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Research Proposal:

“Evaluating the Sustenance Quality of ULAB Campus: From the Perspective of ULAB

Public Relations

Submitted To

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Title: “Evaluating the Sustenance Quality of ULAB Campus: From the Perspective of ULAB Public Relations”

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Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

Students often face a lot stress and pressure from their surrounding and the rate of it is increasing day by day. University students, especially from their undergraduate level to graduate, a lot of things keep happening to them while they pursue their career. This is where their physical and mental health should be prioritized and we believe having a campus that provides the necessary facilities will drastically reduce the overall pressure they receive.

University of Liberal Arts of Bangladesh (ULAB) is a private based University which was founded in 2002. Having five department for undergrad and four for grad, over time ULAB acquired a lot of fame and applause because of its extraordinary performance in many sectors. It was ranked four in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking 2022 among the private universities of Bangladesh. There are many clubs and among them some are very active and productive in the campus area. They bring a vibrant ambience by organizing programs, campaigns, and festivals. Thus, the students spend a long of their time on the campus.

Health is Wealth: Even though ULAB provides a handful number of facilities, there is one very important sector that needs to be taken care of, which is the sustenance quality of ULAB. Food is essential, there is no argue about that but a healthy and proper meal can provide a person with the necessary nutrients that is need for a human being.

ULAB has its own cafeteria or canteen and three food stalls, where the students can have their breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

But the items provided on all of these differs when it comes to quality. It contains a lot of oil which is harmful for health and can be painful for the people who have stomach weakness or digesting problems. Majority of the students have at least two classes each day, some even has three. If someone falls sick and miss the classes, it surely will have an impact on their mental health because the lectures at this level are very important to miss out.

Research Goal: Sustenance is important for our mental and physical growth, that's why we are doing this research project which is evaluating the quality of ULAB food from the perspective of ULAB students. The goal of this research is to understand why ULAB haven't focused on providing sustenance on their campus.

Research Questions

The research basically focuses on some questions such as how hygienic the food that ULAB provides and the incidents of sickness after consuming these foods. We are talking about the employees taking proper hygienic steps to make the food since the pandemic is still ongoing. The paper includes the steps that can be taken to provide quality food at affordable cost and how to increase the overall food facilities. This study also examines how we can ensure our sustenance of students and promote on why healthy food is important. To give a brief idea, some questions are as follows:

- i. How healthy are the foods available on the ULAB campus?
- ii. Do students feel sick after eating these foods?
- iii. Are students getting healthy food at affordable cost?
- iv. What steps can ULAB take to provide better quality food to students?
- v. How satisfied are ULAB students with the food facilities on their campus?

Focus Area: We conducted our research on ULAB campus where the sample population will be the current university students, both grad and undergrad. They provided information regarding their experience based on the available foods on the campus and how it affected them. We did a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research and collected the primary data ourselves. We projected the case study of this research and included the data of the surveys as well.

Literature Review

The literature points out that throughout the globe, students ranging from the secondary to graduate level is drawn towards unhealthy foods which lacks the necessary nutrients for the human body. Studies and their findings have shown that maintaining the well-being of students in their academic are crucial because it has an impact on their overall lifestyle (Baldwin, D., et al., 2017).

Kabir, A., et al. (2018) explains that having a bad food habit will have a direct and detrimental effect on the health. In the long run, eating deeply-fried foods, something that lacks nutrients or unhygienic foods etc will affect the students' life overall, which in turn will cause him/her to derail from his academic activities. It is essential for students that they focus on their physical and mental health. There are a multitude of factors that has an influence on the overall eating habits of students due to them coming from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Watson, T.D, et al. (2017) reports that many of the students prefer cheaper foods which are less-nutritious and some even skip meals. Students who are struggling had a negative effect on their academic performance. Many even pointed out that it affects both their physical and mental health which leads to stress, irregular sleep patterns, depression, headaches, and weight gain. Now, if we think about these, it is a mission for us as PR for ULAB that we prioritize our students' wellbeing and ensure that they are in good hands when they are on the campus.

