

# Enhancing Customer Experience Through Product and Service Innovation: Evidence from a Quick-Service Restaurant in The Philippines

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## Abstract

*This descriptive study was conducted to determine customers' perceptions of innovation strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant. The researchers used a modified-standard questionnaire to gather data, employing convenience sampling to select participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate. This study draws on customer responses from a McDonald's quick-service restaurant in a town area of the Philippines. The researchers adopted the Top-Down Processing Theory to investigate the general beliefs, expectations, interpretations, and perceptions of customers regarding innovation strategies that encompass both product and service innovations, with the aim of enhancing their experience.*

*The findings indicated that the innovation strategies implemented by the quick-service restaurant enhanced customer experience. The aspect of "ability to personalize orders" within product innovation garnered the highest score, indicating that customers highly valued the opportunity to customize their orders. Furthermore, in service innovation, the customer's perception of "order accessibility and transparency" scored the highest. This implied that customers placed significant importance on the ease with which they could access information about their orders and the transparency of the entire order process.*

*The researchers concluded that product and service innovation strategies, specifically the personalization of orders and the provision of order accessibility and transparency, resulted in an enhanced overall customer experience. Based on its perceived assessment in enhancing customer experience, it was further concluded that the introduction of quick-service restaurant innovation strategies made customers feel valued, bringing positive instances for improving their experience.*

**Keywords:** Enhancing Customer Experience, Innovation Strategies, Quick-Service Restaurant, Top-Down Theory

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, the highly competitive restaurant industry has been a significant factor in enhancing the customer experience throughout the dining experience, directly influencing the firm's success and sustainability. According to Data (2020) on customer experience, 200 worldwide marketing leaders emphasized the significance of streamlined and innovative customer experience strategies that could help a brand stand out from its rivals and increase brand awareness, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, 88% of customers claimed they would prefer to spend money on experience (such as dining out) rather than cooking at home (National Restaurant Association, 2021). Therefore, competition in the restaurant business was commonly connected to how efficient these food and service providers were. Customers' choices and preferences have evolved continuously,



shifting from fine dining restaurants to fast food restaurants. As a result, restaurant businesses were expected to deliver ever-increasingly high-quality food and services to their customers, as they became more demanding in choosing the best restaurant based on what they wanted to achieve from their decision-making process. If the business succeeded in providing high-quality food and services, it would also help it to be competitive and achieve success, no matter how the industry evolved.

One of the restaurant businesses that was in demand and preferred by most customers for dining in was the Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR). QSRs had long been synonymous with convenience, offering fast and accessible dining solutions. Since QSRs had been in demand for food and service providers due to diverse and dynamic customer preferences, they were no exception to the highly competitive industry, which resulted in challenges for QSRs in devising and implementing new and innovative strategies. In response, QSR establishments were compelled to adopt and implement innovative strategies that resonated with the evolving demands of their customers. Due to this, QSRs had to use innovative business methods to improve the customer experience and deliver high-quality services, enabling their business to survive, operate efficiently, and keep up with the constant development in the restaurant industry.

### **Research Problem**

This study assessed innovation strategies for Enhancing Customer Experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant. The researchers sought to answer the following specific questions:

1. What are the general beliefs and expectations of customers on the following innovation strategies in a Quick-Service Restaurant?
  - 1.1 Product Innovation
    - 1.1.1 Ability to personalize orders
    - 1.1.2 Value for money
    - 1.1.3 Diverse selection of food options
    - 1.1.4 Sense of excitement and inclusiveness
  - 1.2 Service Innovation
    - 1.2.1 Service speed
    - 1.2.2 Order efficiency
    - 1.2.3 Interactive order processing
    - 1.2.4 Order accessibility and transparency
2. What is the interpretation of customers with the following innovation strategies based on their experience about their beliefs and expectations?
  - 2.1 Product Innovation
    - 2.1.1 Ability to personalize orders
    - 2.1.2 Value for money
    - 2.1.3 Diverse selection of food options
    - 2.1.4 Sense of excitement and inclusiveness
  - 2.2 Service Innovation
    - 2.2.1 Service speed
    - 2.2.2 Order efficiency
    - 2.2.3 Interactive order processing
    - 2.2.4 Order accessibility and transparency
3. What is the perception of the customers on the following innovation strategies for enhancing customer experience in Quick-Service Restaurants?
  - 3.1 Product Innovation
    - 3.1.1 Ability to personalize orders
    - 3.1.2 Value for money
    - 3.1.3 Diverse selection of food options
    - 3.1.4 Sense of excitement and inclusiveness
  - 3.2 Service Innovation

- 3.2.1 Service speed
- 3.2.2 Order efficiency
- 3.2.3 Interactive order processing
- 3.2.4 Order accessibility and transparency

## Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of innovation strategies in enhancing customer experience within a Quick-Service Restaurant setting. Specifically, it seeks to:

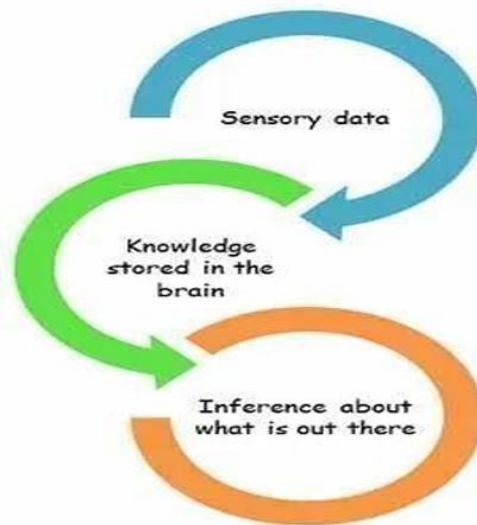
1. To determine the general beliefs and expectations of customers regarding key product and service innovation strategies;
2. to analyze how customers interpret these innovations based on their actual experiences about their prior beliefs and expectations; and
3. assess how customers perceive the impact of these innovation strategies on their overall dining experience, such as order personalization, value for money, food variety, emotional engagement, service speed, efficiency, interactivity, and transparency—

A successful innovation strategy was essential in the competitive restaurant landscape (Rios & Ciobanu, 2019). The synthesis of several essential components highlighted the necessity for QSRs to concentrate on improving customer experience. First, the emergence of digital technologies transformed restaurants, how they interacted with their customers, and how these service providers enhanced the overall customer experience. With the widespread adoption of evolving technologies like smartphones, beepers, and other technology-operated services, customers had unprecedented expectations of business service. Some customers expected even faster service and an easy purchase process, which affected their experience when it came to service quality. To interact with customers and enhance their dining experience, QSRs had to successfully navigate the digital realm. Second, the shifting demographics and preferences of consumers prompted QSRs to rethink their strategies. The changing customer profiles and tastes necessitated QSRs to reconsider their business approaches. The overall experience surrounding a product became increasingly important to modern consumers. To provide distinctive and memorable experiences that went beyond the financial aspects of eating out, QSRs needed to personalize their offers to resonate with the preferences of their target audience. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to the restaurant industry, prompting them to adapt and innovate strategically to survive the changing demands and preferences of customers. Health concerns rose as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, causing the restaurant industry to change how services were provided to its target market. Lockdowns, social distancing, and health issues forced QSRs to look for innovative ways to serve customers while upholding safety standards. In light of extraordinary obstacles, integrating technology, such as contactless ordering and delivery services, evolved from safety precautions to a strategically aligned business approach to improve consumer experience.

In light of these considerations, this study aimed to examine the innovation strategies utilized by selected Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs) in a town area of the Philippines to improve the customer experience. This research contributed to a thorough understanding of the evolving dynamics of customer experience within the local restaurant industry by examining the digital, experiential enhancements, and adaptive strategies implemented by QSRs. Furthermore, this research explores how innovations in products and services affect customer behavior, expectations, and satisfaction. Focusing specifically on Filipino customers, it offers valuable insights into how product and service innovations align with local cultural preferences. This culturally tailored perspective helps bridge the gap between global innovation trends and the unique needs of the Philippine market.

