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Cafeteria Management System - Enhancing its Efficiency

Sidharth Shivam Singh¹, Vishal Ohal², Harsh Mittal³, Aman Bansal⁴, Swati Kashyap⁵

Computer Science and Engineering, Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab

Abstract: Cafeterias, food joints and other eateries established within the premises of a university serve as major hubs for social-interactions, nourishment and academic life, between both faculty as well as students. This review paper synthesizes and evaluates current literature on cafeteria management within university settings.

The paper begins by outlining the importance of efficient cafeteria operations in promoting student well-being, academic success and implementation of sustainable practices. It explores various aspects of cafeteria management including menu planning, dietary preferences, sustainability initiatives, technological advancements, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. The assessment also looks at the difficulties university cafeterias confront, including how to minimize food waste, balance student expectations with nutritional requirements, and several others.

Throughout the paper, an emphasis is placed on innovative approaches and best practices that can be employed by universities globally to enhance cafeteria services. These encompass the integration of emerging technologies such as IoT, Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, etc., to facilitate ordering and payment systems, collaboration with local vendors for fresh and sustainable produce, community engagement initiatives and many more.

Keywords: Cafeteria Efficiency, University, Digital Enhancement, Organization Structure, Emerging Technologies and Integration

I. INTRODUCTION

This review paper sets out to conduct a thorough investigation of the complex field of university cafeteria administration. This study attempts to disentangle the intricacies, obstacles, and revolutionary tendencies influencing these gastronomic ecosystems by a review of recent literature. Through the synthesis of various techniques, innovations, and best practices, this paper aims to provide an overview of the essential components that define effective cafeteria administration.

A. Significance Of Cafeteria Management

University cafeterias play a pivotal role in shaping the dietary habits of students, faculty, and staff. Effective management ensures the availability of nutritious and balanced meals, promoting overall health and well-being among the campus population. Proper nutrition is closely linked to cognitive function and academic performance. Well-managed cafeterias offering healthy options can positively influence students' concentration, focus, and learning capabilities, thereby indirectly impacting academic achievements.

B. The Role Of Cafeteria Management Website

A cafeteria management website can spotlight the institution's sustainability initiatives. This might include information on sourcing practices, waste reduction efforts, or energy-saving measures undertaken by the cafeteria, raising awareness and encouraging eco-friendly behaviour among users. Features such as online ordering, monthly, quarterly or yearly meal plans, or budgeting tools can assist users – both parents as well as students - in managing their expenses. Additionally, showcasing cost-effective meal options or promotions through the website can encourage responsible spending. The website can communicate safety protocols, hygiene practices, and real-time updates on any health-related guidelines or changes.

C. Purpose And Scope Of The Review

A cafeteria management website serves as a central hub for students, faculty, and staff, offering easy access to menus, facilitating efficient ordering and payments, and providing crucial updates on dining services. It enhances user experience by offering convenience, fostering engagement through feedback mechanisms, and promoting sustainability initiatives. Simultaneously, it assists cafeteria administrators in optimizing resources, managing inventory, and aligning offerings with the diverse needs of the university community.

II. FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITY

Websites or applications designed solely for the purpose of meeting intra-university requirements must include various unique features which many other business organizations operating in the same field fail to provide. This section provides an overview of the core functionalities and unique features commonly found in these applications.

A. Listing Available Outlets

Central to the purpose of restaurant management websites is the ability to locate and recognize all available beverage points, food junctions and restaurants along with the store timings and services they provide. To facilitate these requirements, it is essential that the website must provide the users with a list of all such outlets and the mapping instructions to reach them.

B. Menu display

Apart from navigating to the stores, it is essential for the users to access the various options at hand at these accessible outlets. Displaying daily, weekly, or monthly menus with detailed descriptions, nutritional information, and any special dietary options available with the help of images or videos may be considered as an effective outcome during designing and development of such applications. Using images to showcase dishes will enhance the user-experience effectively.

