



Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability of the Farm-to-Table Concept: A PLS-SEM Analysis of Consumer Perspectives in Cebu, Philippines

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Abstract

This study examines the structural relationships among awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability of the farm-to-table (F2T) concept among consumers in Cebu, Philippines. Theoretically, the study extends the Theory of Planned Behavior by positioning perceived benefits as a key mediating construct linking awareness to behavioral intention. Practically, it underscores the need for integrating awareness-building initiatives with value-driven communication strategies to strengthen sustainable food consumption in emerging economies. Grounded in a quantitative research design, it applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using data from 240 respondents to assess both direct and indirect effects. Descriptive results show high levels of awareness ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.990$), perceived benefits ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.923$), and acceptability ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.920$), all interpreted as "Agree." Despite constraints such as cost and accessibility, respondents maintain a positive disposition toward F2T when benefits are clearly recognized. The model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory power, with acceptability yielding an R^2 value of 0.578, indicating that 57.8% of the variance is explained by awareness and perceived benefits. Findings reveal that awareness significantly influences perceived benefits ($\beta = 0.578$, $t = 11.923$, $p < 0.001$) and acceptability ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 5.971$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that greater familiarity with F2T strengthens value recognition and willingness to adopt. Perceived benefits also exert a strong positive effect on acceptability ($\beta = 0.523$, $t = 9.867$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the central role of value-based evaluation in shaping consumer decisions. Mediation analysis confirms that perceived benefits partially mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability ($\beta = 0.303$, $t = 7.772$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a dual-pathway mechanism. This suggests that awareness influences acceptability both directly and indirectly by enhancing perceived benefits, emphasizing the importance of translating knowledge into meaningful value interpretation.

Keywords: Farm-to-Table, Awareness, Acceptability, Perceived Benefits, PLS-SEM

1. Introduction

The farm-to-table (F2T) concept has emerged as a significant global phenomenon in marketing and business strategy. Globally, 50% of habitable land is used for agriculture, with 50% dedicated to human food, 38% for livestock feed, and 12% for non-food purposes (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2020). The F2T movement promotes serving local food in restaurants and school cafeterias by acquiring ingredients directly from producers (Zoeller, 2020), emphasizing fresh, locally sourced ingredients and reducing the distance food travels from farm to consumer.

While eating locally sourced food has existed for centuries, the F2T movement gained momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, becoming mainstream in the early 2000s with the rise of sustainable and organic farming awareness (Tunc, 2020). Influential chefs, such as Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, have been pivotal in popularizing this approach, advocating for sustainable agriculture and local sourcing since the 1970s. The process involves sourcing food from local farmers, preparing meals with seasonal ingredients, and emphasizing the story behind the food and its producers (Roy, 2024; Vargas et al., 2020). The movement brings several benefits, including



fresher and more flavorful food, reduced environmental impact, economic support for local farmers, and health benefits from fresh, seasonal produce free from preservatives (Liu et al., 2022; Fan & Rue, 2020).

F2T popularity has risen by 4.99% in the past year, with consumers enjoying these meals an average of 2.7 times annually (Ludwig-Borycz, 2022). Despite this growth, only 0.03% of restaurants globally offer farm-to-table options, with the average meal priced at \$21.83 (Tastewise, 2024). The movement is closely associated with organic, vegan, natural, and healthy dietary trends.

In the Philippines, the F2T movement is gaining momentum as consumers become increasingly aware of their food choices' environmental and social impacts (Montefrio, 2020). Many restaurants are embracing local sourcing practices, supporting local farmers and reducing dependency on imported produce, allowing farmers to avoid middlemen and receive fair compensation (Rodrigues Fortes et al., 2020; Schreiber et al., 2023). This approach also contributes to food security by promoting a more sustainable food system, though food insecurity remains a significant challenge, with 59 million Filipinos affected even before the pandemic (Sustainability PH, 2024).

In Cebu Province, the F2T movement is bolstered by a robust agricultural sector. In 2021, Cebu recorded the highest annual increase in the value of farming and fisheries production in Central Visayas, with a growth rate of 7.3% (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). The province contributed 50.1% of the total value of agriculture and fisheries production at constant 2018 prices. Cebu also led the region in livestock, poultry, and fisheries production, with contributions of 54.7%, 72.0%, and 57.9%, respectively. Additionally, Cebu's agritourism sector is thriving, with around ten established agritourism sites offering visitors the chance to experience farm life and buy local products directly from producers. The total value of agricultural and fisheries production in Cebu reached PHP 49.09 billion at current prices, highlighting its significant economic impact (Arizo & Apritado, 2022).

Despite its many benefits, the F2T movement faces several global challenges. Accessibility to locally grown food can be limited by geography, climate, or inadequate infrastructure (Kinnunen et al., 2020). Additionally, locally-produced food costs are often higher than mass-produced alternatives, making F2T dining less affordable for many people (Larmer, 2024). Some restaurants falsely claim to serve F2T food, causing consumer skepticism due to the absence of regulatory certification standards (Scott, 2024). Sustainability is another issue, as the movement may not always support diverse agriculture, leading to monocultures that harm soil health. Furthermore, transporting food over long distances increases the carbon footprint, diminishing some environmental advantages of local sourcing (Kreier, 2022). Lastly, balancing local food production with the need to feed a growing global population remains challenging, as international trade is necessary to address food shortages while ensuring sustainability (Van Berkum, 2021; Daszkiewicz, 2022).

The research gap in studying perceived benefits as a mediator between awareness and acceptability of the F2T concept in Cebu lies in the need for region-specific studies. While global research exists, local perceptions, cultural nuances, and economic factors in Cebu remain underexplored. Few studies examine how perceived benefits, such as health and environmental impact, mediate consumer decision-making. Additionally, the psychological dynamics of how consumers weigh benefits against barriers like cost are under-researched. Lastly, the influence of sociocultural factors, including local traditions and community values, needs further investigation.

Despite growing literature on the F2T concept, a key theoretical gap remains in explaining the mechanism through which awareness translates into acceptability. Most studies are largely descriptive and region-focused, often assuming a direct link between awareness and consumer acceptance without adequately examining the intervening processes involved. This reflects not merely a contextual gap, but a deeper conceptual limitation in understanding how and why awareness influences behavior. In particular, the mediating role of perceived benefits remains underexplored. Addressing this mechanism-based gap is essential for strengthening theoretical explanations and informing more effective strategies for promoting sustainable food practices.

This study investigates the mediating role of perceived benefits in the relationship between awareness and acceptability of the F2T concept in Cebu, Philippines. It specifically examines how perceived benefits such as health, environmental, and economic advantages shape consumer attitudes and influence acceptance of F2T practices. By focusing on this mediating mechanism, the study seeks to move beyond direct-association assumptions and provide a



clearer understanding of the psychological and behavioral processes underlying consumer adoption. It is posited that awareness alone may not be sufficient to drive acceptability unless reinforced by clearly recognized benefits. The findings are expected to contribute empirical evidence that can inform the development of targeted strategies aimed at strengthening consumer engagement and promoting the sustainable adoption of locally sourced food systems within the region.

2. Literature Review

The F2T concept has garnered attention as an approach to promoting sustainable agriculture, supporting local economies, and enhancing consumer health. Central to this movement are consumer perceptions, particularly the awareness and perceived benefits associated with F2T practices. Several studies highlight the importance of perceived benefits in influencing consumer behavior and decision-making, serving as a key mediator between awareness and acceptability of F2T initiatives.

2.1 Awareness and Acceptability

Rabacal and Agawa (2023) examined stakeholders' awareness and acceptability of academic program goals using a descriptive-evaluative design. The study found that high awareness, largely facilitated by institutional communication platforms, led to strong acceptability among stakeholders. The results reinforce the proposition that awareness acts as a precursor to acceptance in organizational contexts.

Bautista and Sanchez (2024) conducted a quantitative study among university students to assess awareness and acceptability of institutional vision and mission statements. Their findings revealed that students with greater knowledge and awareness demonstrated higher levels of acceptability, validating the assumption that cognitive familiarity enhances attitudinal support toward institutional frameworks.

Sekhon et al. (2017) developed the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability (TFA) through a systematic review. Their work conceptualized acceptability as a multi-dimensional construct influenced by affective attitude, perceived effectiveness, and self-efficacy. The study emphasized that awareness of an intervention contributes to how individuals cognitively and emotionally evaluate its acceptability, providing a theoretical basis for empirical research. This indicates that awareness has positively influenced acceptability, grounded in the theoretical assumption that knowledge and familiarity with a concept significantly shape evaluative judgment and behavioral disposition. Individuals who possess higher levels of awareness are more likely to form favorable attitudes, as increased access to information reduces ambiguity and strengthens cognitive clarity regarding expected outcomes.

In the context of the F2T concept, awareness plays a central role in shaping how individuals interpret its key principles, particularly those related to local sourcing, sustainability, food traceability, and transparency within the food system. A more developed understanding of these dimensions enables individuals to construct a more informed and favorable evaluation of the concept, thereby increasing their likelihood of acceptance and behavioral support.

This relationship is consistent with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that behavioral intentions are formed through underlying beliefs shaped by accessible information. When individuals are sufficiently informed, they are more capable of developing stable and coherent attitudes toward a behavior, which in turn strengthens their intention to act upon it. Similarly, Rogers (2003), in the Diffusion of Innovations theory, emphasizes that awareness and knowledge reduce uncertainty and increase the likelihood of adoption. As individuals become more informed about an innovation, resistance tends to decline, particularly when the perceived benefits are clear and the associated risks are minimized.

Thus, awareness functions as a foundational cognitive antecedent of acceptability by facilitating informed judgment, reducing uncertainty, and strengthening positive evaluative orientation toward the adoption of the F2T concept.