## 1.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Top-Down Processing Theory of Richard Gregory (1970). Richard Langton Gregory, born on 24 July 1923, stands as a pioneer in the field of cognitive psychology, leaving an indelible mark on our understanding of perception and the human mind.



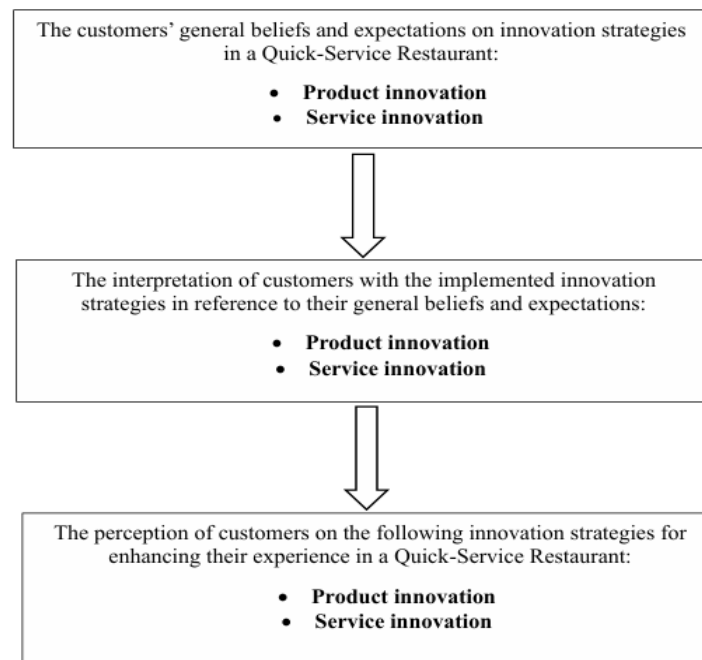
**Figure 1.** *Top-Down Processing Theory Model by Richard Gregory (1970)*

The concept of “Top-Down Processing” was introduced by the British Psychologist Richard Gregory in 1970 who stated that instead of creating perception by just relying on the information, which is based solely on 34 immediate experience, the brain uses pre-existing schemas to better comprehend the new incoming information to the brain in which individuals may have perception from the inference of the sensory data. It means that “Top-Down Processing” involves perceiving and understanding the world by applying our general beliefs and life experiences to new information. Individuals construct mental frameworks over their lifetimes, integrating past experiences, knowledge, emotions, and expectations. These mental patterns become the foundation upon which they build ideas and absorb new information more efficiently when encountering new knowledge. The researchers used the “Top-Down Processing” theory to determine the perception of customers of the innovation strategies of a Quick-Service Restaurant. The “Top-Down Processing” theory emphasizes the significance of higher mental processes such as expectations, beliefs, values, and social influences (Rousay, 2023). As stated in figure 1, sensory data refers to the general beliefs and expectations of customers on the innovation strategies in a quick-service restaurant. Customers have formed an initial impression and received information from the stimulus regarding their perception of innovation strategies by drawing from what they already know to interpret new information. As they begin to take in more information about their environment, their initial impressions influence how they interpret the finer details (Cherry, 2023). As a result, the researchers define “knowledge stored in the brain” as the interpretation of customers on the innovation strategies about their beliefs and expectations. The use of stored knowledge in this way is the essence of “Top-Down Processing,” as this will allow them to make sense of the information that has already been brought by the senses. The ‘inference about what is out there’ refers to the conclusion formed regarding the customer's perception of the innovation strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant.

## 1.2 Conceptual Framework

With the study entitled “Enhancing Customer Experience Through Product and Service Innovation: Evidence from a Quick-Service Restaurant in The Philippines,” the “Top-Down Processing” theory is a valuable lens through which to examine whether these innovation strategies enhance customer experiences. The research revolves around sensory data that reflects the general beliefs and expectations surrounding the innovation strategies, encompassing both product (McSavers mix & match, LTO, Happy Meal Toys) and service innovations (Self-service Kiosks, Mobile Application, and Order Ready Screen), in a Quick-Service Restaurant. Customers form perceptions based on specified indicators and their prior understanding of innovation strategies. For instance, in product innovation, these indicators involve enabling personalized orders, maximizing value for

money, offering diverse food options, and creating a sense of excitement and inclusivity. In service innovation, indicators include increasing service speed, ensuring order efficiency, generating interactive order processing, and providing order accessibility and transparency. Subsequently, customers' stored knowledge in their minds, reflecting their initial impressions, shapes their interpretations of implemented innovation strategies, aligning with their general beliefs and expectations. Lastly, the inference stage determines the conclusion that customers draw regarding their perception of the innovation strategies that enhance their experience. This theoretical framework serves as a valuable tool for innovation strategies, whether in product or service innovation, leading to enhanced customer experience. By employing the “Top-Down Processing” theory, the researchers aim to determine whether the implemented innovation strategies, spanning both product and service innovations, effectively enhance customer experiences in the Quick-Service Restaurant. Figure 2 represents the conceptual paradigm of the study.



**Figure 2. Conceptual Paradigm of the Study**

## 2 Related Work

The following sections present reviews of related literature and studies that helped the researchers determine significant facts to support the study.

### Quick-Service Restaurant

As specified by Albayrak et al. (2019), Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs), also known as Fast-food establishments, are recognized for their brief waiting period from placing an order at the counter to the delivery of food that is either dine-in or takeout.

In conformity with the study of Correa (2023), QSRs grew in popularity in response to Filipinos' rapidly changing and time-constrained lifestyles, leading to an increase in demand for take-out and readily available fast-food goods. These restaurants gained popularity due to their standardized ingredients, efficient supply chains, and cost-effective, attractive, and quick-to-prepare meals. McDonald's and other regional and international players in the industry used pricing strategies that appealed to the cautiousness of the prices among Filipinos.

In accordance with Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020), one of the sectors with a rapid rate of progress was the fast-food restaurant business. To meet the needs of consumers for various kinds of products and services, both national



and small restaurant chains compete with one another. Customers today are increasingly more sophisticated and demanding, along with changing market trends.

According to Bisceglia (2021), the rapid innovation and adaptability of QSRs are used to deal with unforeseen changes. It highlighted how quick service restaurants had to adopt contactless and online solutions to comply with safety rules as a result of such regulations implemented by the government. In addition, supply chain disruptions boosted operational toughness, motivating QSRs to streamline their supply chains and broaden their supplier base. Menu changes, the addition of healthier options, and a stronger emphasis on safety precautions for consumers were also noted. The assessment detailed how innovations like contactless ordering and drive-thrus are on the rise, forcing Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs) to improve both their digital and physical infrastructure in order to meet customer demand for secure and convenient transactions. Additionally, it emphasized how crucial customer insights are in guiding product innovation and encouraging a more consumer-centric strategy within the QSR market. Understanding consumer behavior and preferences made it easier to create creative product designs, simple packaging, and an increased focus on customer experience, all of which helped the fast-food business set new standards.

As specified by Beckett (2021), McDonald's proactive efforts to improve customer experience were highlighted. These proactive efforts included creating a dedicated Customer Experience team and making large investments in digital optimization for their restaurants and drive-thrus. The business was aware of how online customers' expectations were changing and sought to adapt its offerings to these new dynamics. McDonald's intended to prioritize drive-thru, delivery, and digital orders by concentrating on off-premises engagement, which was happening at the time. A dedication to a seamless and customized customer journey was demonstrated by the integration of loyalty programs into these touchpoints. This strategy emphasized the significance of harnessing technology to meet customer requests and enhance overall customer satisfaction in the fast-food sector while also being in line with current industry developments.

