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Five paths to satisfaction: Product, market, process, organization, and service strategies in the fast-food industry

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Abstract
Aim: This study examined how five service-innovation domains—product, market, process, organization, and customer service—relate to customer satisfaction in selected Philippine fast-food restaurants.
Method: Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and domain ratings. Because the same respondents evaluated all five service-innovation domains, a one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test whether mean ratings differed across domains.
Results: Customer evaluations were favorable across all five service-innovation domains. Organization-related innovation obtained the highest mean rating, followed by process and product innovations. The repeated-measures ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences among the domains, demonstrating that they did not contribute equally to perceived customer satisfaction.
Conclusion: The findings suggest that organization-level capabilities—such as visible protocol compliance, workforce training, corporate social responsibility, and operational standardization—play the strongest role in shaping customer satisfaction in fast-food settings. Process reliability and product innovation also contribute meaningfully, while market and customer-service strategies function as complementary supports. These results highlight the importance of prioritizing organizational and process innovations in post-pandemic fast-food operations.
Keywords: *Service innovation; customer satisfaction; quick-service restaurants (QSRs); organizational capability; process reliability*

INTRODUCTION

Global quick service restaurants (QSRs) experienced profound operational disruptions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerating the adoption of health protocols, digital ordering, and redesigned workflows. Contemporary studies emphasize the salience of product and digitally enabled service innovation in shaping customer experience (Manhas, et al., 2024). In the Philippine context, Patropis and Arispe (2025) reported that order personalization (product) and real-time order transparency (service) were top-rated drivers in a McDonald's setting.

Despite these advances, actionable gaps remain. First, many investigations isolate a single domain (e.g., product or process) rather than comparatively ranking all five domains within the same sample. Second, post-pandemic urban Philippine evidence remains limited, despite the distinct recovery, price-sensitivity, and safety dynamics in Metro Manila. Third, while omnibus tests and post-hoc contrasts can determine whether customers weigh domains differently, they have been underused. Fourth, organization-level enablers (compliance, training, standardization, corporate social responsibility (CSR)) are often treated as background conditions rather than customer-visible drivers of satisfaction. Finally, few studies convert findings into a sequenced, practice-ready investment agenda for resource-constrained operators.

This study contributes three advances: (1) a within-study comparative ranking of five innovation domains in Philippine urban QSRs using comparative ANOVA analysis; (2) elevation of organization-level capability as a customer-visible construct; and (3) translation of statistical differences into a sequenced managerial agenda.

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Review of Related Literature and Studies

Recent research links service innovation with higher satisfaction and loyalty in quick service restaurants (QSRs), with product (localized flavors, clear value), process (speed, digital ordering, hygiene), and service quality often ranking highest, while organizational capabilities (training, standardization, governance) enable reliable execution. Marketing and customer-service innovations amplify outcomes when aligned to core operations and local preferences (e.g., Singh & Sarangal, 2021; Manhas et al., 2024; Patropis & Arispe, 2025). Beyond QSRs, studies also show positive performance effects for product, process, marketing, and organizational innovation (Ayinaddis, 2023), while operations and organizational capabilities underpin reliability and safety in hospitality.

Overall, the literature suggests prioritizing organization-enabled product and process improvements, then integrating market and customer-service innovations that are locally tailored. However, within-study comparative rankings across all five domains in Philippine urban quick service restaurants (QSRs) remain scarce, motivating the present investigation and the use of omnibus/post-hoc testing to detect non-equal salience across domains.

Multiple domains matter, but their relative influence is context-dependent. This study tests whether customers weight the five domains differently in Metro Manila quick service restaurants (QSRs) and identifies a prioritized investment sequence.

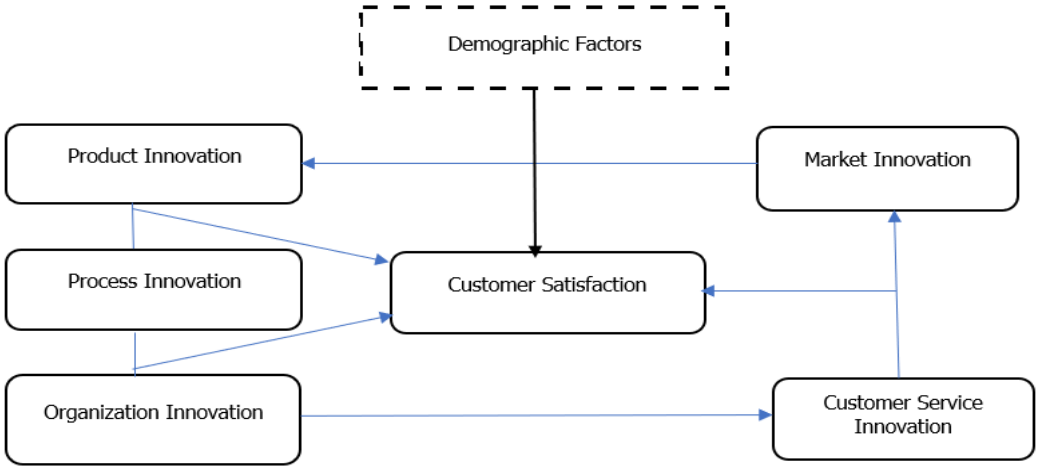
Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and Dynamic Capabilities (DC) as synthesized by Lu et al. (2024). Service-Dominant Logic views service as the basis of exchange, where value is co-created through operant resources such as knowledge, skills, and organizational competencies. Dynamic Capabilities explain how organizations sense, seize, and reconfigure resources to sustain innovation and performance.