C. Online Ordering

Allowing users to pre-order meals or pre-book catering services from a specific vendor for events held within the university premises is an essential feature that must be included to amplify the experience of students and staff members. This feature minimizes wait times and ensures prompt service.

D. User Accounts And Profiles

Providing students, faculties and other staff members with facility to create personalized accounts where they can manage their respective preferences regarding a particular outlet or food brand, save favourite orders, view order history and track loyalty points and discounts may be regarded as important attribute to include during website development.

E. Online Payments And Integration

Offering secure online payment options that integrate with student databases, academic calendars to coordinate events and programs or special offers on occasions, university payment systems or student IDs for seamless transactions is a must requirement to be incorporated for enhanced familiarity and ease of access.

F. Real-Time Updates And Notifications

Some advanced websites offer real-time food tracking functionality, enabling users to keep a check on the time of delivery or the expected time for seat availability at a particular outlet. The website should include features for notifying users about menu changes, special promotions, operational hours, or any cafeteria-related announcements through alerts, emails or push notifications.

G. Feedback And Ratings

Empowering users with the facility to submit feedback, ratings and reviews regarding food quality, service and overall experience can help improve and boost user understanding regarding that particular outlet significantly.

H. Speed And Performance

Users expect online food ordering websites to perform smoothly, with minimal lag or delays. Slow response times or frequent downtime can frustrate users and impede productivity. Thus, the performance and reliability of the website are critical aspects of the user experience.

I. User Accessibility And Inclusive Design

When it comes to increase the profit margins of a website the accessibility plays equal importance as the interface design. The website should be accessible to each and every user irrespective of their location which means a person who is far away from the place is able to place the order. Also it should meet the standard guidelines. The design should be inclusive so that it can enhance the user experience for a diverse audience.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

In this fast-revolutionizing world everything is moving on a fast pace and therefore the humans need a faster output towards everything whether it should be work or related to their eating routine. Majorly the people eat in the cafeterias whether it is the university cafeteria or the work place but due to large number of people taking admission in the university there is a problem of overcrowding and due to this long waiting queues are forming which creates a feeling of frustration among the people and also results in the wastage of time. But since food is a necessity for everyone these long queues are unavoidable and the individual needs to remain in the queue for the order placement as well as the order takeaway.

The basic problem which the prime customer face in the college cafeteria is the overcrowding places which eventually results in wastage of time of the user. This long duration may sometimes give a feeling of irritation to the customer and because of this there might be a risk of loss of business of the shops because of this long waiting time. The problem is for both the user as well as the cafeteria owners which had led to make an online food ordering website which will tie up all the shops of the college or university campus so that the overcrowding problem might get reduced to some extent.

A. Major Problems

- 1) Long waiting queues in the cafeteria.
- 2) Wastage of time.
- 3) Reduced profit of the cafeteria due to the heavy rush.
- 4) Mislacing of order because of the chaos

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Till date various solutions have been made to improve the condition and one such solution is the online food ordering system which will be compatible to both the mobile as well as laptop users. The system merges all the shop menu items separately and in one place. Through this the user only need to create the profile of him and by seeing the menu items can place the order and then will get a notification when their order will be processed and ready to receive.

This will eventually lead to less overcrowding and less burden on the cafeteria staff and they can peacefully make the order ready.