The Philippines has a diverse population and a rich culinary tradition, which has resulted in a fast-food sector that is a blend of global and local chains, showing a wide range of flavors and dining experiences. Sison (2023) explored the main fast-food chains in the Philippines, including their histories, outstanding menu items, geographical reach, and advantages. McDonald's, which first opened in the Philippines in 1981, is the country's second-largest fast-food brand, with over 700 locations nationwide. McDonald's has established a loyal customer base by constantly offering quality and flavor in popular dishes such as the Big Mac, Chicken McDo, and fries.

As mentioned by Gbarrientos (2023), in a press release sponsored by McDonald's Philippines in 2022, McDonald's Philippines surpassed its pre-pandemic (2019) revenues, marking the beginning of a period of rapid growth for the Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) business. This accomplishment can be attributed to its leadership, led by the Chairman and Owner, Dr. George T. Yang, and President and CEO Kenneth Yang. Aside from the comeback in consumer mobility and after the pandemic routines, the brand's success was also credited to its commitment to providing remarkable value for money, attractive limited-time menu items, and an improved digital customer experience. This achievement demonstrated the ongoing attractiveness of fast-service restaurants as well as their adaptability in meeting evolving demands from customers.

### ***Innovation Strategies***

In conformity with the study of Afuah (2020), innovation refers to the application of fresh market insights to develop new and improved products or services that align with customer preferences. Generally, the term "innovation" implies "change," where a business leverages new market information to create advanced and innovative strategies for delivering goods and services, thereby gaining a competitive advantage.

As supported by Martin-Rios and Ciobanu (2019), businesses frequently decide to innovate strategically, resulting in the implementation of one or more innovative actions that have significantly led to success in today's competitive environment. With the help of innovation strategies, businesses remained proactive and positively impacted the firm's performance, to remain competitive and profitable.

Moreover, the study by Singh and Sarangal (2021) aimed to explore the influence of innovative practices, encompassing both product and service innovation, on the level of customer satisfaction with the Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs). In addition, the research sought to identify the subsequent impact of customer satisfaction on the formation of customer loyalty, experience, and satisfaction in this particular sector.

Furthermore, the study by Cote (2022) indicated that product innovation was the process and introduction of introducing newly developed products in the market or by improving the existing ones. It presented innovative products in which businesses could enhance customer experience in new and exciting ways. With the aid of product innovation, a business will be relevant and drive growth despite stiff market competition.

The concept of product innovation by Fussenegger (2023) offered significant promise in the culinary sector, providing a method for creating original and appealing food items, offering a diverse selection of food menu options. Product innovation in the restaurant sector extended beyond cuisine to the production of outstanding eating experiences that resonated with customers. As a result, product innovation has emerged as an essential asset for restaurants to look to differentiate themselves, create lasting connections with consumers, and stay at the forefront of the constantly changing food service industry. In line with this study, this was the product innovation that the chosen establishment has been and is currently implementing.

Fast food companies repeatedly used the power of time-limited promotions to engage their target audience and generate a sense of excitement in their products. This strategy approach also generates a sense of inclusiveness, motivating consumers to take advantage of the unique offer of the fast-food restaurants within the specific time frame, as stated by Genchur (2023).

McDonald's capitalized on the trend of celebrity partnerships with their "Famous Orders" limited-time offerings (LTOs), as highlighted by Campisi (2021). The recent collaboration with Korean boy band BTS for the BTS Meal exemplified this strategy's success, generating significant buzz and profitability. These partnerships leverage celebrities' influence to drive consumer interest and sales within specific timeframes. By adapting to evolving consumer preferences and engaging with culturally significant influencers, McDonald's enhanced its brand image and relevance. Such collaborations also amplified brand exposure and engagement across social media platforms, extending McDonald's reach and influence within the online community. In summary, McDonald's strategic execution of celebrity-driven LTOs reinforced its market position and brand equity in the competitive fast-food industry.

Moreover, Juan (2023) discussed the Chicken McNuggets Meal Meets BT21 promotion by McDonald's in the Philippines as a new product innovation offered for its customers. This limited-time offer aimed to attract customers with a bundle comprising Chicken McNuggets, sauces, fries, and a drink, available from April 15 to April 22. This promotion is accessible through various channels, excluding third-party delivery apps, and including restrictions on the number of orders per transaction. McDonald's strategically utilized this promotion to stimulate consumer interest, enhance foot traffic to its outlets, and reinforce its market position within the competitive fast-food industry.

According to Romero (2023), the addition of two new sauces to the famous combination of McDonald's was essential: the Spicy & Sweet Jam Sauce and Mambo Sauce. With its limited-edition sauce releases, McDonald's had a history of generating culinary hype and fostering a personal connection and deep cultural influence with its customers. With the unique combination of Szechuan peppercorns, cayenne, and apple cider vinegar, the Spicy & Sweet Jam Sauce stood out as the first breakfast-inspired alternative. Its sweet and spicy flavor characteristic makes it perfect for breakfast dishes. However, Mambo Sauce, which brought a sweet, spicy, and tangy tomato-based sauce to the table and was suitable for combining with a variety of menu items, took inspiration from the regional flavors of Washington, D.C. These sauces were only available for a limited time offer, which gave them an air of mystery and increased customer excitement about trying these innovative flavors. Both of these sauces were available at participating McDonald's locations nationwide starting October 9th for a limited time, while supplies lasted. Through these sauces, McDonald's continued to explore a variety of culinary inspirations, showing their commitment to meeting changing consumer tastes and preferences and possibly changing the sauce landscape in the fast-food industry.

Furthermore, as mentioned by McDonald's (2022), since everybody had a budget to follow, people were looking for ways to save to survive until their next paycheck, as the cost of necessities like food and gas continued to rise. In light of this, the multinational fast-food restaurant responded by developing new, affordable snack alternatives that Filipinos would adore and keep their bellies happy. McDonald's has introduced McSavers Mix & Match. This newly offered product by McDonald's enabled customers to personalize their orders, allowing them to choose from a range of main dishes and combine them with their choice of a side dish, beverage, or dessert.

Additionally, it was reported by Press Room (2022) that McDonald's offered McSavers Mix & Match, an affordable choice that allowed consumers with low budgets to create their 2-piece snack combo without sacrificing quality or enjoyment. This service served a variety of customer sectors, including office workers and students. McSavers Mix & Match ensured that individuals could have a delicious and cheaper snack even when circumstances were tough. For office workers, this means indulging in a midday snack. Similarly, students could make the most out of their allowances, breaks, and time spent hanging out with their friends. McDonald's wanted to provide a variety of snack options that create enjoyable moments for everyone without putting a burden on their finances. These options were commonly based on customer preferences as they could personalize their orders while also maximizing the value of the money they spent.

Furthermore, following Isla (2022), Happy Meal toys have become a cherished tradition at fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's and Jollibee, bringing excitement and collectability to children's meals. McDonald's has built a reputation for providing a wide range of toys, many of which are associated with major movie releases such as Pokémon, Minions: Rise of Gru, Sonic the Hedgehog 2, and many more. Furthermore, McDonald's offered an alternative through the Happy Meal Readers Program, which allowed customers to select a book instead of a toy—a great program that promoted a love for reading.

Moreover, according to Hart (2023), fast food companies attracted their target audience and made them want to purchase their offerings by repeatedly working with limited-time promotions. McDonald's has expertly developed a loyal following of clients who eagerly anticipate each new release by bringing innovative and exciting limited-time offerings for collecting toys. This strategy created a sense of urgency and exclusivity that makes people motivated to take advantage of that unique opportunity within the allotted time.

In line with the innovation strategies stated by Singh and Sarangal, which were supported by Tatum (2023), service innovation is a broad term pertaining to changes in the way businesses offer their services to their target market. It offered a new style of service to customers it providing ease, convenience, and fast service. It also involves forecasting future trends in the marketplace and adapting to these changes to achieve business goals such as higher financial outcomes and meeting the needs and wants of the customers. Additionally, the help of service innovation aided businesses in modifying their operational structure by reducing losses, increasing business production, and making the customer orders efficient and less of a process. When managed responsibly, service innovation will enhance the general operation of the business and will affect customer experience, resulting in retention and a competitive edge amongst its rivals in the industry.