Guided by these perspectives, customer satisfaction was conceptualized as influenced by five interrelated service-innovation domains: product, process, organization, customer service, and market. Within Service-Dominant Logic, these domains represent operant resource configurations—including human capability, operational routines, knowledge systems, and technological infrastructure—that collectively co-create customer value. Accordingly, the study anticipated positive but unequal domain effects on customer satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Service Innovations Domains



The framework posits that customer satisfaction in quick service restaurant (QSRs) is shaped by five parallel, positively valenced paths—product, process, organization, customer service, and market—operating as resource configurations that co-create perceived value. Organization (protocol compliance, staff training, standardization, corporate social responsibility) and process (speed, accuracy, hygiene, queue design) provide the operational backbone that makes product (quality, novelty, consistency) reliably experienced. Customer-service (feedback, recovery, loyalty) and market (pricing clarity, targeted promotions) act as amplifiers. Demographic factors (age, gender, education, residence, occupation/sector) were modeled as controls. The model expects non-equal contributions, with organization and process strongest in post-pandemic, trust-sensitive contexts.

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Statement of the Problem

Fast-food operators in quick-service restaurant (QSR) settings in Metro Manila implemented innovations across product, market, process, organization, and customer service domains in response to post-pandemic operating conditions. However, these operators lacked comparative empirical evidence identifying which innovation domains most strongly influenced customer satisfaction in the "new normal." In the absence of a ranked, evidence-based framework, limited organizational resources risked being allocated inefficiently. This study addressed this gap by measuring customer evaluations across all five service-innovation domains and translating the findings into a prioritized investment agenda for resource-constrained operators.

General Objective. To determine how five service-innovation domains relate to customer satisfaction among fast-food customers in selected cities in Metro Manila.

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the demographic profile of respondents (gender, age, education, residence, occupation, sector).
2. To assess customer perceptions of the five innovation domains.
3. To test differences among the five domain means.

Research Questions

1. What are the respondents' demographic characteristics?
2. How do customers rate each domain (product, market, process, organization, customer service)?
3. Do mean ratings differ significantly across the five domains?

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant difference among the mean ratings of the five service-innovation domains in their perceived contribution to satisfaction.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional survey to capture customers' perceptions at a single point in time, an approach well suited for characterizing and comparing perceived performance across the five domains rather than inferring causality. Consistent with Sevim and Yalçın (2022), this design provides an efficient snapshot of current behaviors and their associations with demographics—useful for description and pattern detection—while explicitly acknowledging its limitations for causal inference.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of adult quick service restaurant (QSR) customers who had recently dined in Mandaluyong, Makati, and Taguig. Purposive sampling was used to reach active patrons in the context of interest. Of 200 questionnaires disseminated, 158 valid responses were retrieved (response rate = 79%).

Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire (5-point Likert) was derived from hospitality/service-innovation literature and practitioner guidelines. Content validity was established by a three-member panel: (1) an academic in hospitality/service operations with peer-reviewed work and training in research methods; (2) a quick service restaurant (QSR) multi-unit operations manager with HACCP credentials and experience in workflow standardization/KDS monitoring; and (3) a customer-experience/marketing lead in food service with CRM/loyalty and digital ordering expertise.

Data Collection

Data were collected via a Google Forms survey disseminated through email lists and social media channels to broaden reach and reduce access barriers. Prior to participation, prospective respondents viewed an informed-

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consent statement and subsequently completed the instrument independently (approximately 5–7 minutes). Collection occurred during the first quarter of 2023, for about three months coinciding with a stable operating period in Metro Manila in which dine-in services had resumed under health protocols. All submissions underwent screening for completeness and obvious duplication, followed by data cleaning and preparation for analysis.

Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize respondent characteristics and domain ratings. Because the same respondents rated all five service-innovation domains, a one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted at $\alpha = .05$ to determine whether mean ratings differed across domains. This within-subject analysis accounts for the dependence among observations when respondents evaluate multiple domains. The F-ratio was examined to determine whether significant differences existed among the domain means.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. No personally identifying information was collected. Participants provided informed consent and retained the right to withdraw before submission. Data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings in the sequence of the research questions, integrating interpretation after each result. First, the respondents' profile is summarized to contextualize subsequent analyses. Next, customer ratings for the five service-innovation domains—product, process, organization, customer service, and market—are reported and interpreted.

