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Determinants of meal satisfaction in a workplace environment - DTU Orbit (08/11/2017)

Determinants of meal satisfaction in a workplace environment

Workplace lunches are recurrent meal occasions that can contribute to the general well-being of employees. The objective of our research was to study which factors influence consumers' satisfaction with these meals by exploring the relative role of food-related, personal, situational factors. Using a longitudinal approach, we monitored a total of 71 participants compiled and experienced 519 meals from their workplace canteen buffet during a three-month period; in addition the composed lunches were photographed. Before and after the lunch choice period respondents filled in a questionnaire on several meal-related variables. A mixed modelling approach was used to analyse the data. Meal satisfaction was directly associated with a positive ambience and a positive evaluation of both the quality of the food eaten and the buffet assortment, whereas the meal's energy content did not contribute to meal satisfaction. Additionally, meal satisfaction was associated with a more positive mood, lower hunger level as well as feeling less busy and stressed after lunch. The buffet assortment, a more positive mood before lunch and mindful eating contributed to the perceived food quality, but not associated with the hunger level before lunch. Time available, mindful eating and eating with close colleagues were positively associated with perceived ambience. The results indicate that consumers' satisfaction with workplace meals can be increased by putting emphasis on the quality of food served, but equally important is the ambience in the lunch situation. Most of the ambience factors were related to available time and mental resources of the participants and the possibility to share the meal with close colleagues. These are factors that can be facilitated by the service provider, but not directly influenced.

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