With that, according to Baba et al. (2023), the restaurant business has seen a trend toward implementing new technologies to increase productivity, simplify service processes, and improve customer experience. QSRs were competitive and constantly changing. Hence, restaurant businesses must employ technological advances to their advantage. Adapting technology innovation in the service industry can transform customer experience into exhilarating, satisfying, and increasing service efficiency.

Therefore, according to Pendrill (2023), self-ordering kiosks have become a feature in the fast-food and fast-casual restaurant industry in recent years, with major businesses such as McDonald's leading the way. Aside from convenience, these kiosks have proved to increase service speed as they bring advantages by reducing waiting times, improving order accuracy, and significantly increasing payment amounts, all of which are advantages relevant to restaurants. This move showed the restaurant industry's adaptability in responding to changing consumer demands and advancements in technology.

In light of these, Rastegar et al. (2018) mentioned that self-service kiosks are a widely used form of self-service technology (SST) in many QSRs in today's world. Self-service kiosks are small and independent technologies that



display information such as the menu, price, and pictures of the products that the business has to offer. He clarified that a "self-service kiosk" is a tool with a sizable touchscreen that enables customers to place food orders, customize menu choices, and complete payments all without requiring the assistance of an employee, generating interactive order processing among customers. Self-service kiosk integration into quick-service restaurants (QSRs) resulted in reduced labor costs, increased productivity, and increased profitability.

Self-service kiosks improved the services of fast-food restaurants throughout the new and rapid development of the industry. For instance, establishments, especially QSRs, embraced self-service kiosks as these technological devices could transform the service by ensuring order efficiency and enhancing customer experience while decreasing the cost and queue time, as stated by Algarawi and Khan (2021).

According to Shahril et al. (2021), the study investigated the impact of technology, specifically self-service kiosks, on customer satisfaction in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) within the Klang Valley. The study focused on four key factors—ordering speed, convenience, menu design, and order accuracy—to analyze their influence on customer satisfaction. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional research design, the findings revealed a direct correlation between these factors and customer satisfaction. The study not only provided theoretical and practical implications for future research but also suggested that adopting self-service kiosks in QSR operations could enhance overall customer satisfaction. As technology continued to evolve in the restaurant industry, understanding these specific factors became crucial for businesses aiming to provide a positive customer experience.

As reported by Grubrr (2022), the self-ordering kiosks at McDonald's, which had touchscreens with an intuitive user interface, provided additional improvements to the customer experience and lowered human error, but they also made it easier for customers to obtain information and place orders with only a few taps. Any business looking to improve customer experience, reduce waiting times, and enhance income should use this self-service kiosk approach. Beyond fast food, McDonald's kiosks were valuable for a variety of enterprises selling a variety of products and services.

According to Lee and Oh (2022), the study focused on the psychological factors influencing customer responses to kiosk services in quick-service restaurants. The research, based on a survey of 247 individuals in the US with experience using kiosks, utilized a structural equation model for analysis. The study identified five key factors impacting customer perceptions of kiosk services: rapidity, information quality, reliability, convenience, and usefulness. Notably, the results revealed that convenience and usefulness negatively affected the need for interaction, while reliability and usefulness positively influenced self-efficacy. There was an unexpected positive relationship between customers' need for interaction and the intention to use kiosk services. This suggested that positive interactive experiences may prompt customers to revisit and use kiosk services based on employee recommendations.

Additionally, Dilip et al. (2021) stated that McDonald's began investing in self-service kiosks to attract more customers, enabling the establishment to offer an easy ordering and payment process. These self-service kiosks offered a new style of purchasing as they provided more convenience.

Besides that, according to Southey (2020), as mobile commerce became popular, the online food delivery app that is commonly installed on mobiles changed the process of delivery by certain restaurants. Restaurants began to offer home deliveries at every doorstep at their convenience. As certain instances emerged in the purchasing stage, restaurant businesses were encouraged to onboard food delivery platforms.

Therefore, according to H. Chen et al. (2020), restaurants began offering food delivery platforms as new technology advanced, allowing customers to communicate with a variety of food providers via a mobile app. Customers could now see the latest updates on their orders, and delivery time depending on their designated locations; however, delivery time was also customizable by the customer under their respective preferences. Additionally, restaurants now provide order accessibility and transparency in real-time to their customers through an app, allowing customers to see their orders being processed.

Moreover, McDonald's also worked with various delivery or shipping companies globally, but McDonald's itself established its mobile application to market their products, namely McDelivery, according to Ng et al. (2022).

Thus, if the food and service provider wanted to succeed in this development, they had to offer an application that is easy to use and that displays information that customers could freely choose.

It is also supported by Gurav (2021) that the Online Food Ordering App was specifically created for the food delivery industry, allowing hotels and restaurants to improve their service and increase their customer base while cutting labor costs. Customers could quickly order meals online via the app, which promoted food takeout more than in-person dining. It also simplified the process of establishing online menus and placing orders.

Additionally, according to Ahuja et al. (2021), the way customers ate at their convenience was rapidly growing, resulting in food delivery platforms also continuously evolving to meet this change in the industry. Restaurants offered food delivery platforms and maximized their use by also offering customizable menus that are aligned with their preferences, ensuring order efficiency even if multiple deliveries occurred and many more.

According to Bishop (2023), an order-ready screen, as the name implies, lets customers know when their dinner is ready. Customers who had concerns about waiting times were relieved with order-ready screens, which improved customer experience. The kitchen display system was in addition to the order-ready screen. The idea behind order-ready screens was to give customers an awareness of where they were in the dining process, from standing in line to sitting down to eating.

Moreover, per Peterson (2022), the Order Ready Screen was a technologically integrated screen linked to kitchen management systems in restaurants, which are strategically positioned for customer visibility, significantly impacting both customer experience and operational efficiency. Positioned where customers could observe them while waiting, these displays provided real-time updates on order status, alleviating perceived wait times and enhancing overall satisfaction. Customers, informed of their orders' progression through visual cues like order numbers moving forward, were more likely to wait patiently and understand delays. Simultaneously, from an operational standpoint, it offers centralized, real-time insights into the kitchen workflow. This facilitated improved coordination among kitchen staff, leading to reduced processing times and increased productivity. As a result, Order Ready Displays emerged as a valuable technological solution, seamlessly bridging the gap between customer expectations and restaurant operational efficiency.

### ***Enhance Customer Experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant***

The present study by Singh and Sarangal (2021) explored the influence of innovative practices, encompassing both product and service innovation, on the level of customer satisfaction within the context of Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs). In addition, the research aimed to identify the subsequent impact of customer satisfaction on the formation of customer loyalty, experience, and satisfaction in this particular sector. According to the study, 1.) Product innovation was directed to the satisfaction of the QSR customers, focusing on their needs and wants. The customers were likely to be satisfied with the perceived food innovation. 2.) Service innovations could satisfy customers by considering the experiences that customers disclosed during an interaction session with the service provider. 3.) If the customer were satisfied with the perceived food and service, there was a higher chance they would reorder, resulting in customer loyalty. Therefore, with the help of innovative strategies that were implemented successfully by QSRs, a significant impact on customer experience could be achieved.

