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Focus Group  
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### Focus Group Deliverable

The focus group for Lula's was made up of eight participants. Seven of those members had not been to the restaurant.

The first key finding from the focus group was about the initial passion against the closing of Spanky's in favor of Lula's. The members of the group generally saw Spanky's as a Carolina classic with a variety of food. People would often experience this restaurant with nostalgic alumni or their parents for a nice night out. The reminiscence of Spanky's brought out some initial disappointment from the participants about Lula's replacing such an iconic restaurant. A handful of the participants also felt as though Lula's did not provide as much of a range of dining options as Spanky's did. Generally, many of these students only ate out once a week and on average spent about \$15 on that meal. The participants were quick to discuss their favorite restaurants on Franklin Street, as they expressed they continuously go back to those restaurants because of their reliability. Many students enjoyed a restaurant where one can study and eat at the same time. The difficult part of a restaurant picking up popularity stems from the initial struggle of attracting customers. One participant described their experience with trying the new restaurant Hibachi & Company and said "I didn't want it, I tried it, and now I always want it." Lula's needs to bring people in to try their food in order to create a steady trend of active customers. Another participant brought up the benefit of a restaurant being on a corner of Franklin Street. The corner location has been beneficial to TOPO, Medici, Hops, and Spicy 9. They said that Hops has a distinct smell of good food and large clear windows attracting customers. This was drawn to a comparison as Lula's, which, although being on a corner, has darkened windows and no one can smell the food from the outside. This provides for a much less appealing environment according to the participants.

There appeared to be a general consensus from the group that students do not have time to dress up and go to a traditional atmosphere for dinner. Students do not often have the money to go out and try new places in the area, so why not limit time and go somewhere where they know the menu well. However, students are often eager to try places with a student discount or with promotions. One participant brought up the success of B. Good hosting a lot of big events and opportunities for free products in the first few weeks of opening. This brought in a lot of new customers who would have otherwise not stopped in. Another consensus came from members believing that Lula's only had fried chicken and fried foods on their menu, and therefore they did not see the point of stopping in the restaurant. In fact, when asked "what three words first come to mind when you think of Lula's?", majority of the group said the words "fried" and "chicken." The words "southern" and "homemade" were a close second. They later realized throughout the focus group that the restaurant had other favorite meals such as fried okra and steak and potatoes. Overall, there appeared to be a major disinterest

in trying Lula's due to their reputation of not having very many options and their more traditional style restaurant structure.

The questions that generated the most insights were the ones about what makes a restaurant popular on Franklin Street, why certain participants have not tried Lula's yet, and whether or not the participants would recommend the restaurant to a friend/family member. The popularity has a lot to do with student trends, promotions and the pricing of a restaurant, as discussed above. Lula's also does not have the laidback atmosphere that a lot of students prefer when they go out to eat. The reason why a lot of members have not tried Lula's yet has to do with their lack of options and the perception that students can get better fried chicken elsewhere in Carrboro or Chapel Hill. One participant discussed her disappointment about the promise of a hip-trendy restaurant to replace Spanky's, and instead receiving another traditional sit down restaurant. The recommendation question showed that people who have been to Lula's do not know much about their brunch and do not find their menu to have anything special to recommend.

There were many similarities between the insights gained from the ethnographies, IDIs, secondary research and the focus group information. Some similarities stemmed from the unawareness of the Lula's brunch option, the limited menu problem, and the general unrest about Spanky's being replaced. The participants also expressed similar findings to the secondary research in there being a trend of health foods interest in recent years instead of fried foods. Some new information gained from the focus group is the fact that students feel let down by the atmosphere of Lula's because it feels too traditional for what the owner promised. It was also evident that a lot of participants did not realize that some of their favorite foods are currently on the menu at Lula's but the reputation of only having fried chicken forced them to assume otherwise. It was also surprising to hear from the focus group that the dark windows from the outside of Lula's deter them as consumers to enter the establishment.

This focus group provided many valuable insights, however, there were some issues with the overall structure. First, a limitation came from the lack of members who had been to Lula's and experienced the atmosphere. This caused all of the answers about the experience at Lula's to be summed up by a singular person. Perhaps if there had been a higher number of participants who had been to Lula's the answers would have varied a bit more overall. Nevertheless, the answers to the Lula's experience questions provided a lot of insight for the project. There was also a limitation in the fact that Lula's is less than a year old so there were no long-term responses. This made for a lot of the responses to be concentrated around the fact that the students were just generally unhappy that Spanky's had been replaced. As for the methods of conducting the study, the three words to describe Lula's should have started off the focus group. This would prevent bias from other people describing their restaurant experience influencing other participants' descriptions. There also should have been overall introductions of the group before starting. Nobody in the group knew each other's names, so the vibe of the focus group was quite cold and removed. Finally, there should have been more questions asked about how the patrons who ate at the restaurant felt.