1. Profile of the Respondents

The survey reached 158 fast-food customers and was overwhelmingly composed of young adults: 89.87% were 19–35 years old, with only 4.44% aged 18 and below and a small tail of older respondents (5.06% aged 36–52; 0.63% 53+). The sample was 71% female, suggesting that women may be the more active decision-makers or more willing survey participants in this context. Educationally, respondents were highly schooled: 87.3% were at college level, with small shares of college graduates (4.43%), master's level (5.70%), and doctoral level (1.90%); this profile supports the reliability of self-reported perceptions in a Likert instrument. Residences clustered in Rizal (20.25%) and Pasig (17.08%), followed by Mandaluyong (16.46%), Taguig (12.66%), and Makati (12.02%), indicating a catchment that blends inner-NCR cities with nearby commuter localities (e.g., Antipolo, Taytay, Cainta). Occupationally, 69.6% reported being unemployed, with 20.3% rank-and-file, 8.2% managerial, and 1.9% supervisory; this unemployment share likely reflects students, job seekers, homemakers, or gig/informal workers common in fast-food dayparts. Despite the unemployment figure, 77% identified with the public sector versus 23% private; this item may reflect household affiliation, previous employment, or aspirational sector rather than current status and should be interpreted cautiously. Overall, the profile depicts a young, female-leaning, college-educated, NCR+Rizal commuter market—a core fast-food audience that is digitally engaged, time-sensitive, and value-seeking. For practice, this implied strong receptivity to organization/process reliability (speed, accuracy, hygiene) and product/value offers; for research, generalizability is best to similar urban commuter corridors, with the public/private sector result noted as a measurement caveat.

2. Customer perceptions of the five innovation domains

This section shows how customers rate each domain (product, market, process, organization, customer service.

Table 1: Respondents assessment on five domains

Domain	Mean	Interpretation
Organization	3.52	Very Much Agree
Process	3.47	Very Much Agree
Product	3.45	Very Much Agree
Customer Service	3.42	Very Much Agree

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Market	3.31	Agree

Table 1 shows the customer perceptions of the five innovation domains. Customer evaluations were favorable across all domains, but **unequal in salience**. **Organization**—visible protocol compliance, trained personnel, corporate social responsibility (CSR) cues, standardization—received the highest ratings, followed by **process** (speed, accuracy, hygiene) and **product** (novelty with consistent quality). **Customer-service** and **market** tactics contributed positively but functioned more as **amplifiers**. This pattern is consistent with international evidence that, especially post-pandemic, organization and process signals of trust and execution discipline dominate, while marketing and customer-service tools are most effective when layered on credible operations (Manhas et al., 2024; Patropis & Arispe, 2025).

Collectively, the evidence supports prioritizing organizational discipline and process consistency, then reinforce product improvements; deploy market and customer-service tools to amplify credible operational performance rather than to replace it.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2. Repeated-Measures ANOVA Differences Among Five Domains.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Domain (Between Dimensions)	0.1194	4	0.0299	3.92	.009
Error (Subjects × Domain)	4.78	628	0.0076		
Total	4.90	789			

A one-way repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether significant differences existed among the five service-innovation domains. As shown in Table 2, the analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of domain on customer evaluations, $F(4, 628) = 3.92$, $p = .009$. Because the computed p-value was lower than the significance level of $\alpha = .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the mean ratings across the five domains were not equal.

The findings suggest that customers perceived the contribution of the service-innovation domains to satisfaction differently. Consistent with the descriptive results in Table 1, organization-related innovations received the highest mean rating, followed by process and product innovations, whereas market and customer-service strategies obtained relatively lower evaluations.

These results implied that organizational capability and operational reliability play a more prominent role in shaping customer satisfaction in quick-service restaurant settings. This pattern aligns with the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) perspective interpreted by Lu et al. (2024), which posits that value co-creation emerges from differentiated configurations of operant resources within service systems.

Conclusion

1. All five innovation paths were positively evaluated, with organization-related strategies found to receive the highest ratings.
2. Significant differences among domain mean scores were found, indicating that impacts were not uniform; organization and process were found to warrant priority in this context.
3. A sequenced agenda was indicated: ensure organization-level compliance and workforce readiness → stabilize and speed processes → refresh products → clarify price/promotional messaging → deepen feedback and loyalty systems.

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Recommendations

The findings suggest that managers may prioritize organization-level enablers: maintain third-party–audited hygiene protocols, make compliance dashboards visible, institute quarterly hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) aligned micro-trainings with shift-leader certification, and codify standard work with per-shift audits.

For process improvement, managers may use kitchen display system (KDS) time stamps to monitor prep-to-handoff times, set takt targets, run weekly root-cause reviews, standardize grooming and service etiquette, and conduct brief gemba walk-throughs (on-the-floor observation in the work area).

For products, teams may pilot limited-time offers that simplify preparation yet raise perceived value (e.g., clear portion cues, bundle pricing) and validate these via A/B tests.

In marketing, firms may localize promotions to store catchment patterns, optimize off-peak pricing, and deploy geo-targeted digital advertising.

For customer service, organizations may implement QR-based voice-of-customer tools tied to order IDs with a 72-hour closure target.

Future research may extend to full-service formats and additional NCR cities, test mediation via trust and perceived safety, and employ longitudinal designs to assess durability of effects.

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