Also, there's this perception of healthy food being expensive, so we will make sure to forward the message to the management to provide healthy food at affordable costs.

The results conducted by (Becerra, M. & Becerra, B.J, 2020) has shown that there is a direct correlation between self-perceived physical health status and the presence of psychological distress. Such as, if an individual perceives that he/she is physically ill, it has an impact direct on his/her mental health. Therefore, the food available on ULAB campus, if it manages to make a student ill, it will cause student to miss classes and will make his/her friends paranoid of whether to eat food from the canteen or stalls (present on the campus).

Theoretical Framework

Food Literacy: Vidgen and Gallegos (2014) established the concept of food literacy which can be explained using four aspects.

- i. Food Planning and Management

- ii. Selection
- iii. Preparing
- iv. Eating

These aspects further back up the point that diet does not necessarily depends on an individual but rather the environment he/she spends most time in. In our research context, the university students spend their time in campus for various reason. They have classes, club activities, programs etc. It is important for us to promote a healthier lifestyle so that freshers' or students who are thinking of joining a university shows his/her interest towards ULAB.

Food Insecurity: But there is also another issue that doesn't go unnoticed. It is the factor of "food insecurity". According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), food insecurity means the "household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food". This has been portrayed as one of the key social factors of health. Such as, it poses a risk to health in such a way which can lead to obesity. Recent study has found that students who are experiencing food insecurity are inflicted with depression double the amount of their food-secure counterparts (Ritchie and Martinez, 2016).

Research Methodology

Methodology: We conducted this research online based on the current ULAB University's student where we collected the primary data ourselves by using a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Sampling: The participants consisted of students from different departments. Considering the purpose of the study, it was done through simple random sampling where the inclusion criteria required that participants was between the ages of 17 and 25 and participated voluntarily. We online-surveyed students who became ill after eating cafeteria food and were not satisfied with the food. Our survey helped us to grasp the individual eating experiences, practices, and behaviors etc. Therefore, providing data to understand and clarify students' opinions, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions on it.

In the survey we provided a questionnaire where both open and close ended questions were present, that is qualitative and quantitative. The survey was taken online.

Data Collection Procedure: The survey was conducted in English. We created the survey guidelines to explore a set of topics related to this research topic which influenced eating behavior and food list intake.

The survey was made in a way that it takes around 3 minutes to go through the close-ended parts and regarding the open-ended question, it varied from participants to participants. Detailed field notes were prepared while conducting the survey but due to time limitations, could not be executed.

Data Analysis and Findings

The sustenance quality characteristics were evaluated using descriptive statistics. The organization between health outcomes and each independent variable was further assessed using a survey test for organization, followed by SWOT analysis.

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning technique that provides assessment tools. It works best when diverse groups or voices within an organization are free to provide realistic data points rather than prescribed messaging. Cases with missing values were excluded list-wise from the analysis.

