Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the demands placed on ice-cream vendors to produce state of the art ice cream flavors aimed at pleasing the palette of the consumer. Gathering information pertaining to the incarnation of ice cream, the development of flavors, and the advancement of selling ice cream as a major fast food product is the foundation of this study. In retrieving the reviewed literature for this study the researcher utilized Google Scholar, JSTOR- Scholarly Journal Archive, and ERIC- Education Resources Information Center.

The review of literature explores the emergence of ice cream in modern day dining culture, the evolution of ice cream as a business, and the marketing demands placed on ice cream vendors to stay current in meeting the palette preferences of its consumer market. The concentration of the literature is divided into three key perspectives. The first perspective of the literature review focuses on the invention of ice cream and the development of ice cream flavors. The second perspective of the literature review involves an in-depth discussion pertaining to the entrepreneur milestones of the ice cream industry. The last perspective focuses on the recent thrust of vendors to make ice cream a common fast food option for today’s consumer.

The Invention of Ice Cream and its Many Flavors

Ice cream is often considered to be a major food choice for the American Palette. According to Adams, (2013) many Americans elect to eat ice cream before selecting apple pie or chocolate cake as a dessert of choice. Adams noted how restaurant menus “are expanding to include lavish flavors, from Rocky Road to Cherry Garcia” in their dessert options (2013, p. 18). The origins of ice cream also reflect an expansive tendency in the delivery of this frozen treat. Jones, (2011) marks the introduction of ice cream in the time of ancient Rome. According to Jones, “Nero expected a dessert fit for a ruler, demanding that his soldiers trudge the mountain tops for ice so that it could be mixed with Rome’s
sweet bouquet of fruits” (2011, p. 24). As per Wiggins, (2009) ice cream found its place in the food chain when the emperors of China found ways to mix milk with ice “in a frothy concoction of flavor to delight the senses” (p.46). From Rome to China, and eventually to the United States, ice cream has served to quench the palette of people from all walks of life. As the awareness of this frozen delight grew among the masses so did the quest to produce new flavor combinations more advanced than their predecessors.

According to Wiggins, (2009) the expansion of ice cream flavors occurred simultaneously with the expansion of the industrialization of the previous century. With the advancement of refrigeration came the advancement of food preservation. Ice box technology opened the door for frozen food options that were not formerly available for long term storage. As such, the consumer could purchase a greater variety of food items; including ice cream. Jones, (2011) stated, “with the incorporation of the ice cream churning machine and the modern freezer, people could finally allow their creative ‘juices’ to flow, allowing the internal culinary inventors of the home opportunities to produce ice cream inclusive of fruit, chocolate, sauces, and the like” (p.83). Taking note from the home grown experiments, entrepreneurs took these ideas to market, allowing for the ice cream vendor to be born (Jones, 2011). Vendors such as Haagan Das, Ben and Jerry’s, Blue Bell, placed ice cream front in center in the frozen food aisle, making access to ice cream easier for the consumer, and the entrepreneur as well.

**Ice Cream as a Business**

With the invention of refrigeration, came the means of cold food storage and easy accessibility of cold food supplies (Adams, 2013). Consumers in search of quick food options and tasty treats looked to businesses such as McDonalds, A&W, and Burger King to quench their appetites (Jones, 2011). Even the younger consumer had purchasing power via the ice cream truck vendor in their local neighborhood (Wiggins, 2009). No longer was ice cream isolated to be a homemade creation, requiring quick
consumption. Ice cream had evolved to be a contender in the food industry. Businesses dedicated to solely serving up ice cream were born. “Baskin Robbins, and Tasty-Freeze chains popped up in communities, large and small, across the American landscape” (Adams, 2013, p. 24). Ice cream had arrived. Consumers were accepting of this food medium as a common fast food selection. Even health conscious individuals had their fast food chains of preference, “TCBY and Scoops Soft Serve Yogurt” (Jones, 2011, p. 104).

Ice Cream Considered Fast Food

According to Adams, (2013) consumers of fast food are growing, “tired of the typical burger and fries option... instead opting for a delicacy they can call their own” (p. 21, p.23). To accommodate the personalization need of food consumers, savvy fast food business owners have implemented marketing strategies that require businesses to evolve their menus to include a larger variety of options, inclusive of an array of substitutions. “From coffee to ice cream, people can now order these items the way they want in a matter of seconds” (Jones, 2011, p. 76). People can even concoct their own mixture of ingredients in establishments such as Scoopz. According to Wiggins, (2009) consumers can go into an establishment, grab a cup, and enter ice cream or yogurt nirvana. “People can add nuts, chocolate, jelly beans, or whatever to their plain-Jane vanilla ice cream, turning it into a personal sweet victory of momentary invention” (Wiggins, 2009, p 59). In a culture of fast internet, fast phones, and fast cars, the expectation of fast food is not any different. Historically, ice cream was a concoction that required ample time, from churning to solidifying (Jones, 2011). “Yet, with the advent of machines that expedite the churning process, and machines to store the frozen delight, people can now request ice cream on demand” (Adams, 2013, p.20). Ice cream has become a common alternative in satisfying the American fast food palette.

The Need for Further Marketing Research
Ice cream, and its sister product, yogurt, has been embraced by the food consumer as a solid choice in satisfying sweet-tooth cravings. Ice cream has also been elevated to be a main staple in the consumer’s diet. Yet, has the frozen treat capped out in its ‘rise to preference’ (Jones, 2011, p.127) on the fast food menu? Further research is needed to determine if additional marketing strategies are necessary in keeping this frozen treat in the mainstream of fast food dining. Marketing strategies, themselves, need to be explored to determine the next wave of ice cream creations and delivery options needed to satisfy an ever-changing palette of the food consumer.
References

