The purpose of this study was to develop and validate two customer service surveys for middle/junior high school students to measure factors that impact their participation in and satisfaction with the National School Lunch Program.

**METHOD**
- Qualitative data from the previous National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) focus group study and the validated NFSMI, ARD participation and non-participation surveys for high school students were used as the foundation for drafting two middle/junior high school student surveys.
- A two-stage pilot test was conducted to refine and validate the instruments. Surveys were administered to 1,401 middle/junior high school students from 22 middle/junior high schools (12 school districts) across five USDA regions.
- Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s alpha, and one-way ANOVA with Tukey’s post hoc test.

**PURPOSE**
Factors that Affect Participating Middle/Junior High School Students

**FOOD PREFERENCE**
- The food tastes good.
- The food looks appealing.
- The menu has food I like.

**STAFF ATTENTIVENESS**
- The staff is friendly.
- The staff looks like they enjoy their work.
- The staff listens to my suggestions.

Factors that Affect Non-Participating Middle/Junior High School Students

**FOOD QUALITY**
- The food does not look fresh.
- I do not recognize the food being served.
- The food is not properly cooked.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**
- The staff does not speak to me.
- The cafeteria does not look clean.
- The service is poor.

**RESULTS**
- Results from the participation survey and factor analyses showed that middle/junior high school student satisfaction with their school lunch experience can be attributed to two main factors, food preference and staff attentiveness.
- Top reasons for eating school lunch among participating students were “I am hungry,” “I get to sit with my friends,” and “I didn’t bring anything to eat.”
- Results from the non-participation survey and factor analyses showed that low participation among middle/junior high school students can be attributed to two main factors, food quality and customer service.
- Top reasons that would encourage students to eat school lunch more often were “better tasting food,” “shorter wait in line,” and “better quality food.”

**APPLICATIONS**
- Results from this study will guide the development of a participation and non-participation middle/junior high school student survey guide for school nutrition (SN) professionals. This survey guide will assist SN professionals with planning, administering, collecting, and analyzing middle/junior high school student survey data, and developing and implementing action plans to improve their SN programs.