Ganesh (2024) found that heightened awareness of the environmental, health, and economic impacts of food sourcing directly influences consumers' willingness to adopt sustainable practices like F2T. In the context of Cebu, local awareness of food sustainability and the benefits of supporting local farmers may drive consumers toward greater acceptance of the F2T concept.



Kuo, Liu, Wang, and Chen (2023) developed and validated a sensory experience scale for F2T events using mixed methods. The study revealed that consumer awareness of F2T dining is strongly linked to sensory expectations such as freshness, food quality, and environmental ambiance. Increased awareness enhanced participants' appreciation of authenticity and local sourcing, demonstrating that awareness shapes experiential evaluation.

Edam-Abgor et al. (2025) examined librarians' awareness, acceptability, and application of artificial intelligence in academic research libraries. Their findings indicated that awareness does not significantly predict acceptance of AI in service delivery based on school ownership. This empirical study can be used to show that awareness has a positive effect on acceptance or acceptability, thus, in the context of F2T for the food industry, the hypothesis can be used in the affirmative.

H1: Awareness has a positive effect on Acceptability.

2.2 Perceived Benefits as Mediator

Perceived benefits, such as improved food quality, support for local farmers, and environmental sustainability, often mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability. Research by Bang (2023) found that when consumers recognize clear benefits to their health and the environment, their likelihood of accepting and participating in F2T programs increases significantly. This is especially relevant in regions like Cebu, where the F2T movement is still gaining traction. Consumers may be more inclined to embrace these practices if they understand the tangible advantages for themselves and their communities. The mediating role of perceived benefits is critical, as it links the abstract notion of awareness to concrete behavioral outcomes, such as increased consumer participation (Rahardja et al., 2021).

The dynamics of consumer behavior, particularly how consumers weigh perceived benefits against barriers, further complicate the relationship between awareness and acceptability. While consumers may be aware of F2T benefits, factors such as cost, accessibility, and convenience may act as barriers to acceptance (Pascaris et al., 2020; Schmit et al., 2019). In Cebu, where economic factors and accessibility to locally sourced products can vary, these perceived barriers might inhibit the full realization of the F2T movement. Addressing these barriers by emphasizing the health and economic benefits could help mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability, making the concept more appealing to a broader audience.

Sociocultural factors, including community values and food traditions, also influence how perceived benefits mediate the awareness-acceptability relationship. According to Pesci and Brinkley (2022), local food traditions and community-based agricultural practices can either support or hinder the F2T movement. In Cebu, where food is central to cultural identity, understanding how these sociocultural elements shape consumer perceptions is vital. For instance, community-driven initiatives that align the F2T concept with local food traditions may strengthen the perceived benefits and increase acceptability.

The theoretical framework for the study on the mediating effects of perceived benefits on the relationship between awareness and acceptability of the F2T concept in Cebu, Philippines, is anchored on several key theories. The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) helps explain how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence intentions and behaviors. In this study, awareness of the F2T concept reflects consumer attitudes, while perceived benefits such as health, environmental, and economic advantages mediate the intention to accept and adopt F2T practices. According to TPB, individuals are more likely to engage in behaviors they perceive as beneficial, particularly if they feel confident in their ability to participate and experience social pressure to adopt these practices.

Additionally, Consumer Perception Theory highlights that perceptions of value and benefits shape consumer decisions. In the context of F2T, awareness influences how consumers perceive benefits like freshness, sustainability, and local support, affecting their acceptance of the movement. Perceived value thus serves as a critical driver of consumer behavior (Zeithaml, 1988).

The empirical results establish a significant and positive relationship between awareness and perceived benefits within the context of the F2T concept. This indicates that individuals with higher levels of awareness are more capable of



recognizing, interpreting, and articulating the advantages associated with F2T practices, particularly in relation to health improvement, environmental sustainability, and local economic development.

From a cognitive perspective, awareness functions as a foundational determinant in the formation of evaluative judgments. When individuals are adequately informed, they are better equipped to process relevant information and assign meaning to the attributes of a given concept. In line with the TPB, Ajzen (1991) posits that beliefs underlying attitudes are shaped by accessible information, suggesting that knowledge availability directly strengthens evaluative assessments of behavioral outcomes. In the case of F2T, heightened awareness enables individuals to develop a more structured and meaningful understanding of how food sourcing systems generate both direct and indirect benefits.

In contrast, insufficient awareness limits this cognitive processing, resulting in fragmented or underdeveloped perceptions of value. This implies that perceived benefits are not automatically recognized but are constructed through exposure to information, lived experience, and contextual interpretation. As awareness increases, individuals become more likely to associate F2T practices with positive externalities such as improved food quality, reduced environmental burden, and stronger support for local producers. Over time, these associations consolidate into more favorable benefit perceptions that subsequently shape behavioral intentions.

Thus, the findings highlight awareness as a critical cognitive mechanism that shapes how benefits are perceived and interpreted. Enhancing awareness, therefore, extends beyond information dissemination; it represents a necessary condition for strengthening value perception and fostering greater receptivity toward sustainable food systems such as the F2T concept.

H2: Awareness has a positive effect on Perceived Benefits.

The results demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between perceived benefits and acceptability. This finding indicates that individuals are more inclined to accept the F2T concept when they clearly recognize and assign value to its associated advantages. Perceived benefits operate as a central motivational mechanism that translates cognitive evaluation into behavioral intention. When individuals recognize meaningful advantages—particularly in terms of improved health outcomes, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic contributions—these evaluations strengthen their willingness to support and adopt the concept. In this regard, perceived benefits enhance both the relevance and practicality of F2T, thereby reinforcing favorable behavioral responses. This aligns with Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which posits that perceived relative advantage is a critical determinant of adoption behavior.

The findings further suggest that acceptability is not solely driven by awareness, but is more profoundly shaped by how individuals interpret the usefulness and desirability of the concept. As perceived benefits become more salient, resistance to adoption diminishes, and behavioral openness increases, even in the presence of constraints such as price sensitivity and limited accessibility.

The results underscore that perceived benefits constitute a pivotal determinant of acceptability, functioning as the critical link between cognitive understanding and behavioral endorsement of the F2T concept.

H3: Perceived Benefits have a positive effect on Acceptability.

The findings establish that perceived benefits significantly mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability of the F2T concept. This indicates that awareness does not exert a direct or purely linear influence on acceptability, but instead operates through a more nuanced cognitive-evaluative mechanism in which individuals actively process, interpret, and assign value to perceived advantages.

As awareness of F2T practices increases, individuals develop a more coherent and structured understanding of its underlying principles. This expanded cognitive framework enables a more discerning appreciation of its health-related outcomes, environmental contributions, and socio-economic implications. In turn, this refined understanding strengthens perceived benefits, which becomes instrumental in shaping higher levels of acceptability. Within this



process, perceived benefits function as an interpretive conduit through which informational awareness is transformed into behavioral disposition.

This mediating relationship is theoretically grounded in Ajzen's (1991) TPB, which posits that behavioral intentions are shaped not only by informational exposure but also by belief-based evaluations of expected outcomes. In parallel, Rogers (2003) asserts within the Diffusion of Innovations framework that perceived relative advantage is a central determinant of adoption behavior, underscoring the decisive role of value appraisal in acceptance processes.

The results further imply that awareness, in isolation, is insufficient to generate behavioral acceptance unless it is accompanied by a substantive evaluation of perceived value. Accordingly, the relationship between awareness and acceptability is best characterized as partially indirect, with perceived benefits serving as a critical explanatory mechanism.

Perceived benefits emerge as a pivotal intervening construct that clarifies the process through which awareness is converted into acceptability, reinforcing the theoretical position that value-based cognition is fundamental to the adoption of sustainable consumption systems such as the F2T concept. In a complementary empirical contribution, Kim, Chan, and Gupta (2007) demonstrate that perceived usefulness and perceived benefits significantly influence users' adoption decisions in the context of mobile internet services. Their findings indicate that individuals do not base acceptance solely on exposure or familiarity with technology, but rather on a structured assessment of functional, economic, and utilitarian gains. When users perceive that a system enhances efficiency, reduces effort, or delivers tangible value, their propensity to accept and adopt the technology increases markedly. This evidence reinforces the value-based logic of acceptance, wherein perceived benefits operate as a decisive cognitive filter that translates evaluation into adoption behavior. Collectively, the study affirms that acceptance is fundamentally anchored in the perceived net advantage derived from a given system or behavior.

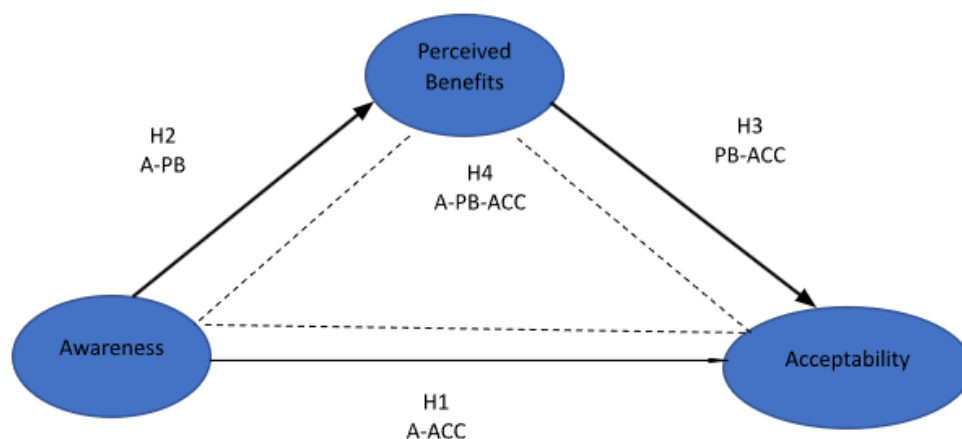
H4: Perceived Benefits mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study anchors on the TPB. The results underscore that perceived benefits constitute a pivotal determinant of acceptability, functioning as the critical link between cognitive understanding and behavioral endorsement of the F2T concept. Ajzen (1991), within the TPB, conceptualizes behavioral intention as the immediate antecedent of actual behavior, shaped by underlying belief structures, particularly behavioral beliefs concerning expected outcomes.