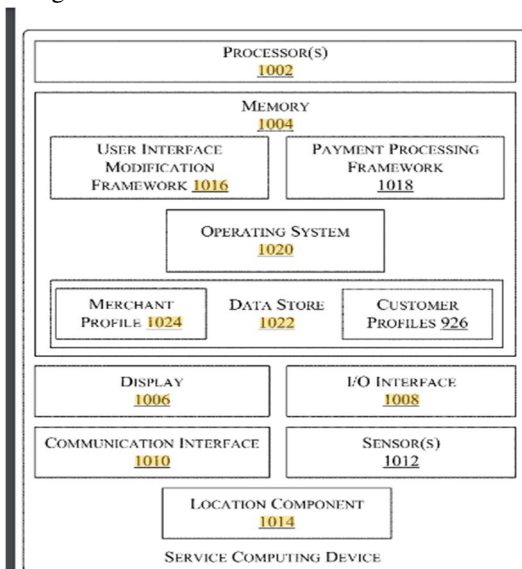


Fig 1. Website layout for the proposed solution

A. Improvement In Structure

The structure can be further improved by adding a section of favorites through past orders so that the user can order their previous favorite items in quick time and this will lead to more faster order processing.

There is a token system which will indicate when the order is going to get ready then only the user needs to come and pick the order which will remove the long waiting queues. All these features in the online food ordering website will create space in the cafeterias and will enhance the efficiency and the profit margins will get increased on an exponential scale.

V. FUTURE TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

As technology and eating preferences continue to evolve, so do food ordering websites. This section explores emerging trends and potential developments in these emerging fields, and how they can impact the food processing procedure within a university. The following methods can be implemented for a notable progress to be achieved: -

A. Online Ordering And Mobile Apps

With the growing demand of mobile applications and a generational shift towards mobile devices, it would be impactful to develop a separate mobile application for online order placement, payments, etc., to cater in-university demands.

B. Personalization And Customization

Investigating the integration of AI or various machine learning algorithms to personalize food recommendations of users based on allergies, dietary preferences or past orders can help significantly improve user satisfaction levels.

C. Sustainability Initiatives

Implementing sustainable practices in cafeteria management such as reducing food waste generation and managing it, offering eco-friendly packaging and other initiatives may help in positively influencing the lifestyle of the users.

D. Integration With Augmented Reality

Emerging technologies such as Augmented Reality can be implemented to provide a seamless experience to the users. AR generated images of dishes from menus of a particular food outlet can be used to provide better transparency to clients.

E. Integration Of Payment Systems And Loyalty Programs

With the incorporation of various payment options such as mobile wallets, UPI, Net Banking, contactless payments into cafeteria websites along with loyalty programs that provide incentives to frequent purchases, a greater number of consumers can be attracted.

F. Integration With Artificial Intelligence (AI)

With the profound advancements in the field of Artificial Intelligence and powerful Machine Learning algorithms at our disposal, meaningful insights such as most frequently purchased item, busy hours, etc., can be generated by and effective measures could be implemented to cater the rising demands.

G. Cross-Platform Compatibility

For users who rely on online food ordering websites across various devices, the experience should be consistent. Mobile apps should offer the same features and ease of use as the desktop or web versions. Cross-platform consistency ensures that tasks and settings are seamlessly synchronized across devices, preventing confusion or data loss.