In line with the study of Brewer and Sebbby (2021), the study identified indirect effects stemming from the visual appeal and informativeness of menus, as well as consumers' perceptions of COVID-19 risks, on purchase intentions. The study predicted consumers' purchase intentions in the online food ordering environment. Beyond its theoretical contributions, the study offered managerial insights into product selection, effective content marketing strategies, and customer attraction methods to aid restaurants in remaining competitive, even in a post-COVID-19 landscape. This adaptability enabled them to continue offering preferred menu items to their target customer. Moreover, the study underscored the imperative for restaurants to not only focus on dine-in services but also elevate their online service performance to gain a competitive edge. Recognizing that menus profoundly influence customers' perceptions and satisfaction throughout the meal journey, from pre-purchase to post-purchase phases, was essential. Therefore, small business restaurant owners and managers were encouraged to stay attuned to industry trends to ensure their businesses remain current, competitive, and sustainable in an evolving landscape.

So, in today's generation, there are already innovative strategies being implemented by restaurants. In line with this study, the researchers sought to find out if these innovation strategies enhanced customer experience.

In conformity with the study of Aziz et al. (2023), businesses in a variety of sectors, including the Quick-Service Restaurant industry, faced worldwide rivals in the current business environment. The most important consideration in the case of fast-service restaurants was the quality of their fast and effective service, which was consistent with their quick and simple strategy. At these businesses, it is essential to make sure customers have a positive experience, whether buying products or using services. This study showed that customer satisfaction was closely related to sensory experiences that were relevant to the menu of the restaurant.

Following Singh et al. (2020), the quality of Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs), the food served, and how employees performed services were the main factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, QSR owners should place a high priority on increasing the creative environment and establishing a more comfortable setting to guarantee customers can enjoy excellent services that meet their expectations. It is also important to understand that the hospitality industry's ability to innovate relied significantly on individuals, both as inventors and as suppliers of hospitality services.

As mentioned by Sashi et al. (2019), the study on social media, customer engagement, and promotion in Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs) explained the growing importance of customer experience in consumer services research and management. This study has frequently emphasized factors like food quality while examining dining experiences. It established a link between quality characteristics and consumers' opinions of value and, ultimately, their behavioral intentions. Additionally, strong emotional ties with repeat consumers were recognized as being important for boosting advocacy, good word of mouth, and value co-creation. The study highlighted the importance of consistent tweeting as well as customer satisfaction in promoting good word-of-mouth for smaller businesses.

According to the study by Rajput and Gahfoor (2020), it examined the elements influencing customers' revisit intention to fast food establishments, paying particular attention to the cuisine, the restaurant service, the physical environment, and the customer experience. The study supported the positive correlation between these variables and consumers' revisit intention to fast food restaurants through a questionnaire survey including 433 customers. Furthermore, this study emphasized the importance of revisiting intention as a vital behavioral reaction in fast-food restaurants.

According to Jawabreh et. al (2018), this study delved into the critical aspects of pricing strategy, menu design, and food cost calculation in the context of restaurant management. The study underscored the importance of aligning pricing with cost considerations, ensuring an attractive and well-organized menu layout that catered to diverse tastes. Findings revealed that a lack of variety does not significantly impact customer retention, but a poorly sequenced menu could hinder the selection process. Notably, the research establishes a statistical connection between menu design and customer satisfaction, emphasizing the value of creative, diverse offerings. Additionally, it highlighted the significant role pricing played in customer satisfaction, and the psychological impact of menu items underscored the complexity of pricing decisions, reinforcing Laube's perspective on the challenges operators face in determining menu prices based on perceived value. Overall, the study emphasized the interconnected nature of pricing, menu design, customer satisfaction, and the overall customer experience in the restaurant industry.

In the study of Smith et al. (2020), conducted at a historically black college and university (HBCU) to understand students' perceptions of on-campus foodservice and its impact on satisfaction and dining frequency. The research, involving 685 students, employed structural equation modeling to analyze factors such as food quality, ambience, value for money, food and beverage options, and service quality. The confirmed hypotheses highlighted the significant positive influence of these factors on students' overall satisfaction and dining frequency. The review emphasized the practical implications for on-campus foodservice operators, urging a focus on enhancing these elements to positively affect student satisfaction, institutional reputation, student retention, and the institution's appeal to prospective students. Overall, the study contributed valuable insights into the effective management of on-campus food services, particularly within the unique context of historically black colleges and universities.

In proportion to the study of Park and Kang (2021), which explored mass customization in fast casual restaurants, aiming to understand how the perceived number of choices and time pressure impacted choice overload and subsequent satisfaction with the customization process. Drawing data from 371 respondents, the study revealed that both the perceived number of choices and time pressure contribute to increased choice overload, subsequently leading to reduced satisfaction with customization. Notably, the negative effect of choice overload on satisfaction is mitigated when customers hold high hedonic or utilitarian restaurant values. The findings offered valuable insights for scholars and practitioners, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and dynamics in the context of mass customization in fast-casual restaurants. The study's implications were particularly relevant for improving the customer experience and aligning services with evolving consumer preferences in this sector.

The study by Zhu et. al (2020) focused on improving the prediction accuracy of Order Fulfillment Cycle Time (OFCT) in on-demand food delivery (OFD) platforms. The OFCT represented the time between a customer placing an order and receiving the meal. The authors presented a deep learning model that dissects the OFCT factors, incorporating features from various data sources. The model, leveraging a deep neural network, integrated representations of couriers, restaurants, and delivery destinations. A novel post-processing layer addressed distributional mismatches for better convergence. Extensive experiments validated the model's effectiveness, showcasing its potential to enhance customer satisfaction.

In the study of Rahim et al. (2023), customer perceptions of digitized restaurants were explored compared to traditional ones in the evolving restaurant industry. The objective was to provide valuable insights for the industry to align with consumer preferences during the transition to digitalization. The study collected data through a questionnaire from at least 100 customers who had recently dined in both types of restaurants. The study revealed a clear preference among customers for digitalized restaurants over traditional ones, attributing this choice to various advantages such as enhanced convenience, efficiency, and an improved overall dining experience. Key factors influencing restaurant selection included the availability of quality yet reasonably priced food, reservation systems, and the option for contactless ordering and payment. Customers, driven by the fast-paced nature of modern life, expressed a strong preference for simplicity and speed in the ordering process, favoring restaurants with digital menu options and streamlined technology.

According to Abatayo et al. (2022), the study investigated the impact of pricing strategies on consumer perceptions and purchase decisions in Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs), a popular choice for individuals seeking convenient and affordable meals. The study, based on quantitative descriptive research with 100 respondents from De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, emphasized the significance of correct pricing in shaping consumer behavior and establishing a successful business foundation within the competitive QSR industry. Affordability, value for money, and appeal emerge as pivotal factors influencing consumer choices, with affordability holding the highest importance.

By Kumar (2020), the study examined the influence of technological advancements, particularly social media, on consumers' purchasing behavior in the Malaysian food and beverage industry. Focusing on under-researched aspects, it incorporated factors like social media marketing, information accessibility, and online ordering systems. Employing rigorous methodology, the study used purposive and non-convenience random sampling, with PLS-SEM for data analysis. Findings highlighted the significant impact of social media advertisements and online ordering systems on consumer purchasing behavior. Surprisingly, highly accessible information via social media did not necessarily positively affect purchasing decisions.

According to Slack et al. (2020), the study focused on customer perceived value (CPV) and its impact on customer satisfaction within the supermarket sector in Fiji, a developing country. The cross-sectional survey gathered data from 500 supermarket customers, using SPSS for analysis. The findings indicated that CPV positively influenced customer satisfaction. Notably, functional value related to price and value for money has a more significant positive impact than social value, while emotional value has a negative impact. Interestingly, functional value linked to performance and quality shows no significant impact on satisfaction. The study suggested that these findings, specific to the Fijian context, warrant further exploration in other developing countries. Marketers were advised to consider these insights to better understand CPV's dynamics and enhance strategies for improving customer satisfaction within the supermarket industry.

### **3 Methodology**

#### ***Research Design***

The researchers utilized a descriptive design in accordance with the quantitative method of research. It was specifically employed to gain the knowledge necessary to make an appropriate judgment in line with the study. According to Bhandari (2023), collecting and evaluating numerical data is the process of quantitative research. Patterns and averages will be found, forecasts can be made, causality can be tested, and results will be able to be applied to larger groups.