In this regard, perceived benefits represent a critical evaluative component of these beliefs, wherein individuals assess the anticipated positive consequences of performing a given behavior. When such outcomes are appraised favorably, they strengthen attitudinal disposition and reinforce intention formation, thereby increasing the likelihood of behavioral acceptance. From this theoretical standpoint, acceptance is not a spontaneous response to information exposure, but rather a reasoned outcome of cognitive evaluation in which perceived value plays a central role in shaping motivational readiness to act.

2.4 Conceptual Framework





The conceptual framework specified in this study is theoretically grounded in the premise that consumer cognition and evaluation processes jointly determine the acceptability of the F2T concept. Specifically, the model seeks to explicate the direct and indirect mechanisms through which customers' awareness influences acceptability, with perceived benefits functioning as a mediating construct. The model is operationalized through three latent variables: awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability.

Awareness of the F2T concept is conceptualized as the degree to which customers possess knowledge and understanding of its underlying principles, including localized sourcing, sustainability practices, and food system transparency. Perceived benefits, in turn, represent customers' evaluative judgments regarding the advantages associated with the concept, encompassing dimensions such as healthfulness, environmental sustainability, and product quality. Acceptability is defined as the extent to which customers exhibit a favorable disposition toward adopting, supporting, or integrating the F2T approach into their consumption patterns and lifestyle practices.

The hypothesized structural relationships among these constructs are multifaceted. First, a direct path from awareness to acceptability is posited, reflecting the assumption that increased cognitive familiarity with the concept enhances consumers' propensity to accept it. Second, perceived benefits are hypothesized to exert a direct and positive influence on acceptability, consistent with value-based adoption frameworks which suggest that favorable evaluations drive behavioral intentions.

In addition to these direct effects, the model incorporates a mediating pathway wherein awareness influences perceived benefits, which subsequently affect acceptability. This indirect effect suggests that awareness enhances acceptability not solely through direct cognitive influence but also by shaping consumers' benefit perceptions, thereby reinforcing their evaluative and behavioral responses.

Taken together, the SEM provides a comprehensive analytical framework that captures both the direct and indirect effect on acceptability. The model underscores the pivotal role of awareness as both an antecedent and an enabling mechanism that amplifies perceived benefits, ultimately contributing to greater acceptance of the F2T concept.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The overall philosophical underpinning for this study was a post-positivist paradigm. The study employed a quantitative research approach, as its objective was to test a pre-defined theoretical model and establish statistically significant causal and mediating relationships between measurable constructs: Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability. The primary research method and strategy employed was a cross-sectional survey, which was appropriate for collecting data on a large number of variables from a sample of a population at a single point in time. Part one sought to describe the respondents' demographic profiles, perceived benefits, awareness, and acceptability of the F2T concept while also exploring the relationships among these variables. Part two (Measurement of Constructs) was subdivided into three sections and started with the measurement of the constructs of Awareness with twenty items, Acceptability with twenty items, and Perceived Benefits. Using this design, the study can analyze direct relationships and the mediating role of perceived benefits. Quantitative data was collected through surveys.

3.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents for this study on the F2T concept in Cebu were selected through purposive sampling, specifically targeting Hospitality Management (HM) students from three major institutions: the University of San Carlos (USC), University of San Jose-Recoletos (USJR), and the University of Cebu (UC). This sampling strategy represents a deliberate and meaningful methodological choice, as it focuses on a group of individuals who are not only consumers but also future professionals in the food, beverage, and tourism industries. Their unique position makes them a critically informed demographic whose perceptions can shed light on the potential adoption and promotion of F2T within Cebu's hospitality sector.

This cohort of HM students possesses a heightened intrinsic awareness of food systems, culinary trends, and service standards due to their academic training. Their curriculum likely includes topics such as sustainable sourcing, menu development, and quality management, which naturally exposes them to concepts like F2T. Consequently, their



baseline awareness is expected to be significantly higher than that of the general public. This allows the study to explore not merely whether they are aware of F2T, but how deeply they understand it, which benefits they consider most compelling from an operational and ethical standpoint, and whether their academic knowledge translates into professional intent. In essence, they serve as proxies for the next generation of industry influencers, whose attitudes today may shape business practices tomorrow.

The inclusion of students from USC, USJR, and UC introduces valuable diversity into the sample, reflecting varied educational philosophies and institutional cultures. USC, as a research-oriented university, may foster a more analytical and ethically grounded perspective, leading students to prioritize the environmental and social dimensions of F2T. USJR, with its Recoletos tradition of community service, may emphasize the local economic and communal benefits of supporting Cebuano farmers. UC, known for its strong industry links and practical approach, likely encourages students to assess F2T through the lens of feasibility, cost, and customer appeal. Collectively, this tri-institutional representation ensures that the findings are not limited to a single academic mindset but instead capture a range of viewpoints that mirror the broader educational landscape in Cebu. Any strong consensus emerging from such a diverse group would indicate a robust, widely shared vision for F2T's role in the local industry.

Demographically, these respondents belong largely to Generation Z, a cohort characterized by digital nativity and heightened concern for sustainability and authenticity. Their views are shaped by social media, global discourse on climate change, and a preference for experiential and transparent consumption. For them, F2T aligns with values of traceability, storytelling, and ethical engagement—elements that are increasingly central to contemporary hospitality marketing. Their reported acceptability, therefore, should be interpreted as both a personal preference and a professional judgment on a trend with growing market resonance. At the same time, any reservations they express—regarding cost consistency, supply reliability, or consumer readiness—are particularly insightful, as they reflect the practical hurdles that future managers must overcome to implement F2T successfully.

The purposive proportionate sampling of HM students from USC, USJR, and UC provides a focused, relevant, and multi-layered respondent base for this study. Their responses offer a forward-looking snapshot of how an informed, professionally oriented segment perceives the F2T concept. The findings will reveal not only the potential drivers of F2T adoption—such as strongly perceived benefits—but also the critical barriers as seen through the eyes of future industry practitioners. This discussion underscores that the results are not merely about student opinion but about the emerging professional ethos that could guide the evolution of Cebu's food and hospitality landscape toward greater sustainability and locality.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants must be at least 18 years old.
- Must reside in Cebu, Philippines, and be engaged in or knowledgeable about the F2T concept as consumers.
- Participants should be willing to provide informed consent and participate voluntarily.
- Individual understanding of local agricultural practices or those who regularly consume locally sourced food will be included.
- Must be a hospitality management student.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals under 18 years of age.
- Participants who are not familiar with F2T concepts or who not be involved in the local food system.
- Participants who refuse to provide informed consent or do not wish to participate voluntarily.

Since the population size is unknown, the sample size was determined using statistical sampling techniques for unknown populations. A common approach is to use Cochran's formula, which calculates sample size based on desired confidence levels, margin of error, and response variability. In this case, a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5% were used. An initial assumption of maximum variability (50%) was applied, which is common when little is known about the population distribution. Adjustments were made depending on the responses collected in the pilot study.

Participants were recruited using a purposive-proportional sampling technique. Purposive-proportional sampling targeted specific hospitality management students who are already engaged in the F2T movement. Ethical



considerations were upheld by ensuring that all participants provided informed consent and were fully informed of the study's purpose and process.

3.3 Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool for this study was a researcher's questionnaire designed to measure key variables: perceived benefits, awareness, and acceptability of the F2T concept. The questionnaire consisted of several sections. The demographic information section included age, gender, household monthly income, and frequency of visit. The Perceived Benefits Scale measured participants' perceptions of the advantages of F2T practices, such as health, environmental impact, support for local farmers, and economic benefits. The Awareness Scale assessed participants' knowledge of F2T principles and practices within the local context in Cebu, while the Acceptability Scale measured their willingness to adopt F2T practices, either as consumers or practitioners. Each section used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater levels of perceived benefits, awareness, or acceptability.

To ensure validity and reliability, several steps were taken. An expert review was involved through consultation with hospitality management professionals among top-tiered universities and survey design to ensure that the questionnaire accurately measures the intended variables. Based on feedback from the content experts, the questionnaire underwent item refinement to enhance its reliability and effectiveness across different participant groups. The final questionnaire was treated through scientific reliability and validity through SMART PLS-SEM 4.0.

Respondents answered the questionnaire in a face-to-face manner. Each section was scored using a 5-point Likert scale. Perceived benefits, awareness, and acceptability scores were calculated by averaging responses within each section. The data was recorded in a spreadsheet and analyzed using statistical methods such as mean scores and standard deviation.

The research instrument is a robust, multi-scale questionnaire expertly designed to measure awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability of the F2T concept in Cebu. It progresses logically from demographics to 20-item scales for each core construct, ensuring comprehensive measurement. The awareness scale effectively gauges both general familiarity and specific knowledge of the local F2T system. The benefits section meticulously captures health, economic, environmental, and social dimensions of consumer perception. Most importantly, the acceptability scale moves beyond attitude to assess concrete behavioral intentions and willingness to pay. The strategic inclusion of reverse-coded items mitigates response bias and strengthens validity. Guidance on creating composite scores and performing factor analysis demonstrates analytical foresight and rigor. This structure allows for both overall correlation analysis and deeper exploration of sub-dimensions within each variable. While its length necessitates pilot testing to prevent respondent fatigue, the tool is well-aligned with the study's objectives. Overall, it is a methodologically sound instrument capable of generating high-quality, actionable data for the research.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedures

This section outlines the systematic, step-by-step process followed for data collection in the study. The procedures are designed to ensure the ethical treatment of respondents, the accuracy of data, and the reliability of findings.