VI. RESULT AND OUTCOMES

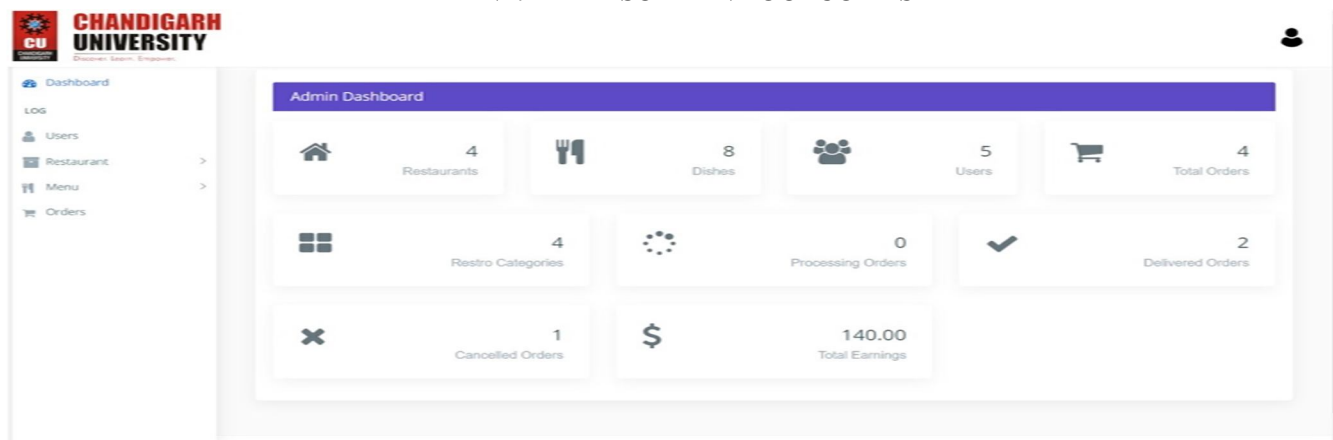


Fig 2. Admin Dashboard View

Fig 2. is used to provide an illustration of the admin panel developed and the various attributes it includes. Information regarding restaurants added, services included, number of users, menu and food options, etc., can therefore be easily accessed by the admin and actions to process the required requests could be taken accordingly.

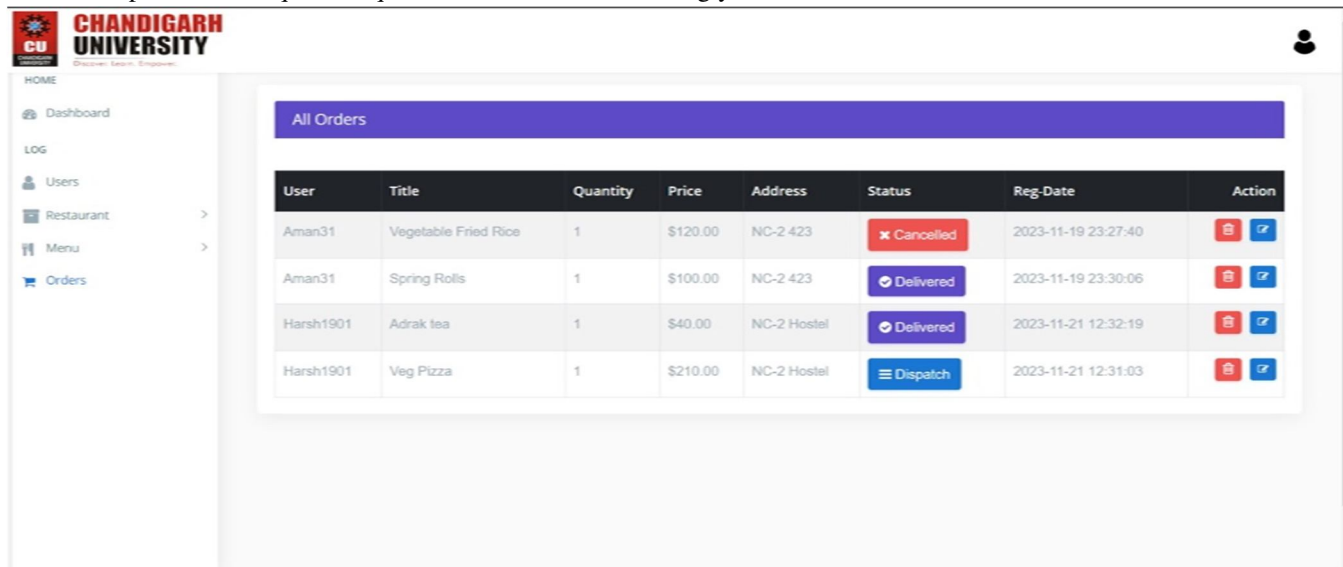


Fig 3. Orders List

Fig 3. provides a view of the orders placed on a given day and their current status, i.e., whether the orders placed have been completely fulfilled or if they have been cancelled or if the order has been dispatched for delivery. All these data can help improve the understanding of the order status and necessary steps can be taken to process them, thus improving user-experience.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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