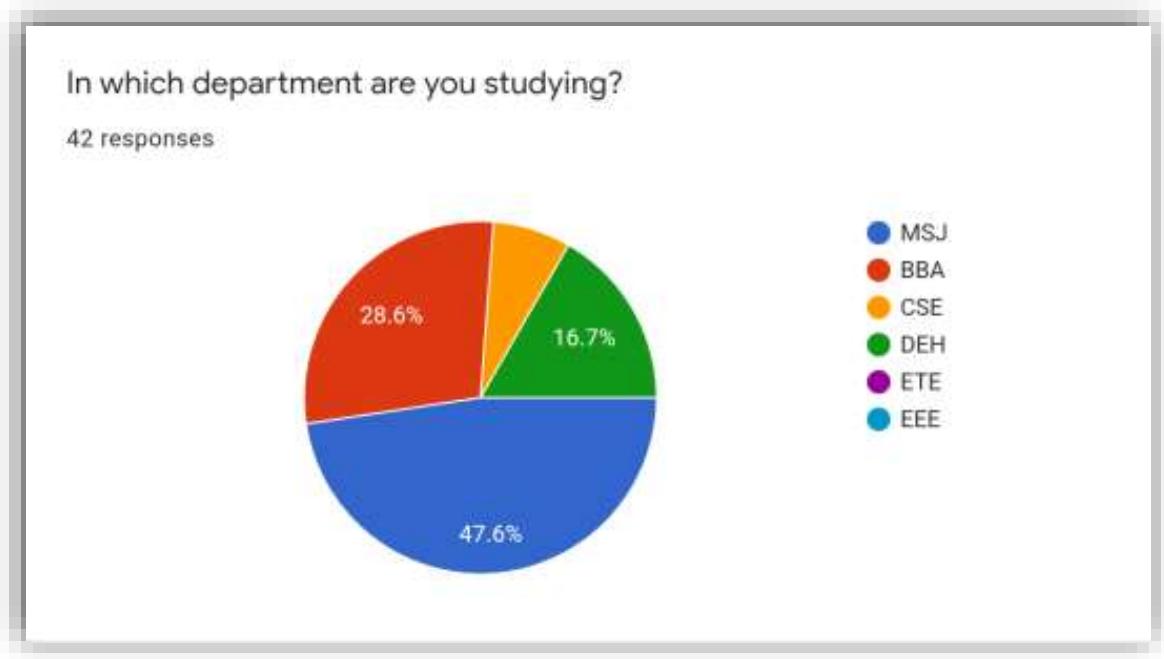


Figure 2. Results regarding which department the participants belong to

Results: The pie-chart data shows the characteristics of the 42 study participants. A majority (47.6%) from MSJ department, (28.6%) from BBA, DEH (16.7%), and some participants from CSE department. 100% respondents said that they are not vegetarian. When asked about getting sick after eating at ULAB's canteen, the response was that (26.2%) got sick. When asked if employers who serve food wear masks and hand gloves, (64.3%) of respondents said that food service providers do not use masks and gloves. The semantic differential scale survey was used to collect all these data.