The initial phase focused on the development, validation, and authorization of the research process. The research instrument—comprising sections on demographic profile, awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability—was first finalized. To ensure its validity, the instrument underwent content validation by a panel of at least three experts in the field of hospitality management. Their evaluations, particularly regarding clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness, were systematically incorporated to refine the instrument. Subsequently, the researcher secured all necessary permissions and ethical clearances. Formal request letters, accompanied by the study protocol and finalized instrument, were submitted to the appropriate research offices or academic authorities of University of San Carlos, University of San Jose-Recoletos, and University of Cebu to obtain authorization to conduct the study among hospitality management students. In parallel, the full research proposal was submitted to the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB) of the researcher's home institution to ensure adherence to ethical standards, including voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and data protection.



Sampling procedures were established during this phase. In coordination with department heads or class advisers, a list of eligible participants—specifically hospitality management students in their second year and above—was identified. A purposive sampling technique was employed, guided by inclusion criteria relevant to the study objectives. The required sample size was determined through power analysis appropriate for mediation studies. Additionally, survey administration schedules were coordinated with faculty members to take place during designated class periods, thereby maximizing participation while minimizing academic disruption.

The second phase involved the systematic administration of the survey instrument. Data was collected through paper-and-pencil questionnaires administered in person, a method chosen to ensure greater control over the data collection environment and to enhance response rates.

Prior to participation, a comprehensive informed consent process was conducted. The researcher or a trained assistant introduced the study, outlining its purpose, significance, and expected completion time of approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Participants were clearly informed that their involvement is entirely voluntary and that they may decline participation or withdraw at any time without consequence. An informed consent form was presented on the first page of the questionnaire, and respondents indicated their agreement by marking a designated option before proceeding.

To maintain consistency, standardized instructions were read aloud to all participants. The researcher remained available to clarify procedural concerns but refrained from influencing responses. A quiet and uninterrupted time frame was allocated to facilitate thoughtful and independent completion of the questionnaire. Upon completion, all questionnaires were collected immediately and placed in sealed envelopes to preserve confidentiality. Any identifying information, such as class sections, was recorded separately from the survey responses to ensure anonymity.

The final phase centered on data preparation, validation, and secure storage. A comprehensive codebook was developed to define all variables and their corresponding numerical representations. Data from the completed questionnaires was encoded into statistical software (e.g., Microsoft Excel or SPSS) using a double-entry system, wherein two independent encoders input the data separately. Any discrepancies were resolved through verification against the original questionnaires.

Data cleaning procedures were then undertaken to enhance accuracy and reliability. This included the assessment of missing data, where minor and randomly distributed omissions were addressed through mean substitution, while cases with substantial missing information were excluded. Outliers were identified using standardized scores (z-scores) to detect potential encoding errors or anomalous responses. Additionally, negatively worded items were reverse-coded to ensure uniformity in scale direction prior to the computation of composite scores.

Finally, stringent data security measures were implemented. Physical questionnaires were stored in a locked cabinet accessible only to the principal researcher and will be retained for one year following the completion of the study before being securely destroyed. Electronic datasets were stored on password-protected devices and encrypted cloud storage systems. All data was anonymized, with no personally identifiable information linked to the responses. Through the implementation of this comprehensive and methodologically sound procedure, the study ensures the collection of high-quality, valid, and reliable data. This, in turn, provides a strong empirical foundation for the subsequent statistical analyses and supports the generation of credible conclusions regarding the mediating role of perceived benefits in the adoption of the F2T concept in Cebu.

3.5 Treatment of Data

Quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaires was organized and presented to facilitate analysis and interpretation. For tables, the study utilized descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) for respondent profiles for SOP number 1. Means and standard deviations for the levels of the study variables (Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability) addressed SOP 2. Correlation coefficients (e.g., Pearson's r) were used to show the relationships between the study's variables. Lastly, results of the PLS-SEM analysis, including path coefficients, significance levels, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and model fit indices were employed in the study. The result of the survey was analyzed in the 5-point Likert Scale as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Scoring Distribution with Category and Verbal Description



Mean Range	Item Interpretation	Overall Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41 - 4.20	Agree	High
2.61 - 3.40	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Neither High nor Low
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree	Low
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

A five-point Likert scale was provided to measure each construct. The PLS-SEM method benefits from this approach because it enables researchers to gather precise data which helps them develop more accurate predictive models while studying intricate connections. The application of five-point within a single model becomes acceptable when all indicators share the same conceptual framework yet model execution needs accurate scale interpretation across different elements. The analysis process along with result interpretation becomes easier when all scale points stay consistent throughout the study.

The researchers used PLS-SEM as their main method to test all study hypotheses about direct effects and mediating effects. PLS-SEM is well-suited for complex models with multiple mediating variables and is robust to smaller sample sizes. PLS-SEM is also effective in handling non-normal data, which is common in social science research. As Hutama et al. (2024) successfully used PLS-SEM, it further validates its appropriateness for this research. This involves evaluating the reliability and validity of the measurement scales (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity) and examining the significance and strength of path coefficients to determine the direct effects of Awareness on Acceptability.

Measurement Model Assessment. The measurement model evaluates the reliability and validity of constructs. The following key analyses were performed:

1. **Indicator Reliability.** Index reliability refers to the high degree of commonality among measurement variables and can be explained by the dimension of its measure, which measures using outer loadings (factor loadings). These loadings should be ≥ 0.708 (Hair et al., 2021). However, values between 0.4 and 0.7 can be retained if the construct's AVE and CR are acceptable. To establish the importance of the factor load, the standard error must be calculated using the bootstrap techniques, followed by the T-values and P-values.
2. **Internal Consistency Reliability.** This is assessed through Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). A CR of 0.7 - 0.9 is acceptable while values > 0.95 indicate redundancy. This means that all the variables being measured are measuring the same thing, and therefore cannot be used as a measurement indicator for mask validity. For CA, a threshold of > 0.7 would be acceptable and > 0.8 is good.
3. **Convergent Validity.** The degree of positive correlation between the measures to which the dimension belongs and is assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE should be ≥ 0.5 , indicating that at least 50% of the variance in the construct is explained by its indicators.
4. **Discriminant Validity.** Ensures constructs are distinct from each other. Common methods include: The study utilized a Fornell-Larcker Criterion where the square root of AVE for each construct should be greater than its correlation with other constructs. As well as Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) with a threshold that should be < 0.85 (strict criterion) or < 0.90 (relaxed).

Structural Model Assessment. After establishing measurement validity, the structural model is assessed to test relationships between constructs. Key analyses include:

1. **Collinearity Assessment.** This is checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Hence, VIF should be < 5 (preferably < 3).
2. **Path Coefficients and Significance Testing.** This is estimated through bootstrapping (5,000 resamples recommended) to determine statistical significance. With a decision Criteria of t-values > 1.96 ($p < 0.05$, significant at 95% confidence level) and t-values > 2.58 ($p < 0.01$, significant at 99% confidence level).
3. **Coefficient of Determination (R^2).** Indicates how much variance in the dependent variable is explained by independent variables. The thresholds are: 0.75 (substantial), 0.50 (moderate), 0.25 (weak) and Effect Size (f^2) Assessment Determines the impact of an independent variable on the dependent variable. The threshold for Small is 0.02, Medium is 0.15, and Large is 0.35.



4. **Predictive Relevance (Q^2) via Blindfolding.** Assessed using the cross-validated redundancy measure (Q^2). With a threshold of $Q^2 > 0$ indicates predictive relevance.
5. **Goodness of Fit in PLS-SEM.** PLS does not provide a single model fit index like CB-SEM, but the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is used. For its threshold, the SRMR should be ≤ 0.08 for it to be a good fit.

Mediation Analysis. After validating the structural model, mediation analysis was performed to investigate how independent variables influence dependent variables indirectly through mediators. Mediation occurs when an independent variable affects a dependent variable both directly and indirectly through a mediating variable (Hair et al., 2019a). This analysis ensures a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among constructs, provided the measurement and structural models meet all required quality standards (Hair et al., 2022). When the direct effect (c) is significant, but the indirect effect is not, this indicates direct-only nonmediation, suggesting no mediation. Similarly, if neither the direct effect (c) nor the indirect effect (a x b) is significant, the result is classified as no-effect nonmediation, which may suggest issues with the theoretical model that need to be addressed. For cases where mediation is present, Zhao et al. (2010) describe three distinct types of mediation. Complementary mediation occurs when both the direct effect (c) and the indirect effect (a x b) are significant and move in the same direction, indicating that the mediator partially accounts for the relationship. Competitive mediation is identified when both effects are significant but operate in opposite directions, showing that the mediator exerts a counterbalancing influence. Finally, indirect-only mediation is found when the indirect (a x b) is significant, but the direct effect (c) is not, suggesting that the mediator fully explains the relationship (Zhao et al., 2010).

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 240)

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	18–21	120	50.0
	22–25	113	47.1
	26–29	6	2.5
	30–33	1	0.4
Gender	Male	125	52.1
	Female	108	45.0
	Prefer not to say	7	2.9
Monthly Household Income (PHP)	Below 20,000	95	39.6
	20,001–40,000	94	39.2
	40,001–60,000	35	14.6
	60,001–80,000	6	2.5
	Above 80,000	10	4.2
Frequency of Visit	Once a week	202	84.2
	Twice a week	25	10.4
	Thrice a week	5	2.1
	Four or more times a week	8	3.3

The demographic information of the survey sample of 240 individuals shows that most of the participants are young adults, with 97.1% falling within the 18-25 age range. The group aged 18-21 makes up 50.0%, while the 22-25 age group accounts for 47.1%. Participants aged 26-29 and 30-33 represent only small percentages (2.5% and 0.4%, respectively), indicating that the research primarily reflects the perceptions and behaviors of the younger population. Regarding the percentage of males and females, the sample was slightly skewed toward males, accounting for 52.1% and 45.0% respectively, with 2.9% not stating. This provides an overall balanced representation of both genders, although males had a slight majority.



