cleaned regularly and safely” received a high score of 3.65, and “No concerns about cleaning and sanitizing practices” was rated at 3.63, both still falling under strongly agree. These results suggest a general perception that while some cleaning practices may be occurring, they are not consistent or visible enough to instill full confidence in the sanitation standards. The composite weighted mean of 3.7, with a strongly agree interpretation, reinforces that there is a widespread concern among respondents about the adequacy and visibility of cleaning and sanitizing procedures in food preparation areas.

Section 4: Challenges in Food Safety & Sanitation

Table 4.1. *Space*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The kitchen or prep area is too small.	3.55	Strongly Agree
There aren't enough hand-washing stations.	3.67	Strongly Agree
It's hard to ensure that all workers follow hygiene rules.	3.60	Strongly Agree
Maintaining cleanliness is expensive.	3.58	Strongly Agree
Other:	3.52	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.6	Strongly Agree

Table 4.1 presents respondents' views on space-related challenges in university food concessions. All statements received “Strongly Agree” as their verbal interpretation, indicating consistent concern across various aspects of space and hygiene management. The highest-rated issue was the lack of hand-washing stations, with a weighted mean of 3.67, suggesting that inadequate facilities may hinder proper hygiene practices. This is followed by the difficulty in ensuring all workers follow hygiene rules (3.60) and the belief that maintaining cleanliness is expensive (3.58), highlighting operational and financial challenges in upholding sanitation standards. The small size of kitchen or prep areas (3.55) also emerged as a concern, possibly contributing to overcrowding and inefficiency. Additionally, responses under the “Other” category scored a 3.52, indicating that respondents recognize other space-related issues not specifically listed. weighted mean reflects a perception that space limitations and inadequate facilities significantly affect the cleanliness, safety, and hygiene compliance in food concession operations.

Table 4.2. *Availability of hand- washing facilities*

	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
There are enough sinks with soap and running water.	3.55	Strongly Agree
Hand-washing stations are available but sometimes lack soap.	3.67	Strongly Agree
It's okay but could be improved.	3.60	Strongly Agree
Not enough facilities for proper handwashing	3.58	Strongly Agree
Almost no proper hand-washing facilities.	3.52	Strongly Agree
Composite Weighted Mean	3.6	Strongly Agree

Table 4.2 respondents' perceptions regarding availability of hand-washing facilities in university food concessions. The statement “Hand-washing stations are available but sometimes lack soap” While hand-washing stations are present, there are occasional issues with maintaining necessary supplies, such as soap. The statement “It's okay but could be improved” scored 3.60, suggesting that while hand-washing facilities are functional, there is room for improvement in their overall quality or consistency. “Not enough facilities for proper handwashing” received a weighted mean of 3.58, reflecting concerns about the availability of adequate hand-washing stations. The statement “Almost no proper hand- washing facilities” received the lowest score, yet it indicates that some feel there is a significant lack of proper facilities. The composite weighted mean of 3.6, interpreted as strongly agree, suggests a consensus that, while hand-washing facilities are available, there are notable shortcomings in their quality, availability, and consistency, which could compromise hygiene practices.

Conclusions

The study on food preparation practices and sanitation in university concessions reveals a lot about the students' experiences and the food services they rely on. Most of the respondents are in the 18 to 20 age range, which fits the typical college demographic, but it's great to see that non-traditional students and a range of academic backgrounds are also part of the mix. This diversity is important when considering how different groups view food practices on campus.

The food services themselves are a mix of older, well-established cafeterias and newer, more flexible food stalls and food courts. While the variety in food options is positive, there are significant concerns when it comes to hygiene and cleanliness. Students have noticed issues like unclean utensils, poorly maintained food equipment, and inconsistencies in how food is stored and handled. It's clear that while some staff members are following hygiene procedures, there are still gaps that need to be addressed.

One of the key challenges highlighted in the study is the lack of space in the kitchen and the insufficient number of hand-washing

stations. These limitations create hurdles in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene standards. The overall picture suggests that while some progress is being made, there's still a lot of room for improvement when it comes to food safety and sanitation practices.

To improve the overall safety and hygiene of university food services, several key recommendations should be implemented. First, better hygiene training and monitoring for food service staff is essential. Staff should receive ongoing education on hygiene practices, including the importance of wearing proper uniforms, frequent handwashing, and safe food handling. To ensure compliance, a regular system of checks and monitoring should be established to reinforce consistent adherence to hygiene protocols.

Second, food storage and handling procedures must be improved. Cold items need to be stored correctly and kept covered to prevent contamination. Additionally, regular checks should be conducted to monitor expiration dates, ensuring that only fresh and safe ingredients are used in food preparation.

Third, upgrading utensils and equipment is critical to enhancing food safety and service reliability. Investing in higher-quality utensils and preparation tools can significantly reduce health risks. Disposable utensils should also meet a higher quality standard, and all equipment must be cleaned on a consistent schedule to maintain sanitation.

Fourth, attention must be given to the maintenance of dining facilities. Clean and well-maintained dining areas contribute to a healthier and more comfortable environment for both staff and students. Proper waste disposal systems should be implemented, and improvements to ventilation and lighting are necessary to support a more pleasant dining experience. Additionally, the limited kitchen spaces should be assessed and optimized to promote better hygiene and more efficient food preparation.

Finally, hand-washing facilities need to be addressed. Stations should be upgraded to ensure the constant availability of soap and clean water. These facilities must be easily accessible and strategically located near food preparation areas. There should also be a sufficient number of hand-washing stations to accommodate both staff and students, along with regular maintenance checks to ensure functionality.

By addressing these critical areas, universities can significantly enhance the hygiene and safety standards of their food services, ultimately creating a healthier and more enjoyable experience for all.

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