Feasibility Report for Implementing More Express Lines at Tim Hortons Located on UBC Vancouver Campus

For Stakeholders of Tim Hortons at UBC Vancouver Campus

by

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Abstract

This report aims to investigate the feasibility of implementing more express lines at Tim Hortons on the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver campus. With over 70,000 students enrolled at UBC, popular food spots on campus are frequently overwhelmed, resulting in wait times that can exceed 20 minutes. Express lines, which are specialized lines designed for quick service for items that do not need to be made, can provide an option for customers who are not dining in and ordering a small order to receive their order quickly. The report presents the results of an online survey of 20 UBC students to gain insight into their order, wait times, and overall satisfaction with the service, as well as a short questionnaire sent to Tim Hortons stakeholders on campus to explore the feasibility of implementing express lines. The report examines the student population's frustration with wait times, demand for express lines, and challenges with implementing them. The report also includes secondary research on the impact of express lines on customer satisfaction and perceived wait time. The findings of this report can help the stakeholders of Tim Hortons on UBC Vancouver campus decide if implementing express lines is feasible.

Introduction

Background information about the current wait times at Tim Hortons at UBC

Tim Hortons is generally seen as one of the more popular and affordable coffeehouses in the market. This makes the three locations located at UBC Vancouver Campus being very popular amongst students that are looking for a quick and more affordable meal in today's economy. With over 70,000 students enrolled at UBC this year alone, this causes popular food spots on campus to be frequently overwhelmed; resulting in wait times that can exceed 20 minutes.

Benefits of express lines

Express lines are specialized lines at stores designed for quick service for items that do not need to be made. These items include hot and cold beverages, baked goods, donuts and timbits, and bagels; that can be served under one minute vs sandwiches and wraps that need to be assembled and prepared. This provides an option for customers that are not dining in and ordering a small order to quickly receive their order.

Purpose and intended audience

The purpose of this report is to determine the feasibility of implementing more express lines at the Tim Hortons on campus. This will result in higher customer satisfaction, higher sales, and quicker service times. This report will be presented to the

stakeholders of the Tim Hortons that are located on UBC Vancouver campus. By examining the report results, the audience can better decide if it is feasible in implementing express lines.

Methods of Study

The methods of data collection for this report was an online survey addressed to UBC students and a short questionnaire sent to the stakeholders of the Tim Hortons that are located on campus. 20 students responded to the online survey to gain insight about an average student's order, wait times, and overall satisfaction with the service. Secondary research consists of relevant literature materials and experts' views on the subject.

Scope of Inquiry

This report will address the following questions:

- Is the student population frustrated with the high discrepancy in wait times when ordering from Tim Hortons?
- What is the demand for more express lines being implemented
- What are the challenges with implementing express lines

Data Section

Questionnaire with Tim Hortons stakeholders

This section reports on the questionnaire responses from the stakeholders and management at Tim Hortons. This questionnaire includes the feasibility of express lines from their perspective and the additional cost.

When asked about the feasibility of express lines in their stores, there was mixed response from different stores. One store stated that they thought about implementing express lines as they have noticed that their store often has a long line for small orders. Another store stated that they did not consider an express line regardless of the length of line as the line would just add to the list of things they have to monitor.

No exact amount for the additional cost was given when asked about the cost of implementing express lines; however, one store stated that implementing a express line would involve renovations as they would have to create a new section just for the express line, installation of equipment, training …

Student surveys

The survey that was conducted consisted of six questions. 20 students responded to the survey. The results of the survey are shown below:
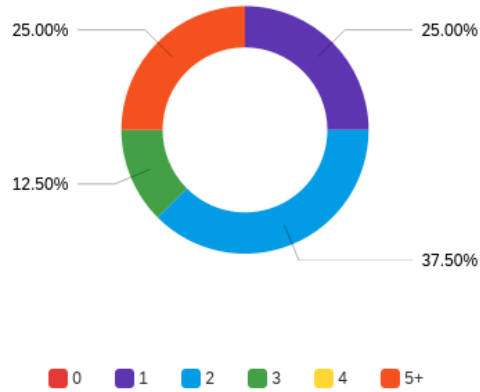
How often do you go to Tim Hortons a week

Figure 1. How often students go to Tim Hortons a week

Students were asked how often they go to Tim Hortons each week. All students buy something from Tim Hortons at least once a week, with 37.5% going twice, 12.5% going three times, and 25% of respondents going more than five times a week (Figure 1).
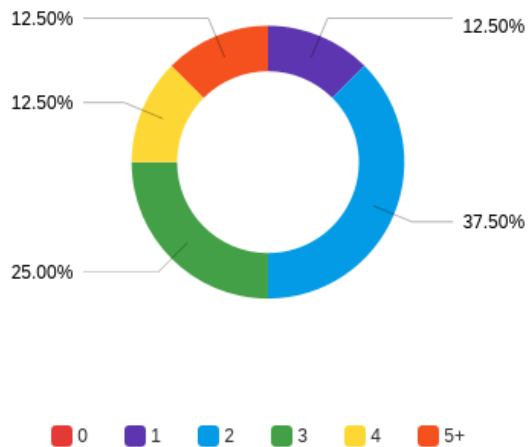
Size order