Regarding monthly household income, most respondents reported earning less than PHP 40,000, with 39.6% earning less than PHP 20,000 and 39.2% earning between PHP 20,001 and PHP 40,000. A smaller number of respondents indicated higher income brackets: 14.6% earned PHP 40,001 to 60,000, 2.5% earned PHP 60,001 to 80,000, and 4.2% earned over PHP 80,000. This suggests that the research will primarily reflect the perceptions of low- and middle-income households, which can influence their purchasing behavior and outlook toward upscale products like F2T items.

Regarding the frequency of visits to relevant F2T venues or markets, a large percentage of respondents (84.2%) reported visiting once a week, while a smaller percentage (10.4%) visited twice a week. Even fewer respondents visited three times a week or more (2.1% and 3.3%, respectively). This suggests that respondents are regular consumers, providing valuable insight into their awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptance of F2T products. In general, the demographic structure shows a relatively young population mainly from lower- to middle-income groups and an active demographic. This can help explain their answers regarding F2T awareness levels, perceived benefits, and acceptability. The results mainly indicate that young adults, who are mostly active consumers, may be early adopters of sustainable and locally sourced food habits in Cebu.

4.2 Level of Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability

Table 3. Level of Awareness

Statement	Mean	SD	Description
1. I am aware of the term "farm-to-table" before this survey.	3.43	1.097	Agree
2. I am aware of what "farm-to-table" means in my own words.	3.42	0.980	Agree
3. I am aware that F2T aims to shorten the distance food travels from farm to consumer.	3.65	0.927	Agree
4. I am aware that F2T often involves direct sales from farmers to consumers (e.g., at markets).	3.72	0.946	Agree
5. I am aware that some restaurants in Cebu specifically advertise as "farm-to-table."	3.54	0.962	Agree
6. I am aware of F2T products being sold in local markets or stores in my area.	3.62	0.997	Agree
7. I can name at least one local farm in Cebu known for direct selling.	3.21	1.12	Agree
8. I am aware that F2T is different from the conventional supermarket supply chain.	3.62	0.945	Agree
9. I am aware of community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs or similar F2T initiatives.	3.42	0.886	Agree
10. I have read articles or seen news segments about the F2T movement in the Philippines.	3.25	1.066	Somewhat Agree
11. I follow social media pages or groups that promote local or F2T food.	3.03	1.154	Somewhat Agree
12. I am aware that F2T can involve organic or natural farming practices.	3.76	0.877	Agree
13. I am aware that F2T emphasizes seasonality (eating produce that is in season).	3.67	0.943	Agree
14. I am aware of the potential challenges farmers face in participating in F2T systems.	3.68	0.937	Agree
15. I am aware of the role of middlemen in conventional systems versus their reduced role in F2T.	3.36	0.930	Somewhat Agree
16. I am aware of some local food festival or fair that promoted F2T principles.	3.53	0.961	Agree
17. I can identify a product label or certification that suggests it is "local" or "direct from farm."	3.53	0.980	Agree
18. I am aware that F2T is linked to discussions about food security and sovereignty.	3.61	0.946	Agree
19. I know someone who actively seeks out and purchases F2T products.	3.38	1.073	Somewhat Agree



20. I consider myself knowledgeable about the farm-to-table concept.	3.42	1.059	Agree
Average Mean	3.49	0.990	Agree

Legend: F2T – Farm to table; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41 – 4.20 – Agree; 2.61-3.40 – Somewhat Agree; 1.81 – 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 3 results show that overall, the respondents are highly aware of the F2T concept, with a factor mean of 3.49, placing it in the High Awareness category. The statements about general knowledge of F2T, including its definition, purposes (such as reducing the distance between the farm and the consumer), the practice of direct sales, and the differences between F2T and traditional supply chains, all had mean scores above 3.41, which indicates agreement. In particular, the respondents were very aware that F2T emphasizes seasonality (mean = 3.67), relates to organic or natural farming (mean = 3.76), and addresses the issues farmers face in F2T systems (mean = 3.68). This indicates that the participants not only recognize the name farm-to-table but also understand its practical and ethical aspects, including sustainability, seasonality, and reducing the role of intermediaries.

Other items ranged in the somewhat agree zone (2.61 - 3.40), including awareness of F2T social media pages (mean = 3.03), knowledge of community-supported agriculture programs (mean = 3.42), and the ability to identify local farms with direct selling practices (mean = 3.21). These moderate scores indicate that respondents have a conceptual understanding of F2T but may need to improve their practical engagement and personal connection to local F2T initiatives.

Overall, the data suggests that respondents feel confident in their understanding of the F2T concept and its core principles. This indicates a strong level of knowledge that can facilitate promotion, engagement, and lead the educational campaign. Awareness is particularly high regarding key aspects of F2T, including local sourcing, sustainability, and supporting local farmers.

Table 4. Level of Perceived Benefits

Statement	Mean	SD	Description
1. F2T products are fresher and taste better than conventionally sourced products.	3.93	0.873	Agree
2. F2T products are more nutritious and healthier.	3.93	0.877	Agree
3. Buying F2T provides better food safety as the origin is more traceable.	3.95	0.843	Agree
4. F2T products contain fewer chemical pesticides and preservatives.	3.76	0.902	Agree
5. Supporting F2T directly increases the income and livelihood of local Cebuano farmers.	3.94	0.902	Agree
6. F2T helps keep money circulating within the local Cebu economy.	3.91	0.885	Agree
7. F2T creates more job opportunities within our local community.	3.93	0.854	Agree
8. F2T helps preserve traditional farming methods and local crop varieties in Cebu.	3.95	0.876	Agree
9. F2T reduces carbon footprint and environmental pollution by cutting down on long-distance transport.	3.85	0.893	Agree
10. F2T uses less plastic and non-biodegradable packaging.	3.80	0.872	Agree
11. F2T promotes more sustainable use of land and water resources.	3.96	0.838	Agree
12. F2T increases my trust and connection with the people who grow my food.	3.93	0.882	Agree
13. F2T encourages a healthier and more conscious lifestyle for my family.	3.98	0.887	Agree
14. F2T educates consumers, especially children, about where food comes from.	3.95	0.879	Agree
15. F2T strengthens the resilience of our local food system against external disruptions (e.g., pandemics).	3.90	0.863	Agree
16. F2T ensures a more stable and secure food supply.	3.95	0.845	Agree
17. F2T offers unique and high-quality products not found in regular supermarkets.	3.90	0.875	Agree



18. The higher price of F2T products is justified by their superior quality and benefits.	3.82	0.879	Agree
19. Participating in F2T (e.g., visiting farms, markets) provides positive community and social experiences.	3.90	0.843	Agree
20. The benefits of the F2T concept outweigh its potential drawbacks.	3.81	0.809	Agree
Average Mean	3.69	0.923	Agree

Legend: F2T - Farm to table; 4.21-5.00 - Strongly Agree; 3.41 - 4.20 - Agree; 2.61-3.40 - Somewhat Agree; 1.81 - 2.60 - Disagree; 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

The outcomes reveal that customers have relatively positive views about the F2T concept, and the factor mean is 3.69, which is considered as the category of High Perceived Benefit. The mean score of all the statements falls within the range of Agree (3.41-4.20) which shows that the participants are aware of the benefits of F2T products and practices. This is because traceable origins led respondents, in particular, to agree that F2T products are fresher, tastier, more nutritious, and safer (means = 3.93-3.95). This indicates a strong awareness of the quality and health benefits associated with eating locally sourced food. Additionally, they recognized the economic and social advantages of F2T, such as increasing income for local Cebuano farmers, keeping money within the local economy, creating jobs, and promoting community participation (means = 3.91-3.94).

Sustainability and environmental advantages were identified, too. The respondents confirmed that F2T reduces carbon footprints, reduces the use of non-biodegradable packaging, and promotes the sustainable use of land and water resources (means = 3.80-3.96). The above results indicate that respondents value the extended effects of F2T beyond personal use, particularly in terms of ecological and community health.

Others that showed significant value include the development of consumer trust and closeness with food manufacturers, children learning about the sources of food, and the capacity of the local food system to withstand disruptions like pandemics (mean = 3.90-3.98). Even the perception of increased prices was discussed as legitimate, based on the high quality and advantages of F2T products (mean = 3.82).

Overall, the information indicates that respondents are highly aware of the various benefits of the F2T concept, including nutritional, economic, environmental, and social aspects, and hold a positive view that could encourage further adoption and promotion of F2T practices in Cebu.