Some new research questions include the following. Do patrons have a strong tie to fried chicken and the Lula's brand? What new items should they put on the menu? Would an addition of some of the classic Spanky's items on the menu be of interest? How important is speed of service? How important is it to have a wide range of healthy options? Some major customer and client challenges come from the general dissatisfaction customers feel about their loyalty to Spanky's being ripped away from them. Lula's will need to put in a lot of work restoring that same brand image to the public. Also, the client is going to have to choose whether or not they want to keep that southern and fried style of food as their vibe or if they want to pander to their audiences' desire for more food choices.

### **Focus Group Question Ideas**

Bolded are questions used\*

INTRO (on paper):

- 1. How often do y'all eat out on Franklin Street? Why?**
- 2. How much on average are you willing to spend on a meal?**
- 3. Did you ever go to Spanky's?**
- 4. What did you like about it? Dislike?**
- 5. How did y'all feel when it closed?**
- 6. What comes to mind when I mention Lula's?**
- 7. Have you ever been to Lula's? Why? (both ways)**
  - **Which did you prefer? Why?**
- 8. What does the name Lula's make you think of?**

MIDDLE:

**What is your favorite thing about Lula's? Least favorite?**

- What did you like best about their foods and services?
- **What did you like least about their foods and services?**
  - I loved spanky's, menu was limited, all options included fried chicken, I didn't really eat when I went with my parents, compared to spankys a major let down

**How was the service? How would you rate the ability of the staff to meet your needs?**

- Thought staff was good, in fall no one was really there because they had just opened, spanky's was always popping, did not make me feel weird

**What was the environment like? (family-friendly, bar-like, casual, etc.?)**

- It was good... I don't think I would go there with my friends for just a meal, more focused on going with your parents

**Would you recommend this restaurant to a friend or family member? Why or why not?**

- I don't know, i've heard they have really good brunch but maybe not for a regular meal. I think there are better options around here.

**If you could add one thing to the menu, what would it be?**

- A Lot of fried chicken, didn't really remember. Thought they would have more a variety, from what I remember it was just different types of fried chicken or

chicken and waffles etc. They could have changed it rn bc I went 6 months ago.  
In the southern category more variety, may have had pork chops.

**What do you think of the seating arrangement?**

- Good and same as spankys

How do you feel when you step into Lula's?

Did you know that a waiter was going to seat you versus a seat yourself environment?

What did you find frustrating or unappealing about Lula's?

Would you consider stopping at the bar in Lula's on a "night-out?"

Did the atmosphere of the restaurant embody the "Lula's brand?"

**Do you have any suggestions to make the experience at Lula's better?**

- I thought the experience was good and the environment was good same as spankys and it was a good location to people watch. They need to broaden their offerings because they don't seem to be targeted at college students.

FINAL:

Any final thoughts about Lula's?

Anything we didn't mention that you'd like to discuss?

If no one has been:

**What is your favorite restaurant on Franklin Street? Why?**

- I really like hibachi, it's also newer so i don't know if that would change next year
  - Went because someone else was getting it, "i didn't want it, i tried it, and now i always want it"
  - Also different from other places on Franklin
- Tru or spicy 9 because they have a variety on the menu
  - Soup, salads, hot food and cold food, customization of food
- I really like purple bowl
  - Quick, study and can have it for any meal of the day
  - No contest with frutta
- I really like Hops
  - Originated from where i'm from and moved here
  - Compared to al's, you get more for your money
- Back to hops discussion earlier
  - Walk by and smell the food really makes you want it
  - I never really smelled lulas
  - They should spray fried chicken
  - They have dark windows, so I never really wanted to go in there.
  -

**What makes a restaurant popular on Franklin Street?**

- Price and a lot of good food for how much you are paying
- Location of it, if it is on a corner, TOPO and MEDICI are popular due to corner possibly, Hops and spicy 9, little more open and can see into it

- How long it has been there, Elaine's and Spankys and Time out, places my parents have been before and alumni come back, places my parents would take me to when i was little
- Atmosphere, sup dogs is very lively, laid back atmosphere because we are in a college town and it is harder to get students into more traditional atmospheres
- Students don't have time to dress up and go to a traditional atmosphere.

**What do you think has caused restaurants on Franklin Street to close or leave in the past?**

- Rent is really high
- And competition
- If they are not really killing it
- So much competition
- How many pizza places are on franklin?
- Pizza press is still kinda successful and lotsa is doing well

**Do you think that UNC students have a loyalty to certain restaurants on Franklin?**

**Why? Is there a pattern with loyalty?**

- In terms of money, don't have funds to reach out and try different places, once i've seen or tried food in catering or tasted, i wont have cuisine that I don't like
- People pick certain restaurants in each category and stay loyal to that
- Quicker when you know the menu, chipotle you know the menu versus somewhere elsewhere if you tried something new youd have to decide

**Do you think those students would be open to trying somewhere new?**

- Student discounts
- B good got a lot of action because of promotions, free entrees
- Pizza press 15% for carolina square and student discount, makes you want to go back because of a connection
- Lotsa has daily lunch specials that make it pretty cheap
- The people that return back to places have a connection there, they may not even be buying food but they like the foundation and innovation of the shop
- Nicer restaurants for family or cocktail, other restaurants want a lot of options.