The researchers gathered information about how innovation strategies enhanced the customer experience in a quick-service restaurant. Researchers used pen and paper survey questionnaires as the principal instrument for data gathering. Questionnaires were a set of predetermined questions for all respondents that served as the primary survey.

#### ***Participants of the Study***

The participants of the study were 100 customers, aged 18 years old and above, who had recently dined at a McDonald's quick-service restaurant located in a town area in the Philippines. There were one hundred (100) participants. The researchers used convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method where participants are chosen for a study based on their accessibility to the researchers. This accessibility can be due to factors like geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or a willingness to participate. In this approach, participants are selected based on their convenience and willingness to take part, rather than through random selection stated by Nikolopoulou (2023). Researchers opt for accessible participants by choosing individuals based on proximity or convenience.

#### **Research Instrument**

A questionnaire type was used as an instrument in this study because the researchers wanted to find out if these innovation strategies enhanced customer experience. The instruments that the researcher used were a pen and paper. This survey questionnaire was given to those who had already tried the restaurant where the study was conducted. The survey questionnaire was divided into four (4) parts. The first part of the questionnaire was used to validate the customers' profiles, which included their names (optional), their age, the date when they answered the questionnaire, and, of course, the filtering question of whether they tried the quick-service restaurant within the last year. The second part assessed the respondents' general beliefs and expectations regarding innovation strategies in a Quick-Service Restaurant. The next part assessed the respondents' interpretation of innovation strategies implemented by QSR about their general beliefs and expectations. The final part determined the perception of the customers regarding the innovation strategies in enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant.

#### ***Data Gathering Procedure***

The respondents had a sufficient amount of time to decide whether or not to participate in the study. Through this conveyance, mutual consent was acquired. Once the respondents accepted the invitation, the survey was given to them in their respective choice. Anytime they felt exposed or uneasy discussing their opinions on the study, they could choose not to respond to the questionnaire or not to participate in the study.

The instrument retrieval process started after the questionnaire was finished. The researchers first completed the data by tallying and tabulating it. After computing the data, the statistician presented the findings alongside relevant studies.

#### ***Statistical Treatment of Data***

This helped the researchers interpret and analyze the data they needed for their current study. The weighted mean was used to determine the innovation strategies for enhancing customer experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant in the town area of the Philippines.



**Weighted Mean** is a tool to compute the weight of the respondents' responses based on the questionnaire assigned during the data-gathering procedure. The weighted mean was used to determine the general beliefs and expectations of the customers regarding the innovation strategies of a Quick Service Restaurant, identify the interpretation of customers regarding the innovation strategies based on their beliefs and expectations, and finally, find out the customers' perceptions of the innovation strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant.

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Weighted Mean Formula:

$$\bar{x}_w = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

Where:

|             |   |                       |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|
| $\bar{x}_w$ | = | Weight Mean           |
| $f$         | = | frequency of response |
| $x$         | = | weight of response    |
| $n$         | = | number of respondents |

Likert Scale- This was used to determine the customers' general beliefs and expectations, their interpretation in reference to their beliefs and expectations, and their perceptions of the innovation strategies for enhancing their experience.

**Table 1. Likert Scale**

| Verbal Interpretation |               |                                  |                |            |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Scale                 | Weighted Mean | General Beliefs and Expectations | Interpretation | Perception |
| 4                     | 3.50 to 4.0   | Very High                        | Very High      | Very Good  |
| 3                     | 2.50 to 3.49  | High                             | High           | Good       |
| 2                     | 1.50 to 2.49  | Low                              | Low            | Poor       |
| 1                     | 1.00 to 1.49  | Very Low                         | Very Low       | very Poor  |

## **4 Result Discussion**

Based on the results of the study gathered from the data, the following findings were summarized. Generally, customers of a Quick-Service Restaurant have "high" general beliefs and expectations for both product and service innovation strategies. Specifically, customers strongly emphasized their general beliefs and expectations regarding

the ability to offer a diverse selection of food options, while showing the least interest in product innovation strategies aimed at maximizing “value for money”. Under service innovation, customers expressed high beliefs and expectations of the Quick-Service Restaurants' ability to offer order accessibility and transparency. On the other hand, the aspects of service speed and interactive order processing are least emphasized for enhancing customer experience, as they received the least beliefs and expectations from customers. Additionally, the customers of a Quick-Service Restaurant generally have “high” interpretations regarding the Product and Service Innovation Strategies about their general beliefs and expectations. On the other hand, the ability to personalize orders to suit individual preferences and the offerings of diverse food options are areas where respondents expressed high interpretation, whereas maximizing “value for money” receives the least interpretation compared to other indicators. Regarding service innovation strategies, customers have a high understanding of how these strategies can provide accessibility and transparency to their orders, while ensuring order efficiency receives the least attention. Furthermore, the customers perceived an “excellent” perception regarding the product innovation strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant. In contrast, they generally perceived a “good” perception of service innovation strategies. Under innovation strategies, enabling one’s ability to personalize orders is perceived as the highest, as it allows them to control their orders, which positively influences their perception and enhances their overall experience in the Quick-Service Restaurant. However, aspects like generating excitement and inclusiveness, as well as maximizing “value for money,” are least perceived in terms of enhancing customer experience, but they are still considered good. In service innovation strategies, providing order accessibility and transparency were perceived as the highest, making it crucial for enhancing customer experience. On the other hand, increasing service speed, though least perceived, still contributes positively to the overall customer experience.

**Table 2:** General Beliefs and Expectations regarding the Product Innovation Strategies in a Quick Service Restaurant

| <b>Product Innovation</b>                         | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Verbal Interpretation</b> |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Has the ability to personalize orders             | <b>3.28</b>          | High                         |
| Maximizes the value for money                     | <b>3.21</b>          | High                         |
| Offers a diverse selection of food options        | <b>3.33</b>          | High                         |
| Generates a sense of excitement and inclusiveness | <b>3.25</b>          | High                         |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                      | <b>3.27</b>          | High                         |

Table 2 represents the general beliefs and expectations of the customers regarding the product innovation strategies in Quick-Service Restaurants. The results of the survey highlight that customers in Quick Service Restaurants hold high general beliefs and expectations in offering different choices to the menu, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.33, which indicates a high view of the customers towards menu selection. This indicates that customers believe and expect that having a variety of food options to choose from, according to their likes and preferences, can contribute greater value to their experience in Quick-Service Restaurants. Respondents express heightened general beliefs and expectations that the QSR will continuously offer a menu that not only seeks to meet basic culinary needs but also offers a rich variety of food choices. A diverse food menu allows the customer to choose from a wide selection available at certain restaurants. Moreover, restaurants continuously innovate their products to present new tastes in the industry and enable customers to decide what they like best. Customers who have more beliefs and expectations on QSR can not just offer variety but are also focused and aligned with the diverse tastes of their customers. This is supported by the study of Jawabreh et al. (2018), which shows that customers appreciate diversity on the menu as it potentially influences customer purchasing behavior. This indicates the efforts of the restaurants to redesign or rethink the pre-existing menu and establish experienced decision-making when creating

a menu that shows design, colors, and diversification of menu play a pivotal role in acknowledging customer needs and wants, resulting in a positive judgment. In the context of the study, the customers believe and expect that the product innovation strategies offered by the QSR, especially those that facilitate diverse food selection, can bring the greatest value. This factor emerges as a great tool for influencing and shaping their respective experiences, which may be seen as a keen aspect of creating memorable experiences.