Figure 2. Average size of an order

Students were asked about their average order size at Tim Hortons. 12.5% bought one item, 37.5% bought two items, 25% bought three items, 12.5% bought four items, and 12.5% bought five or more (Figure 2).
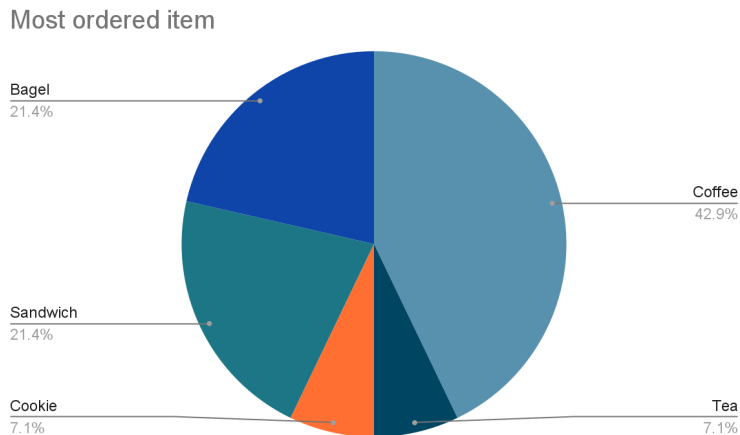
Most ordered item

Figure 3. Most frequently ordered item by students

Students were asked about their most ordered item at Tim Hortons. Half of the students responded with a beverage, either coffee or tea. 21.4% ordered sandwiches most of the time, 21.4% ordered bagels, and 7.1% ordered cookies (Figure 3).
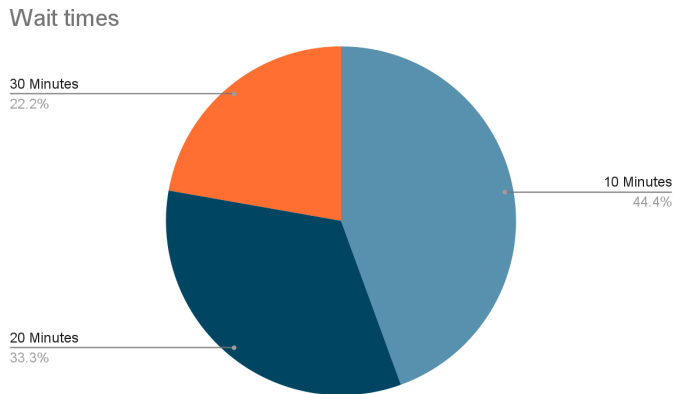
Wait times

Figure 4. Average wait time to receive order

Students were asked about the average time they would have to wait until they get their orders. 44.4% of students reported waiting at least 10 minutes. 33.3% of students reported waiting 20 minutes. 22.2% of students reported waiting 30+ minutes for their order (Figure 4).
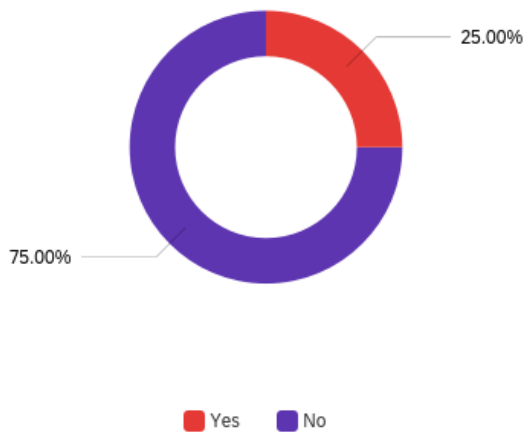
Have you ever left without getting your order

Figure 5. Percentage of students that left without receiving their order

Students were asked if they have ever left Tim Hortons without getting their order. 25% of students voted yes while 75% of students voted no (Figure 5).