Table 5. Level of Acceptability

Statement	Mean	SD	Description
1. I have a positive attitude towards the farm-to-table concept.	3.98	0.875	Agree
2. I believe F2T is a desirable model for Cebu's food system.	4.04	0.836	Agree
3. I intend to actively look for F2T products in the future.	3.94	0.878	Agree
4. I am willing to shift a significant portion of my food purchases to F2T sources.	3.82	0.916	Agree
5. I am willing to pay a premium (e.g., 10-20% more) for genuine F2T products.	3.72	1.001	Agree
6. I would go out of my way (e.g., travel farther, visit special markets) to buy F2T products.	3.75	0.906	Agree
7. I plan to recommend F2T products and stores to my friends and family.	3.88	0.837	Agree
8. I would choose a restaurant specifically because it sources ingredients locally via F2T.	3.83	0.928	Agree
9. I am willing to subscribe to a weekly vegetable box/bag from a local farm.	3.79	0.913	Agree
10. I would participate in farm visits or "pick-your-own" activities organized by F2T farms.	3.87	0.892	Agree
11. I support government policies that incentivize and promote F2T initiatives in Cebu.	3.92	0.830	Agree
12. I am confident that I can find reliable sources of F2T products in my area.	3.85	0.877	Agree



13. The perceived benefits of F2T are strong enough to motivate me to change my buying habits.	3.88	0.915	Agree
14. I believe F2T is a practical and feasible concept for my household.	3.83	0.899	Agree
15. I would support my family's decision to buy more F2T products.	3.86	0.947	Agree
16. The inconvenience of accessing F2T products is a major barrier for me.	3.75	0.869	Agree
17. I think F2T products are too expensive for my regular budget.	3.71	0.943	Agree
18. I am skeptical about the actual quality and safety claims of F2T products.	3.74	0.886	Agree
19. I am satisfied with the current conventional food system and see no need to switch to F2T.	3.69	0.939	Agree
20. I am highly likely to become a regular consumer of F2T products in Cebu.	3.88	0.900	Agree
Average Mean	3.74	0.920	Agree

Legend: F2T - Farm to table; 4.21-5.00 - Strongly Agree; 3.41 - 4.20 - Agree; 2.61-3.40 - Somewhat Agree; 1.81 - 2.60 - Disagree; 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 5 results indicate that respondents generally show strong acceptance of the F2T concept, with an average score of 3.74, placing it in the High Acceptability category. All statement scores ranged from 3.41 to 4.20, reflecting positive attitudes, intentions, and willingness to adopt F2T practices.

The attitude toward F2T held by respondents as a preferable and viable model of the food system in Cebu was strongly positive (means = 3.98, 4.04). They indicated they will actively pursue F2T goods, refer friends and relatives, and consider the restaurants that buy their products locally (means = 3.83, 3.94). This shows that participants not only agree with the concept in theory but also demonstrate willingness to turn it into practical action.

Readiness to adopt F2T practices despite the additional effort or cost was also observed. The respondents were willing to pay a higher price for authentic F2T products, drive further to purchase them, and receive weekly boxes of vegetables grown at local farms (means = 3.72, 3.79). They also expressed interest in visiting farms or participating in pick-your-own activities, which highlights the experiential aspects of F2T (mean = 3.87).

Accessibility and government support were also viewed positively. Respondents agreed that F2T promotion policies are important, and they are confident they can find credible F2T sources locally (means = 3.85-3.92). Additionally, the perceived usefulness of F2T was high enough to motivate behavioral change in buyers (mean = 3.88), showing that awareness and perceived benefits translated into acceptance.

Although potential barriers such as perceived cost, inconvenience, and doubt of product claims were considered (means = 3.71-3.75), they did not significantly reduce overall acceptability. This suggests that even with some minor concerns, respondents are generally willing and inclined to include F2T products in their daily consumption habits. Overall, the evidence shows that the F2T idea is being well accepted by participants, and they are eager to contribute to and get involved in local F2T projects. This demonstrates their willingness to promote and expand its presence within the Cebu food system.

Table 6. Summary of the Levels of the Variables

Latent Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation
Awareness	3.49	0.990	Agree	High Awareness
Acceptability	3.74	0.920	Agree	High Acceptability
Perceived Benefits	3.69	0.923	Agree	High Perceived Benefits
Average Mean	3.64	0.946	Agree	

Note: The mean scores are interpreted using the equal interval distribution presented in Table 1. A mean score of 4.21-5.00=Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20=Agree; 2.61-3.40=Somewhat Agree; 1.81-2.60=Disagree; 1.00-1.80=Strongly Disagree

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of the key latent variables examined in this study: Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability have mean scores ranging from 3.49 to 3.74, all falling within the "Agree" to "High"



categories. The descriptive results suggest that all constructs such as Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability provided verbal interpretation results to High Awareness, High Perceived Benefits, and High Acceptability, respectively.

4.3 Measurement Model Assessment

It is important to evaluate the measurement model to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs, which are necessary prerequisites for interpreting relationships in the structural model (Henseler et al., 2016b). Figure 4 shows the evaluation of PLS-SEM through algorithm. All indicators were specified as reflective, meaning that the observed items are considered outcomes of their respective latent constructs. The analysis was performed using the PLS-SEM algorithm, which is suitable for complex models and does not require the assumption of normality. This method estimates the relationships between latent constructs and their indicators, examining internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha, ρ_A , ρ_C), convergent validity (AVE), and indicator reliability (outer loadings ranging from 0.578 to 0.826) to ensure that the measurement model is robust prior to hypothesis testing.

Indicator Reliability

Indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each item, as presented in Table 7. Outer loadings indicate the degree to which each item reflects its corresponding latent construct, with values of 0.70 or higher generally considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019a). Most indicators of the three constructs demonstrated strong loadings, confirming that they reliably measure their respective constructs. For example, Awareness (A1-A20) had loadings ranging from 0.630 to 0.783. However, the final model for SEM from A1 to A4 was omitted to improve the average convergent validity to go beyond the 0.50 threshold value. Acceptability (ACC1-ACC20) had loadings between 0.578 and 0.826, reflecting a robust representation of participants' acceptability to the farm-to-market restaurant food sector industry. Similarly, Perceived Benefits items (PB1-PB20) showed strong loadings from 0.636 to 0.794, indicating consistent measurement of participants' perceived benefits of F2T concepts.

Table 7. Outer Loadings, Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Reflective Measurement Model

Latent Variables	Items	Outer Loadings	CA (α)	CR (ρ_A)	CR (ρ_C)	AVE
Awareness	A1	0.652	0.935	0.938	0.942	0.505
	A2	0.654				
	A3	0.630				
	A4	0.652				
	A5	0.683				
	A6	0.671				
	A7	0.630				
	A8	0.689				
	A9	0.738				
	A10	0.719				
	A11	0.708				
	A12	0.693				
	A13	0.707				
	A14	0.721				
	A15	0.735				
	A16	0.783				
	A17	0.725				
	A18	0.711				
	A19	0.713				
	A20	0.735				
Acceptability	ACC1	0.605	0.957	0.959	0.961	0.553
	ACC2	0.713				
	ACC3	0.788				
	ACC4	0.794				
	ACC5	0.764				



	ACC6	0.765				
	ACC7	0.814				
	ACC8	0.826				
	ACC9	0.755				
	ACC10	0.757				
	ACC11	0.742				
	ACC12	0.794				
	ACC13	0.827				
	ACC14	0.776				
	ACC15	0.773				
	ACC16	0.687				
	ACC17	0.578				
	ACC18	0.670				
	ACC19	0.610				
	ACC20	0.772				
Perceived Benefits	PB1	0.640	0.954	0.955	0.958	0.533
	PB2	0.671				
	PB3	0.713				
	PB4	0.636				
	PB5	0.692				
	PB6	0.714				
	PB7	0.745				
	PB8	0.771				
	PB9	0.773				
	PB10	0.727				
	PB11	0.770				
	PB12	0.784				
	PB13	0.772				
	PB14	0.794				
	PB15	0.731				
	PB16	0.751				
	PB17	0.768				
	PB18	0.664				
	PB19	0.747				
	PB20	0.713				

Internal Consistency and Convergent Reliability

Internal consistency and convergent validity were assessed using Cronbach's alpha (CA), Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A), composite reliability (CR or ρ_C), and average variance extracted (AVE), as summarized in Table 7. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .935 to .957, indicating acceptable strong internal consistency across constructs. Rho_A values for all constructs exceeded 0.70, further supporting the internal reliability of the measurement model. Composite reliability scores were also high, ranging from .942 to .961, confirming that the latent variables are consistently measured by their indicators.

Convergent validity, as measured by AVE in Table 7, showed that all constructs exceeded the recommended minimum of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that the majority of variance in each construct is captured by its respective indicators. AVE values ranged from 0.505 to 0.553, showing satisfactory convergence.

The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and validity for all constructs. The strong outer loadings, consistent internal reliability metrics (Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability), and sufficient convergent validity (AVE) presented in Table 7 confirm that the constructs are measured accurately.



Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that each construct in the model captures a distinct concept and does not overlap significantly with other constructs. It was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations, or HTMT, which is widely regarded as a robust method for evaluating discriminant validity in PLS-SEM. HTMT values represent the ratio of correlations between constructs to correlate within the same construct, referred to as monotrait correlations. For constructs that are conceptually similar, HTMT values should remain below 0.90, while a stricter threshold of 0.85 is recommended for constructs expected to be highly distinct (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2019a).

As shown in Table 8, all HTMT values in this study were below the 0.85 cutoff, confirming that the constructs are sufficiently distinct. For example, the HTMT value between Acceptability and Awareness was 0.656, while the value between Acceptability and Perceived Benefits was 0.733. Awareness with Perceived Benefits has 0.587 indicating that each maintains a unique conceptual identity confirming that it measures a construct distinct from the others. This establishes confidence in the measurement model, indicating that subsequent structural analyses will reflect valid and meaningful relationships between constructs.

Table 8. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Latent Variables	Acceptability	Awareness	Perceived Benefits
Acceptability			
Awareness	0.656		
Perceived Benefits	0.733	0.587	

Note: HTMT values below 0.85 indicate strict discriminant validity, while values below 0.90 suggest acceptable discriminant validity between constructs.

The discriminant validity in this study was also assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which is a widely used method in PLS-SEM for evaluating the distinctiveness of constructs. In this case, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable should be greater than its correlations with all other constructs in the model. This ensures that a construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with any other construct, confirming that each latent variable represents a unique concept (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 9. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Latent Variables	Acceptability	Awareness	Perceived Benefits
Acceptability	0.744		
Awareness	0.630	0.711	
Perceived Benefits	0.712	0.578	0.730

As presented in Table 9, all constructs satisfy this criterion, providing additional evidence of discriminant validity. For instance, Acceptability has a square root of AVE of .744, which is higher than its correlations with Awareness (.630) and Perceived Benefits (.712), demonstrating that each latent variable captures a unique aspect of respondents' perceptions and behaviors.