**Why have you not been to Lula's?**

- I don't eat fried foods or heavy meals so that seems like all they have
- No one has suggested it in my friend group, no one ever did so we didnt think to go there, same free restaurants
- Friends always recommend healthy restaurants, not even a burger restaurant, no one forcing me to go because they know what im down for
- So many restaurants in carrboro, venible or acme, venible has really good fried chicken so I'd rather go there

**Have yall ever attended a benefit night on franklin? Motivator?**

- Yes, but better if a fast restaurant because you can just go and get your food and go (lotsa or purple bowl).

**"Thank you for your input!"**

**“Can you expand on that a bit.”**

Additional notes:

Same owner right? Yes

- Do you think they would be open to add items back from spanky's

I honestly don't know why they changed from spanky's it was so successful

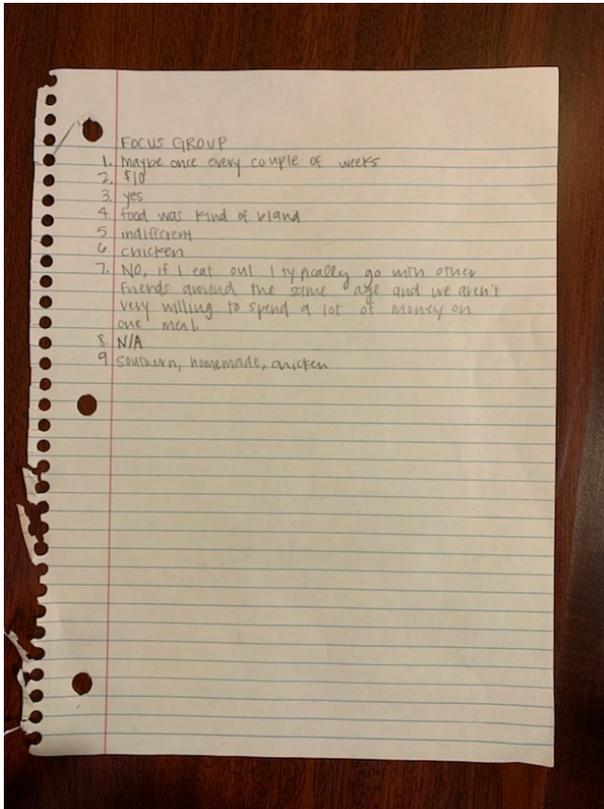
Article about a hipper younger demographic, but then Lulus came which didn't seem to know what happened

Didn't know it was closing, didn't tell employees or customers

Here when mom was here

Pull an ihop and go back, surprise.

Fried okra omg i wanna go.



1. 3-4 times a week
2. \$10
3. Yes
4. I loved the variety of options they had  
I didn't like how expensive it was
5. Confused, upset, I still don't know why it closed
6. The restaurant was replaced Spang's
7. No, none of my friends ever suggest Lulu's
8. N/A I haven't been to Lulu's

3 words

-new -family  
-update

3-4 times a wk

\$10

once or twice

like classic Carolina plate, went with my Mom who had  
gone there when she went to UVA, good  
selection

done food diversity wasn't amazing

snacked, kind of sad, curious what would be there  
next

red, chicken legs, fried chicken, kale salad,  
friend who works there, Southern

no bc I don't eat fried ~~food~~ food and I've heard  
Lulu's doesn't have a lot of healthy options...  
look at online menu quickly supposed the same

N/A

Southern, fried, red

- 1) TWICE a week
- 2) \$10
- 3) Yes
- 4) Very good food + good variety of options
- 5) SO SAD and Shocked because no warning
- 6) Restaurant that took over Spanky's
- 7) Yes with my family to try it out
- 8) SPANKY'S - better food
- 9) Southern, Fried, limited

- 1 - twice/week
- 2 - \$11
- 3 - yes
- 4 - loved their steak + fried ostra! (didn't know Lula's had)
- 5 - disappointed & surprised
- 6 - Fried chicken
- 7 - nope, usually don't have fried chicken
- 8 - N/A

→ fried chicken brunch  
should've asked this first

## FOCUS GROUP

- 1) Once a week (not that often) - grocery shop & make food
- 2) 10-11\$
- 3) NO, never been to spanky's - never been, I've seen the sign but never knew what it was
- 4) A restaurant from Home - (other than next to Starbucks)  
I think it's called Lulu's but I had never heard of Lulu's before this study
- 5) NO, not into eating out unless it looks easy/good (like Medki has a lot of people in there) but I don't think I'd go anyway cause I don't like that kind of food.
- 6) never been to either

heard of restaurant called "Lulus" <sup>you would find chicken if you don't like it</sup>  
think of → MOM <sup>why would you find chicken if you don't like it?</sup>  
Homemade. 7. NO suggestions

- 1) one every 2 weeks
- 2) \$20
- 3) yes
- 4) liked how old it was, pictures on wall, traditional Carolina vibes (Parents went there when we visited / went to basketball games when I was little)
- 5) Not that affected, hadn't been in a while
- 6) chicken
- 7) No, haven't thought about it
- 8) N/A
- 9) Fried, chicken, spanky's