Satisfcation with wait times at Tim Hortons

50.00%   50.00%

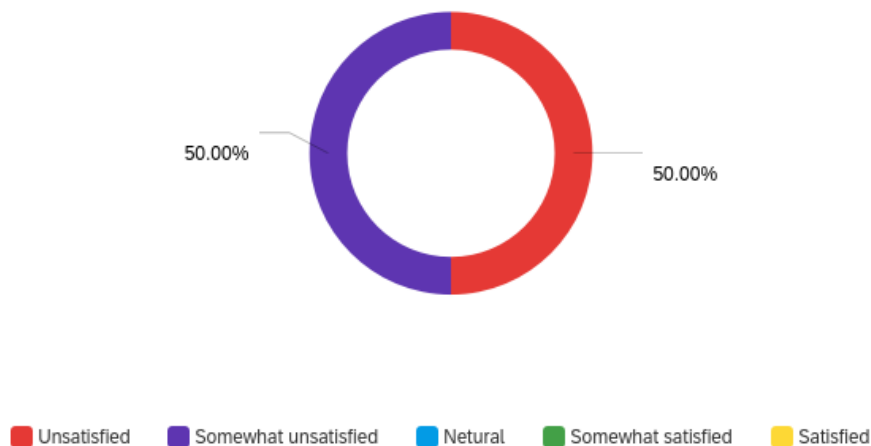🟥 Unsatisfied   🟪 Somewhat unsatisfied   🟦 Netural   🟩 Somewhat satisfied   🟨 Satisfied

Figure 6. Satisfaction with wait times at Tim Hortons

Students were asked to rank their satisfaction with the wait times at Tim Hortons. Half of survey respondents were somewhat unsatisfied, with the other half being unsatisfied (Figure 6).

Summary of secondary research

Customer satisfaction can be linked by wait times. The faster a customer gets their order, the more satisfied they will be. In a research conducted by Weng et al, they found that express lines had a positive impact on business as they are able to serve more customers, fulfill orders faster, and keep customer satisfaction high (Weng et al.)

Perceived wait time is an important aspect to consider when thinking about wait time. Actual wait time is the precise duration of time that is waited while perceived wait time is how long a customer reports that the wait feels like. In a study conducted by Lahap et al., they found that customers felt that a store's expected reasonable waiting times are often longer than perceived waiting times. The different waiting times between perceived and actual also differs between different types of waiting lines in different stores (Lahap et al.)

A customer's perceived value of the food item and the brand has influence on customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction has an influence on behavioral intentions (Slack et al.). The physical environment quality also greatly affects customer perceived value; physical environment quality includes service quality by restaurant employees which encompasses knowledge of menu, mannerism, service of food ordered, prompt service, and minimisation of service failures. Each aspect is connected with each other and one poor service can cause a cascading effect that influences on the customer returning or buying more.

Conclusion

Summary of findings

Based on the findings, most students are unsatisfied with the service they receive currently at the Tim Hortons on campus. Students are generally ordering one or two items and these items are either beverages or baked goods. Students wait on average 15+ minutes for their order, regardless of the type of food and the size of their

order. Some students even had to leave before they were able to receive their order just because of how long it took and they had somewhere to be.

Existing research shows that brand loyalty and customer satisfaction are important in getting customers to return. Both measures are greatly impacted by wait times. Service satisfaction is less of a factor when customers are satisfied with waiting times. Long wait times and poor service greatly lower the chances of the customer returning; while customers that are highly satisfied with wait times have high loyalty levels with whatever the service satisfaction. The latter point is important for fast food restaurants as that is the model of the industry.

Recommendations

The student surveys and secondary research shows that implementing express lanes would be beneficial to the business, especially on campus where students are always moving about going to their next class. All of the survey respondents were dissatisfied with the current service. Please consider the follow recommendations:

- Implementing express lines at your location

- Triage orders received to determine what orders can be fulfilled quickly and which orders need time

- Dedicating one or two employees to be in charge of orders that can be fulfilled quickly

- Adjusting employee roles based on time of day and the popular items ordered during that time

Appendices

Student Survey Questions

Student survey link - https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9SU4a2lFhOH9BnU

1. How many times a week do you purchase something from Tim Hortons a week on campus? [Multiple Choice - 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+]

2. What is your most ordered item?

3. On average, how long do you wait for your order?

4. Have you ever had to leave before getting your order because of the long wait times? [Yes, No]

5. Rate your satisfaction with wait times when ordering from Tim Hortons: [Multiple Choice - Unsatisfied, Somewhat unsatisfied, Neutral, Somewhat satisfied, Satisfied]

References

Weng, Shao Jen, et al. "Lining up for Quick Service—the Business Impact of Express Lines on Fast-Food Restaurant Operations." *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2016, pp. 65–81., https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2016.1195217.

Slack, Neale J., et al. "Influence of Fast-Food Restaurant Service Quality and its Dimensions on Customer Perceived Value, Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions." *British Food Journal (1966)*, vol. 123, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1324-1344.

Lahap, Johanudin & Azlan, R.I. & Bahri, K.A. & Said, Noraslinda & Abdullah, Dahlan & Zain, Razlan. (2018). The effect of perceived waiting time on customer's satisfaction: A focus on fast food restaurant. International Journal of Supply Chain Management. 7. 259-266.