The Fornell-Larcker results in Table 9 complement the HTMT findings, confirming that all constructs in the study exhibit satisfactory discriminant validity. The combination of HTMT and Fornell-Larcker evidence strengthens the robustness of the measurement model, ensuring that each construct is distinct and that subsequent structural analyses will yield reliable and meaningful insights into the relationships among Awareness, Acceptability, and Perceived Benefits.

4.4 Structural Model Assessment

With the reliability and validity of the measurement model confirmed, the next phase in the PLS-SEM procedure through bootstrapping was conducted. It involves evaluating the structural model which is referred to as the inner model. This stage focuses on examining the hypothesized relationships between constructs and assessing the model's ability to explain and predict the behavior of endogenous variables (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Structural path coefficients are estimated through a series of regression equations that represent the hypothesized connections among latent variables. Prior to interpreting these relationships, the assessment of collinearity among predictor constructs was conducted to ensure that the parameter estimates are unbiased and not inflated due to multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019b). These include the coefficient of determination, or R^2 , which assesses the explanatory power of the model, and



Q^2 from blindfolding, which evaluates predictive relevance. The significance and strength of path coefficients are examined to determine the importance and practical impact of each hypothesized relationship. These criteria provide a comprehensive assessment of the structural model's robustness and practical utility.

Table 10. Outer Model Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Construct	VIF	Construct	VIF	Construct	VIF
A1	2.398	ACC1	2.064	PB1	2.124
A2	2.820	ACC2	2.544	PB2	2.434
A3	2.124	ACC3	2.644	PB3	2.612
A4	2.061	ACC4	3.030	PB4	1.727
A5	1.988	ACC5	2.645	PB5	2.146
A6	2.033	ACC6	3.033	PB6	2.159
A7	1.843	ACC7	2.783	PB7	2.424
A8	1.893	ACC8	3.421	PB8	2.834
A9	2.209	ACC9	2.264	PB9	2.610
A10	2.365	ACC10	2.697	PB10	2.716
A11	2.594	ACC11	2.447	PB11	3.057
A12	2.142	ACC12	2.914	PB12	2.866
A13	2.077	ACC13	3.167	PB13	2.624
A14	2.125	ACC14	2.669	PB14	3.097
A15	2.012	ACC15	2.390	PB15	2.375
A16	2.443	ACC16	2.393	PB16	2.445
A17	2.093	ACC17	1.929	PB17	2.709
A18	2.039	ACC18	2.170	PB18	2.281
A19	2.476	ACC19	2.309	PB19	2.315
A20	2.322	ACC20	2.631	PB20	2.557

Note: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) ≤ 3 is ideal; 3-5 is acceptable.

Collinearity among Constructs

As shown in Table 10, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values used to assess collinearity among the predictor constructs in the structural model. Testing for collinearity is essential because high correlations among predictors can distort path estimates and weaken the accuracy of the model's results. All VIF values ranged from 1.727 to 2.914, well below the recommended threshold of 3.0, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern and that the constructs are suitable for structural analysis.

Specifically, the VIF values for the paths from Awareness to Acceptability, and Utilitarian Perceived Benefits were 1.727 and 3.097, respectively. Overall, these results demonstrate that the predictor constructs are sufficiently independent, confirming that the structural model is reliable and the relationships among the variables can be validly interpreted.

Explanatory Predictive Power

The explanatory and predictive capability of the structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). R^2 represents the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct that is explained by its predictor variables, providing insight into the explanatory power of the model. Hair et al. (2019a, 2021) and Henseler et al. (2010), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are generally interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. However, in consumer behavior research, R^2 values of 0.20 are considered meaningful, and even lower values may still be acceptable when the emphasis is on statistical significance rather than predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2019a; Ozili, 2022).

As shown in Table 11, the R^2 values indicate varying levels of explanatory power across the endogenous constructs. The Acceptability as outcome explained the variance ($R^2 = 0.578$), highlighting its moderate role being Awareness a predictor. Perceived Benefits as predictor to outcome variable acceptability demonstrating weak explanatory power but it is beyond the threshold value of 0.25 with R^2 values ($R^2 = 0.335$).



Similarly, the interaction term, Awareness to Acceptability is ($f^2 = 0.169$) has a moderate effect; then from Awareness to Perceived Benefits is ($f^2 = 0.503$) has a strong effect; and from Perceived Benefits have ($f^2 = 0.432$) suggesting a strong effect.

Predictive relevance, assessed using Q^2 , reflects the model's ability to predict out-of-sample observations. All Q^2 values were positive (0.000 - 0.309), indicating acceptable predictive power. These results suggest that Acceptability is the most influential predictor while Perceived Benefits is limited. Overall, the model provides meaningful explanatory and predictive insights into the relationships among Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability.

Table 11. Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Predictor Variables	Outcome Variables	R^2	f^2	Q^2
Awareness	Acceptability	0.578	0.169	0.172
	Perceived Benefits		0.503	
Perceived Benefits	Acceptability	0.335	0.432	0.000
				0.309

Note: Coefficient of Determination (R^2): 0.25 = weak, 0.50 = moderate, 0.75 = substantial; Effect Size (f^2): < 0.02 = no effect, 0.02 = weak, 0.15 = moderate, 0.35 = strong; Q^2 : > 0 = predictive relevance, 0.02 = weak, 0.15 = moderate, 0.35 = strong.

Goodness of fit in PLS-SEM was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) to evaluate if the model reproduces the observed data. SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good fit, hence values slightly above 0.08 shall still be considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2022). As shown in Table 12, the saturated model had an SRMR of 0.070. These results indicate that the structural model provides a reasonable representation of the relationships among Awareness, Perceived Benefits, and Acceptability in the context of F2T restaurant in the food sector industry.

Table 12. Model Fit Assessment using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

Model Type	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	95%	99%
Saturated Model	0.070	0.044	0.050	0.053
Estimated Model	0.070	0.044	0.050	0.053

Note: An SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good fit, showing that the structural model adequately represents the observed data.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Prior to testing the hypotheses, multicollinearity among the constructs was carefully examined and found not to be an issue, with all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values within acceptable limits. The structural relationships between the constructs were then assessed using standardized path coefficients (β), which indicate both the strength and direction of each hypothesized effect. To ensure the robustness and reliability of the results, bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted, following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2022). This method allowed for the generation of accurate estimates of standard errors, t-values, and significance levels without relying on normality assumptions. The analysis focused on the direct effects of the predictor constructs of Awareness and Perceived Benefits on Acceptability. The results demonstrate how Awareness and Perceived Benefits on Acceptability interact to shape the perceptions of respondents on the contexts of the F2T business strategies. This approach provides a clear and practical interpretation of the structural model, highlighting the key constructs that meaningfully drive the respondents' perception on the F2T concepts that would eventually translate actionable insights for marketing and business strategies.

Path Coefficients

Path coefficients (β) represent the strength and direction of the hypothesized relationships among constructs that provide empirical evidence of causal linkages indicating the relative influence of predictor variables. It forms the basis for evaluating both mediation and total effects. Comparing these coefficients across the specified paths allows for a precise assessment of the relative contributions of Awareness and Perceived Benefits on Acceptability.



Standardized path coefficients reflect both the magnitude and the direction of effects within the model. The coefficients of approximately 0.10 indicate small effects, those around 0.30 indicate moderate effects, and values of 0.50 or higher denote strong effects (Hair et al., 2022). Statistical significance is robustly assessed using bootstrapping procedures, with p-values below 0.05 indicating definitive support for the hypothesized relationships.

This study examines the specific effects of Awareness and Perceived Benefits on Acceptability within the context of F2T concepts of students as respondents from Cebu City. The computed path coefficients provide precise estimates of the perceptions that influence F2T concepts as business strategy in the restaurant setting. Direct effects capture the immediate influence of Awareness on Acceptability and Awareness on Perceived Benefits while the indirect effects will subsequently reflect the critical mediating role of Perceived Benefits.

Table 13 reveals the consolidated results, showing that five of the seven structural and mediation paths were statistically significant, mapping a highly specialized, dual-pathway mechanism for operational success.

Table 13. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	β	Std. Deviation	T statistics	P values	Result
H1: A→ACC	0.327	0.055	5.971	0.000	Supported
H2: A→PB	0.578	0.049	11.923	0.000	Supported
H3: PB→ACC	0.523	0.053	9.867	0.000	Supported
Specific Indirect Effects					
H4: A→PB→ACC	0.303	0.306	7.772	0.000	Supported / Competitive or Partial Mediation

Note: P-value < 0.01 = high significance, P < 0.05** = significance, P < 0.10* = marginal significance, P ≥ 0.10 = not significant (Hair et al., 2022).**

H1. Awareness has a positive effect on Acceptability

The findings in Table 13 show that Awareness has a positive effect on Acceptability with a path coefficient of 0.327, a t-value of 5.971, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that respondents have accepted the concept of the F2T in terms of awareness on acceptability. This suggests that awareness is a key personality trait that drives acceptability.

This result supports the notion from literature that awareness on acceptability to assess awareness and acceptability of institutional vision and mission statements of Bautista and Sanchez (2024). The findings revealed that students with greater knowledge and awareness demonstrated higher levels of acceptability, validating the assumption that cognitive familiarity enhances attitudinal support toward institutional frameworks where the result of the study also confirmed. The study also affirmed the empirical study of Edam-Abgor et al. (2025) of the awareness on acceptability. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is significant.

H2. Awareness has a positive effect on Perceived Benefits

The results indicate a strong and positive relationship of Awareness has a positive effect on Perceived Benefits, with a path coefficient of 0.578, a t-value of 11.923, and a p-value below 0.000. The empirical results establish a significant and positive relationship between awareness and perceived benefits within the context of the F2T concept. In the case of F2T, heightened awareness enables individuals to develop a more structured and meaningful understanding of how food sourcing systems generate both direct and indirect benefits.

