

Assessing the socio-economic impacts of the Seasoned Spoon

PURPOSE:

The main goal of the project is to understand how the Seasoned Spoon socio-economically affects producers, employees and consumers. By constructing a conceptual analytical model of the Seasoned Spoon as a hub that link sproducers,employees and consumers, we are able to look at how the restaurant has socio-economic impacts on them.

METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured interviews and surveys were the main methods of data collection to answer the following research questions:

PRODUCERS:

- How substantial are the economic benefits acquired by doing business with the Seasoned Spoon?
- How important are those gains in relative terms with the overall economic gains of your produce selling activities?
- How would you describe the benefits of working with Seasoned Spoon beyond income generation?

EMPLOYEES:

- How significant is the income generated by the Seasoned Spoon for your overall income generation?
- How does working at the Seasoned Spoon provide you with skills and job experience to compete in the job market?

CONSUMERS:

- Does the Seasoned Spoon provide economically accessible food?
- How do consumers perceive the organization in terms of provision of healthy food at reasonable prices?
- What are the effects of the information/ awareness campaigns about sustainable local food system?

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS:

PRODUCERS:

Socio-economic impact varied upon size and scope of business exchange with the Seasoned Spoon. In terms of impacts, social benefits tended to outweigh the economic benefits in terms of actual income generation. Producers highlighted the value of being part of the Seasoned Spoon community.

EMPLOYEES:

Student employees highlighted the importance of the Seasoned Spoon as means to income generation. The restaurant was seen as an important source of employment. Furthermore, transferrable skills and experience were also key positive socio-economic impacts for the employees and could be carried forward in any potential employment opportunities in the future.

CONSUMERS:

Around 55% of surveys indicated that food was expensive, and detailed that portion sizes were relatively small for the price. Nonetheless, the overall impact of the Spoon was seen as positive as a healthy food alternative on campus. Educational workshops did induce small behavioral change, depending on the specificity of the workshop.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Containing and enhancing rapport with producers could allow for increased business exchanges and a strengthening of the sense of community.

Given the enormous economic importance that employment at the Seasoned Spoon has for students, more job openings would be highly beneficial.

More accessible pricing relative to portion sizes would augment the number of students purchasing meals, and the number of meals purchased at the restaurant.

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