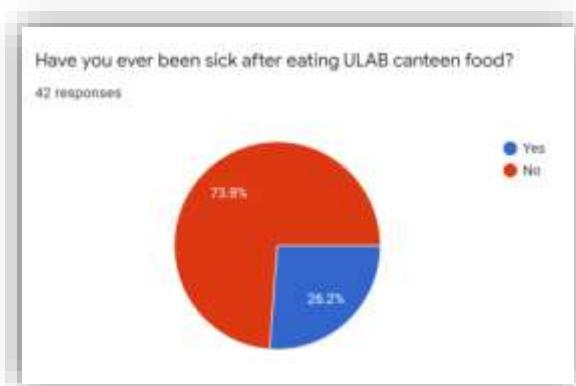


Figure 1. Results regarding the aftermath of eating canteen food



Figure 3. No participants were vegetarian

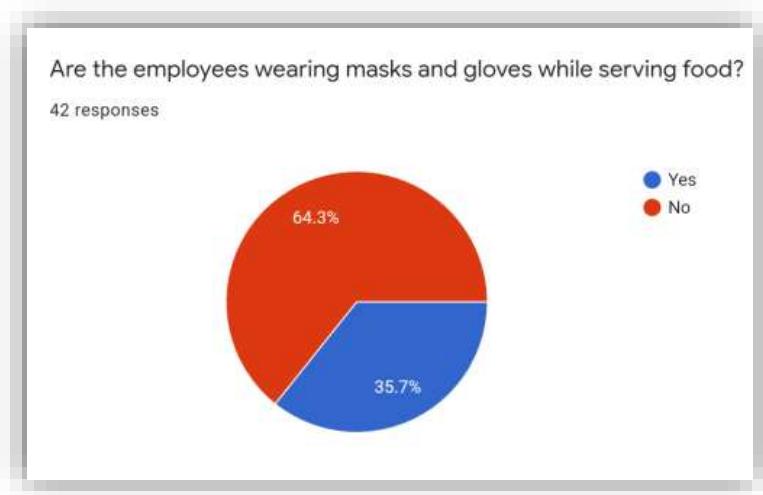


Figure 4. Results regarding the canteen employees

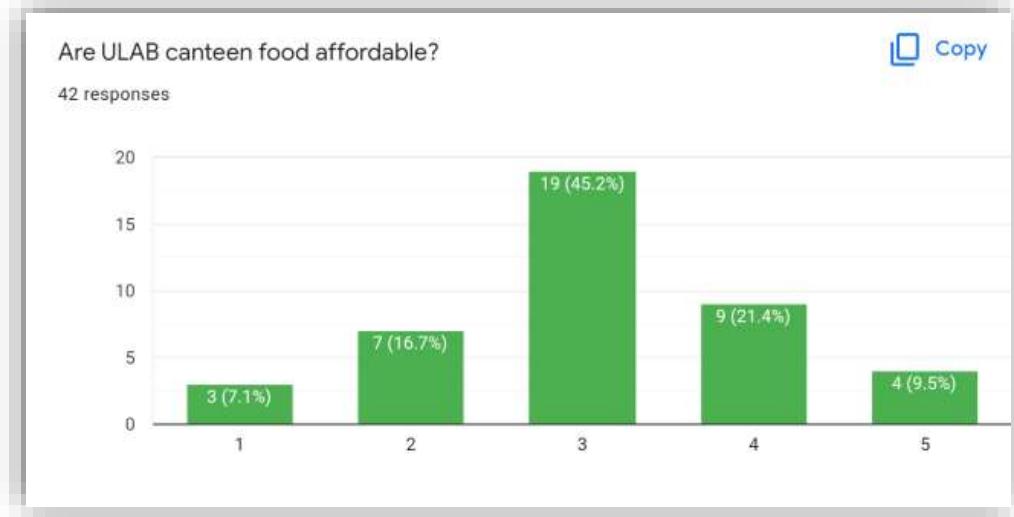


Figure 5. Result regarding the canteen food affordability

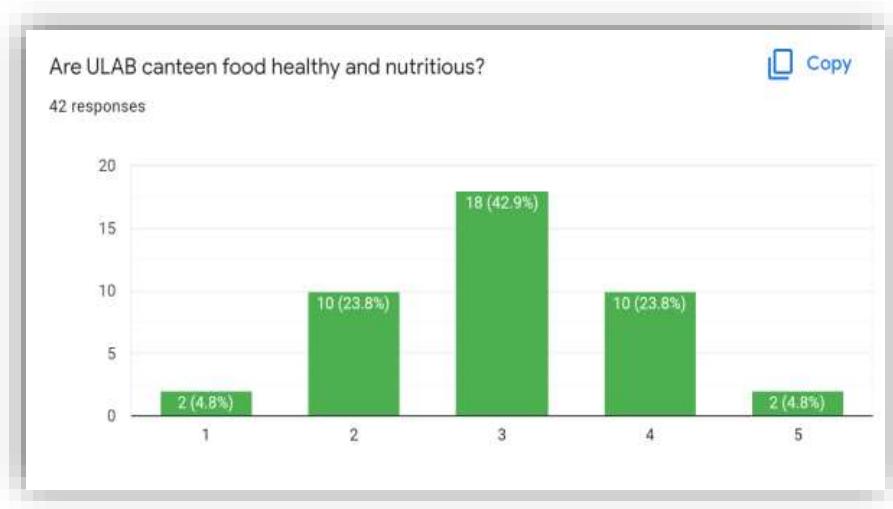


Figure 6. Results regarding the health and nutritious factor



Figure 7. Results regarding the canteen food quality



Figure 8. Results regarding the satisfaction level of ULAB's food facilities

The tables from display the results of the survey where the participants rated the ULAB canteen food's affordability, quality, nutrition and hygiene and satisfactory related factors. Most respondents rated into the scale of 3 out of 5 which suggests that the respondents are not actually satisfied with the current state of the food management of the canteen.