Thus, the findings highlight awareness as a critical cognitive mechanism that shapes how benefits are perceived and interpreted. Enhancing awareness, therefore, extends beyond information dissemination; it represents a necessary condition for strengthening value perception and fostering greater receptivity toward sustainable food systems such as the F2T concept. Ahmad et al. (2020) highlight that awareness of e-commerce systems increases consumers' perception of benefits such as convenience and efficiency. As awareness rises, users better understand functional advantages, resulting in stronger perceived benefits in online purchasing. This supports the notion from literature that Awareness has a positive effect on Perceived Benefits. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is significant.

H3. Perceived Benefits have a positive impact on Acceptability



Perceived Benefits have a positive impact on Acceptability, with a path coefficient of 0.523, a t-value of 9.867, and a p-value below 0.000. This result confirms the literature of Rogers (2003). Rogers (2003) identifies "relative advantage" (perceived benefits) as the strongest predictor of innovation adoption. The greater the perceived benefits compared to existing alternatives, the higher the likelihood of acceptance. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is significant.

Hypothesis Testing Mediating Effects

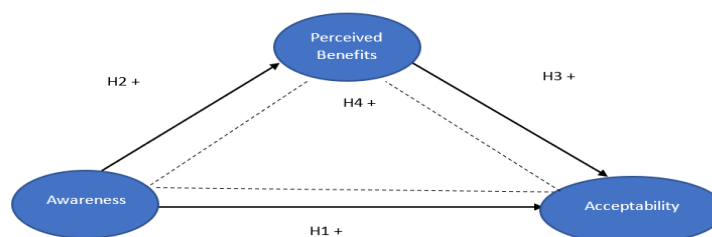
To gain a deeper understanding of how the study variables interact, mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether the effect of Perceived Benefits mediate in the relationship between Awareness and Acceptability. Mediation occurs when an independent variable influences a mediator, which in turn affects the dependent variable, providing insight into the mechanisms or processes underlying observed relationships (Hair et al., 2022). This approach is particularly relevant in the context of F2T context in the restaurant sector. By identifying the mediating effects of Perceived Benefits perceptions.

Mediation testing was performed using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4, which allows for robust estimation of indirect effects without relying on assumptions of normality. Establishing a reliable and valid measurement model is essential because PLS-SEM accounts for measurement error and provides more accurate estimates of relationships among latent constructs. This approach offers advantages over conventional regression techniques, particularly for complex models with mediators, as it enables precise assessment of both direct and indirect effects while maintaining the integrity of the structural model (Hair et al., 2019a; Henseler et al., 2014).

H4. Perceived Benefits mediate in the relationship between Awareness and Acceptability

Perceived Benefits mediate in the relationship between Awareness and Acceptability. The PLS-SEM bootstrapping results confirm this relationship, revealing that the specific indirect effect of Awareness on Acceptability through Perceived Benefits is supported and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.303$, a t-value of 7.772, $p = 0.000$). Concurrently, as established in the evaluation of direct effects, the direct influence of Awareness on Acceptability remains statistically significant with ($\beta = 0.327$, $p = 0.000$). According to the mediation guidelines established by Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010), when the indirect effect and the direct effect are both significant but point in opposite directions, this pattern indicates Competitive/Partial Mediation. This competitive mediation mechanism provides profound insight into the acceptability of the F2T concepts of the restaurant concepts of both marketing and business strategy. This finding is strongly corroborated with the literature of Ajzen (1991). Within the TPB, favorable behavioral beliefs (including perceived benefits) directly strengthen intention and acceptance of behavior. Individuals are more likely to accept actions they perceive as beneficial. Kim, Chan, and Gupta (2007) found that perceived usefulness and perceived benefits significantly determine mobile internet adoption. Users accept systems when they perceive clear functional and economic gains. Therefore, H4 is supported, with both direct and indirect hypotheses are significant which tantamount to competitive or partial mediation.

Figure 6. Research Model



The proposed research model presents the structural relationships among the main constructs of Awareness on Acceptability as mediated by Perceived Benefits. The figure visually explains how perceptions of F2T influence



perceptions of the respondents in terms of marketing and business strategy in the restaurant sector. By showing the connections among the variables, the model provides a clear representation of high acceptance of the proposed research model. The model also illustrates the interconnected relationships, the model explains awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability through distinct routes to sustain F2T efficiency in a complex and competitive industrial setting.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the understanding of Acceptability by demonstrating how Awareness interacts with Perceived Benefits. This study advances the understanding of acceptability by illustrating how awareness and perceived benefits operate as interdependent cognitive constructs that jointly shape consumer behavioral outcomes within the F2T context. Rather than functioning as isolated predictors, awareness acquires theoretical depth when interpreted alongside evaluative cognition, particularly through perceived benefits.

The findings indicate that awareness of F2T practices attains substantive behavioral relevance only when individuals are able to translate this knowledge into meaningful value judgments. In the absence of this interpretive process, awareness remains largely informational and does not sufficiently generate acceptance. However, when awareness is cognitively processed and linked to perceived benefits such as improved health outcomes, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic contribution, it becomes a stronger determinant of acceptability.

These results refine the explanatory scope of the TPB by demonstrating that perceived benefits serve as a crucial intervening mechanism in the awareness-acceptability pathway. This suggests that behavioral intention is not solely a function of informational belief structures, but is more accurately understood as a product of both cognitive exposure and evaluative appraisal.

In addition, the study extends the theoretical assumptions of both the TPB and the Diffusion of Innovations framework by emphasizing that adoption decisions in sustainable food systems are strongly anchored on perceived relative advantage. Accordingly, benefit appraisal emerges as a pivotal cognitive bridge linking awareness to behavioral acceptance.

Collectively, these findings contribute to consumer behavior literature by supporting a dual-process explanatory model in which acceptability is shaped through both direct cognitive familiarity and indirect value-based interpretation.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide empirically grounded guidance for policymakers, agricultural stakeholders, and local government units involved in promoting F2T initiatives. Awareness-building efforts must be strategically strengthened to ensure that consumers develop not only familiarity with F2T concepts but also a clear understanding of their practical significance.

The results further indicate that communication strategies should move beyond information dissemination and place greater emphasis on articulating tangible consumer benefits, particularly in relation to health improvement, food quality, environmental protection, and local economic sustainability.

The study also highlights that perceived benefits function as a decisive determinant of acceptability. As such, promotional strategies should prioritize value-centered messaging, as awareness alone is insufficient to generate sustained behavioral adoption. Strengthening benefit perception is therefore essential in translating knowledge into actual consumer support.

Thus, these findings emphasize that effective implementation of F2T initiatives requires an integrated approach that combines structured education, strategic value communication, and improved accessibility to ensure that awareness is effectively converted into acceptance and behavioral intention.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations



6.1 Summary

This study examines the structural relationships among awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability of the F2T concept among consumers in Cebu City, Philippines. Grounded in the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and the Diffusion of Innovations theory (Rogers, 2003), awareness is conceptualized as a cognitive antecedent, perceived benefits as a mediating construct, and acceptability as the behavioral outcome.

The results indicate that awareness significantly influences both perceived benefits and acceptability, while perceived benefits exert a strong positive effect on acceptability. Moreover, perceived benefits partially mediate the relationship between awareness and acceptability, confirming that consumer acceptance is shaped through both direct cognitive familiarity and indirect value-based interpretation. The study ultimately contributes a detailed and actionable framework for understanding how consumer acceptance of the F2T concept is formed through the interplay of awareness and perceived benefits, wherein cognitive exposure is translated into behavioral acceptance through value-based evaluation.

6.2 Conclusion

This study has examined the interdependent relationships among awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability of the F2T concept in Cebu City. The findings confirm that consumer acceptance is not a linear product of awareness alone but a layered cognitive and evaluative process shaped by how individuals interpret value.

The study further confirms that awareness serves as an essential entry point in shaping consumer understanding; however, it does not independently ensure acceptance. Instead, acceptability is strengthened when awareness is translated into perceived benefits, particularly in relation to health, environmental sustainability, and socioeconomic value. This demonstrates that value interpretation is central to behavioral endorsement.

The study also contributes to theoretical understanding by extending the TPB through the integration of perceived benefits as a key mediating mechanism. This refinement strengthens TPB by demonstrating that cognitive awareness must pass through value-based evaluation before translating into behavioral intention within sustainable consumption contexts.

The findings indicate that acceptance of F2T in Cebu follows a dual pathway: a direct effect of awareness and an indirect effect through perceived benefits, highlighting a combined knowledge-value mechanism.

6.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest several actionable directions for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders.

First, awareness campaigns should be strengthened through sustained educational and communication initiatives that clearly explain the principles and relevance of F2T, particularly its links to health, environmental sustainability, and local economic development.

Second, strategies should prioritize value-based messaging. Since perceived benefits are the strongest driver of acceptability, promotional efforts should emphasize tangible consumer gains such as food quality, safety, freshness, and support for local farmers.

Third, government and private stakeholders should address structural barriers such as pricing and accessibility to ensure that awareness and perceived benefits translate into actual adoption.

Fourth, integrating F2T concepts into academic curricula and community-based programs may strengthen long-term sustainability-oriented consumer behavior.

Finally, future research may incorporate additional constructs such as trust, cultural food norms, and perceived behavioral control to further enhance the explanatory power of the model.



6.4 Future Research Directions

Future researchers are encouraged to employ longitudinal approaches to examine how awareness, perceived benefits, and acceptability evolve over time. Such designs would provide stronger evidence of causality and offer deeper insight into behavioral change dynamics in sustainable food consumption.

Future studies may extend this framework by incorporating additional mediating variables such as trust, perceived behavioral control, cultural food norms, and price sensitivity.

Comparative studies across different geographic and socio-economic contexts may also enhance the generalizability of the model and deepen understanding of consumer acceptance in diverse agricultural systems.

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