However, respondents have the least general beliefs and expectations of product innovation efforts made by the QSR on maximizing the “value for money” of each product they offer, although the results still rated as high obtaining a weighted mean of 3.21, this means that customer generally believes and expects that product innovation can offer a maximization value for money; however, some respondents do not share the same view. Customers believe and expect good value for the money they spend, thinking that QSR might not only offer convenience but also add a good product that satisfies their preferences. Customers, as it seems, have varied views when it comes to the money they spend on their experiences. Garnering the least numerical result can be an indication that not all customers believed and expected that the newly introduced product in the market is good for how much of money they spent. However, since the verbal interpretation still shows high interpretation, this simply means that there are customers who also believe and expect that the money they have spent in QSR could be reciprocated by the establishment. Customers also value the money they spend on a certain product rather than just focusing on the quality, as, according to their prior knowledge, it could also help to enhance their experience. This is supported by the study of Slack et al. (2020) in which indicates that the emotional value of customers to the product they purchase does not merely depend on its quality but is also supported by the price/ value for money, which could lead to positive judgments of their experience. The study’s results show that social value (perceived quality) and functional value (value for money/ price) are the factors customers always value, especially in fast food restaurants. However, the lack of one gives higher chances of negative judgments. Therefore, restaurants must emphasize this factor when promoting such products to the industry.

The overall weighted mean of 3.27 indicates high general beliefs and expectations of the respondents to the QSR efforts to introduce product innovation strategies. They firmly believe and expect the four indicators of product innovation strategies in the Quick-Service Restaurants. Their high level of belief and expectation is attributed to their prior knowledge about what to expect in these four indicators, indicating strong anticipation of the positive outcomes these indicators could bring to their overall experience.

**Table 3:** General Beliefs and Expectations regarding the Service Innovation Strategies in a Quick-Service Restaurant

| <b>Service Innovation</b>                     | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Verbal Interpretation</b> |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Increases service speed                       | <b>3.25</b>          | High                         |
| Ensures order efficiency                      | <b>3.30</b>          | High                         |
| Generates interactive order processing        | <b>3.25</b>          | High                         |
| Provides order accessibility and transparency | <b>3.37</b>          | High                         |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                  | <b>3.29</b>          | High                         |

Table 3 illustrates the general beliefs and expectations of the respondents to the service innovation strategies of Quick-Service Restaurants. Respondents showed the highest general beliefs and expectations that service innovation strategies can provide order accessibility and transparency, obtaining a weighted mean of 3.37. This means that customers place significant beliefs and expectations that QSRs' service innovation strategies could offer easy access to up-to-date order information and processes, enabling them to monitor their orders and streamline ordering processing, resulting in an enhanced experience. This also implies that customers also value being informed about their order status, and not just by purchasing the products offered by the QSR. Being

informed of the order status is where customers have access to their orders, which involves a sophisticated and comprehensive system or technology that shows the orders being served or being processed, and the rider's whereabouts in real-time are also transparent during the delivery phase. It is supported by the study of H. Chen et al. (2020) found that factors such as ease of use, transparent order processing, and convenience have a direct effect on customers' degree of enjoyment and purchase intention, leading to a positive judgment of how the service was provided. The perceived judgement of the customers was solely based on the efforts of providing ease and convenience while being able to communicate effectively what customers' needs and wants are, and providing information.

Nevertheless, the results revealed that "speeding up the service" and "generating interactive order processing" are the least believed and expected to contribute a greater value for enhancing their experiences. The results indicated that two aspects both garnered a weighted mean of 3.25. Despite obtaining the lowest results, it is noted that the results are still interpreted as high, signifying that respondents also believe and expect that interactive order processing and the speed of the service can also contribute to enhancing their experience, as this can provide smooth transactions among customers. The two indicators can enable the customer to reduce queue time while also ensuring their orders are handled first-hand. Speeding up the service is the provision of service efficiently, in which the use of technologies was mainly introduced, as this could be a great tool for reducing wait times. This also generates interactive ordering processing, which allows the customers to have accessibility to these technologies, enabling them to order by themselves interactively. Although these two aspects can also be considered critical when formulating a service innovation strategy, respondents may have a general belief and expectation that this factor contributes least to their experiences based on their prior knowledge. This result is supported by the study of Lee & Oh (2022), who discussed that the growth of technology-based systems enables restaurants to reduce the time consumed when ordering, paying, and receiving orders, which could enable efficient processes in certain fast-food restaurants. The study revealed that technology such as kiosks, where customers can place orders on their own, enhances customer convenience and usability while also reducing the wait times, which directly influence the overall perception of the customers in their experience. Moreover, the area of "generating interactive order processing" is supported by the study of Rastegar (2018), in which it was stated that customers value this as it can help them to choose their orders on their own, place orders on their preferred time, choose payment method, and pay without any requiring assistance of the employees.

The combined weighted mean of 3.29 indicates that customers have high general beliefs and expectations with regard to the service innovation strategies of QSR. The results revealed that customers believe and expect that these four factors could bring the greatest value for their experience. Although order accessibility and transparency garnered the highest results, as the other factors also resulted in high, this means that respondents also expect and believe that other factors could also relatively help positive outcomes in their overall experience.

**Table 4:** Interpretations regarding the Product Innovation Strategies in a Quick-Service Restaurant about their general beliefs and expectations

| <b>Product Innovation</b>                         | <b>Weighted Mean</b> | <b>Verbal Interpretation</b> |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Has the ability to personalize orders             | <b>3.29</b>          | High                         |
| Maximizes the value for money                     | <b>3.19</b>          | High                         |
| Offers a diverse selection of food options        | <b>3.29</b>          | High                         |
| Generates a sense of excitement and inclusiveness | <b>3.24</b>          | High                         |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                      | <b>3.25</b>          | High                         |

Table 4 presents customers' interpretation of the product innovation strategies employed by the QSR based on their experiences that are aligned with their general beliefs and expectations. The results revealed that respondents hold a high interpretation with regard to their ability to "personalize orders" according to their preferences and try

diverse “selections of food options”. Both achieved a weighted mean of 3.29. This suggests that respondents interpret these two factors based on their experiences about their general beliefs and expectations. The highest weighted means imply that these two aspects, especially the evidence of being consistent with the diverse food selection, are still high from general beliefs and expectations, and to the customer interpretation, which solidifies the contribution of this factor to the customer experience. Based on the actual experience of the customer in reference to their general beliefs and expectations, their ability to customize their orders enhances their experience. This indicates that allowing the customer to be able to choose products and what to pair with their orders brings great value. This implies that by this factor, they can personalize their orders with a combination of other products according to what they desire. Moreover, the result also shows that as customers try different food selections, they are more likely to have a positive judgment towards product innovation about their general beliefs and expectations. This indicates that customers want something new rather than sticking with what is already in the industry or what is typically being served, as they look for a new and exciting product. These two factors complement each other, as it is highlighted that customers are continuously trying something new. This was supported by the study of Park & Kang (2021), as it presents that customers express a positive expression to diversity rather than conformity. Fast-casual restaurants are known for providing a full customization order, making it easier to satisfy customers because a highly tailored menu meets the diverse preferences of customers while also offering something new in the market. It also shows that customers express a sense of control as they are involved in their orders while still interacting with service employees or by merely using systems. This can enhance positive service experiences, which will noticeably reflect the customer's interpretation.

About the study, based on customers' actual experiences, the product innovation strategies about their general beliefs and expectations, particularly offering diverse food selection and the ability to personalize orders, highlight customers' most valued aspects when dining in a QSR were decided by their preference shaped by their own experiences. Since the customer has a lot to choose from on the QSR's menu, it increases the likelihood that customers find a dish that suits their desired preferences and tastes.