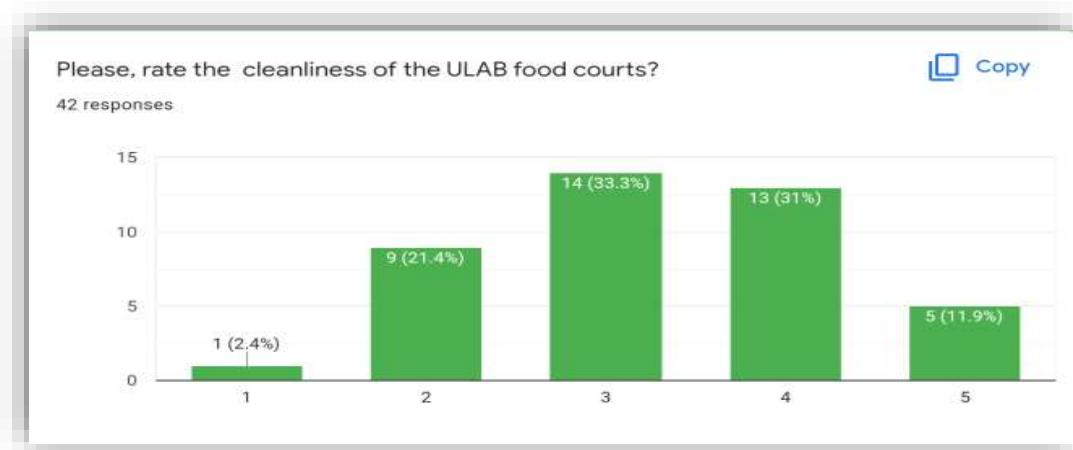


Figure 9. Results regarding the hygiene factor

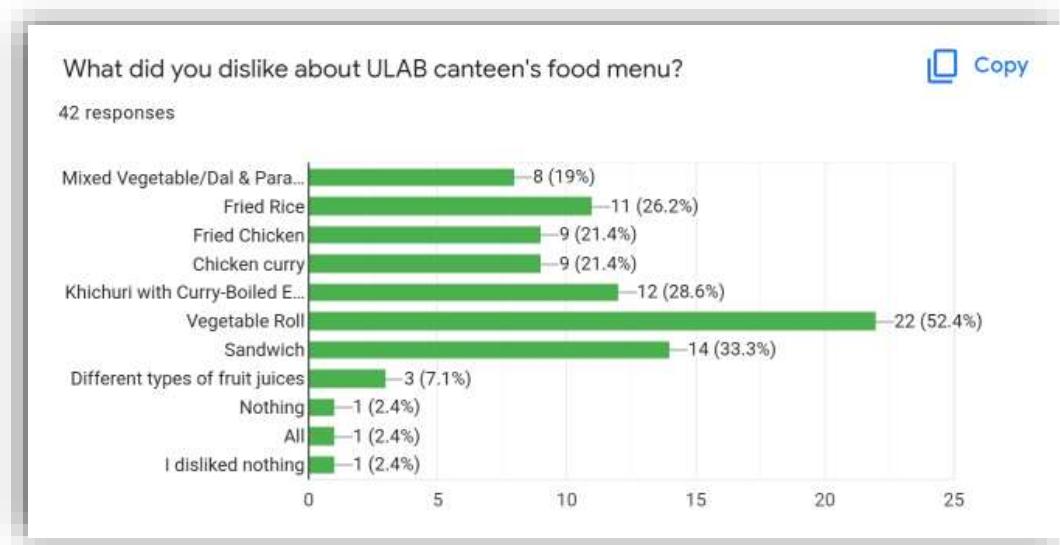


Figure 10. Results regarding the most disliked food from the canteen

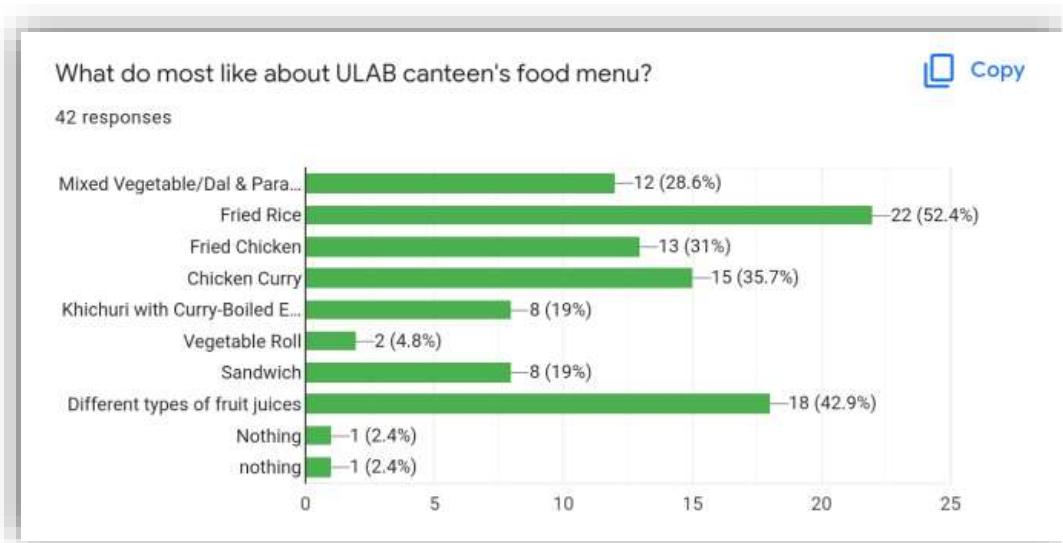


Figure 11. Results regarding the most liked food from the canteen menu

ULAB's canteen food menu related survey findings show that most, that is 22 participants (52.4%) like fried rice and again, 22 participants (52.4%) dislike the vegetable roll. Audience Satisfaction Questionnaire Template also used for complete this research survey.

Findings: After conducting the research, we have found that majority seems to be fine with the current state of the canteen food ULAB provides. Then again, several students side see the overall management as unsatisfactory. When a general image or procedure is followed by a lot of people and goes well with it, that's when the stereotypes occurs. Majority seems to be fine with the food

that they get to eat in the campus area, so, when we tried to get their opinion, they didn't put that much effort onto describing the negative aspects.

Three types of research that are found in campaigns—evaluations of the effectiveness of the transmittal and reception of messages (informative); Here, we have collected the necessary elements which will be helpful for ULAB.

Secondly, the influence of the messages (affective); maybe, now the authority will bring changes in some foods, such as, including new items to the menu etc.

Lastly and finally the intended action on the messages on the target audience (behavioral), ULAB students are involve in this criterion. We gathered all data formally, and did the primary research ourselves which was solely carried out to address a certain problem requiring an in-depth analysis.

Conclusion

Limitation of this Study: One of the study's limitations is that we used sampling approach with a limited sample size. Our goal was to evaluate the sustenance quality of ULAB campus. So, we have gathered opinions and suggestions from our students but a big limitation was we did not conduct this survey among the ULAB faculty members. Because same type of food from same canteen is served among the ULAB faculty members as well. Therefore, it was a big drawback for our study. On the other hand, in our online survey we did not have found any responder from EEE (Electrical and Electronics engineering) and ETE (Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering) departments.

Lastly, as we have conducted this survey of students from different socio-economic backgrounds, they might not have answered according to their perspective. Secondly, as it was an online survey, the participants did not prioritize on answered the close-ended questions in details, they avoided overall which suggests they are okay with the current management system.

Possibilities for Future Research: As we did not conduct this survey and focus group discussion (FGD) among ULAB faculty members, so the scope remains of researching how ULAB faculty members evaluate the quality of ULAB canteen's food. Not only that, but also, we can conduct a survey during ULAB organizing an event on campus. From there we can gather opinion from invited guests about ULAB's sustenance quality. That will help ULAB public relations office to prepare branding and promotional content for external public.

For Professional Practice: Our study was to evaluate the Sustenance Quality of ULAB Campus but if someone wants to apply same methods, research questions and sampling approach to

evaluate their own organization's and company's sustenance that will be applicable for them. Because we have prepared all the materials from the perspective of public relations. But our materials are only applicable for internal public because our study was among ULAB students only.

Concluding Remark: Public relation is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behavior. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Therefore, this research may help develop the overall canteen management, improve the food standards, and shed a light in front of the authority who will focus on the sustenance quality.

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