The results showed that customers interpret the value for money that the QSRs offered to customers as the least significant aspect. Despite garnering a weighted mean of 3.19, which is still considered high, it is still labeled as the least interpreted to heighten customer experience. The respondents express different viewpoints with regard to this factor. Based on their actual experiences, some respondents interpret that the product offered by the QSR did not justify the money they spent on the experience. However, as the results are high, therefore, there are some respondents who think that the product innovation introduced maximized the value for money and could positively enhance the overall dining experience. They find the products offered by the business are budget-friendly or keeping the cost down while still ensuring food quality. However, since QSRs are also known for offering budget-friendly and convenient services, some general beliefs and expectations were not met. This was supported by the study of Smith et al. (2020); according to the results, there is compelling evidence that shows negative perceptions of customers toward the statistical approach to what food they have tried. Some customers do not find their orders as “value for money,” risking the dining frequency, resulting in a negative perception. Thus, it was stated in the study that attributes to ensuring “value for money” will enable a positive perception. The study emphasizes the importance of money for creating a good experience and not just merely depending on the quantity of products offered.

Garnering 3.25 as a weighted mean and interpreted as high simply indicates that the interpretation of the customer based on their experience about their general beliefs and expectations of the product innovation strategies of QSR was that those four factors contribute to the success that customer beliefs and expectations. Thus, the customer's ability to personalize orders receives the highest weighted mean, while the other factors still receive high interpretation, signifying that customers interpreted that those factors can all bring value in a QSR.

**Table 5:** Interpretations regarding the Service Innovation Strategies in a Quick-Service Restaurant about their general beliefs and expectations

| Service Innovation | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------|



|   |             |      |
|---|-------------|------|
| Increases service speed                       | <b>3.24</b> | High |
| Ensures order efficiency                      | <b>3.23</b> | High |
| Generates interactive order processing        | <b>3.25</b> | High |
| Provides order accessibility and transparency | <b>3.35</b> | High |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                  | <b>3.27</b> | High |

Table 5 shows the interpretation of the customers of the service innovation strategies by the QSR, and how they understand these factors based on their experience in reference to their general beliefs and expectations. Receiving a weighted mean of 3.35, the customer holds a high interpretation of how these service innovation strategies can provide accessibility and transparency to their orders. Respondents see this as a key factor as they can control the mix of their orders, see the status of their orders, whether being processed or being delivered, give convenience as customers can plan when the schedules of their orders are scheduled, and notify them to their orders are ready for pick up. In this regard, customers also value the information about their orders that the QSRs provide to make their dining experience all at ease, rather than solely focusing on what their order is. They also want to see the status update, in which order accessibility and transparency are usually powered by technologies, as customers can locate their orders in real-time through some mobile applications. This is supported by the study of Rahim et. al (2023), who suggest that digitized restaurants are more efficient and effective than traditional restaurants. Most customers agreed that digitized restaurants made it easier to track their orders while also reducing the time they waited. The results indicate that with the help of these technology-operated services, it is easier for the customer to be updated on the status of their orders, providing more convenience in tracking their orders, rather than the traditional service offered by traditional restaurants. Considering that these are considerably helpful for gaining positive judgments among the customers, which enhances their dining experience.

Within the study's framework, customers interpreted that being able to see the status of their orders, either the whereabouts of the delivery rider or the customer's access to their order's scheduled pick-up and delivery drop-off, or even personalizing orders at ease, plays a pivotal role in enhancing their experience in the QSR.

However, the results showed that QSR's efforts in giving service innovation strategies for ensuring order efficiency received the lowest numerical results. Garnering a weighted mean of 3.23, it was marked as the least factor, but despite that, it still results in a high which indicates that customers still see this factor as a contributing factor, although not all the respondents share the same views. Based on their experience, some customers receive free errors of their orders, which are complete and accurate; this could generate a positive experience as customers receive a satisfying service provision; however, the result also highlights such instances that customers receive wrong orders, which may result in negative experiences. The marking of the order efficiency still indicates high interpretation, which simply means that the customer views this and that it will also contribute to the success of enhancing their overall experience; however, it indicates room for improvement for the QSR's efforts. Order efficiency is when a customer receives an accurate order. It involves ensuring the entire order lifecycle, from receiving orders to processing and fulfilling them accurately when the orders are ready to receive. This also indicates if the time elapsed was efficient when a customer places their orders and when they will receive them. This is supported by the study of Zhu et al. (2020), explaining that effective management of Order Fulfillment Cycle Time (OCFD) will provide ease of transaction in such in-demand restaurants, where it ensures the accuracy of customers. OFCD refers to the time from placing orders up to receiving the order, while also ensuring that an accurate order is placed as well. This could generate a positive perception among the customers, whereas restaurants promise to deliver the orders efficiently.

The results show an overall weighted mean of 3.27, which stipulates that the efforts of the QSRs to introduce service innovation strategies to their customers serve as contributing factors for enhancing their overall experience. Thus, order accessibility and transparency received the highest interpretation; the other factors also received high interpretation, indicating that these efforts generate positive interaction among customer to provide a remarkable experience throughout their journey.

**Table 6:** Perception regarding the Product Innovation Strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant

| Product Innovation                                 | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| Enabling one's ability to personalize orders       | <b>3.50</b>   | Very Good             |
| Maximizing the value for money                     | <b>3.37</b>   | Good                  |
| Offering a diverse selection of food options       | <b>3.47</b>   | Good                  |
| Generating a sense of excitement and inclusiveness | <b>3.37</b>   | Good                  |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                       | <b>3.43</b>   | Good                  |

Table 6 reveals the perception of the customers of the product service strategies and whether these factors indeed contribute to enhancing the customer experience in the QSR. Respondents view the service innovation strategies as it can enable them to personalize their respective orders, garnering a weighted mean of 3.50, which indicates this as very good. This result shows consistency from their interpretation in that allowing customers to personalize their order could bring the greatest value to their experience, resulting in positive instances. The relationship between allowing personalization to orders and positive customer perception is crucial to each other. It suggests that when customers can control and customize the combination of their orders, the a higher likelihood of perceiving this as a good value for enhancing their experience. These instances positively reflect the QSR approach towards introducing new and improved products. This result also highlights that QSR is successful for enhancing customer experience through emphasizing the importance of customer-centric strategies. Garnering the same result as the highest factor in table 2.1, this was supported by the study of Ahuja et. al (2021), in which the study stated that as the people who eats continuously evolve their preferences and customers seeks to control their orders, restaurants who offer food delivery that shows menu engineering or building up custom menus will enable customers to choose their orders in freedom while ensuring that food allergies and taste they like was considered, resulting to the opportunities of growing revenues and satisfied customers.

About the study, enabling customers to personalize their own orders, from choosing what they desire combination to the individual orders, this shows as the highest aspect when it comes to enhancing customer experience in the QSR. Customers can feel more valued, and their desired unique and individual requirements when visiting such QSRs are met. In essence, the QSR's efforts to tailor to the changing customer preferences are a strategic success reflected by the positive perception of customers of this factor.

Despite that, the results underscore that having a weighted mean of 3.37, generating a sense of excitement and inclusiveness among its customers, and maximizing the "value for money" are the least important aspects for enhancing customer experience, making this good only, although this still implies positive results. It implies that customers may not uniformly express a heightened sense of emotional excitement and inclusiveness upon trying the new products offered. It is conceived that product innovation does not generally evoke a change of emotional approach to this. However, looking at the nature of emotional responses, it is essentially noted that individuals vary in preferences and reactions, which is why the results as "good" and still imply positive outcomes. There are still customers who feel excitement towards the new product offered and inclusiveness in the emergence of market trends. Additionally, the results also show that customers see "value for money" as the least aspect contributing to their experience; this may be because the products they purchased did not justify the money they spent. However, the verbal interpretation of this aspect as good still indicates that, according to their respective experience, there is still a positive perception with regard to the financial proposition of the product innovation, as seen as a contributing factor for enhancing their experience. In line with this result, this was supported by the study of Abatayo et al. (2022), the results showed that participants responded that when buying a certain product, even if the customers can afford it, they still look for its value for money and if it is worth spending money on. If they

think that the products they will purchase show value for money, the chances of patronizing the product, which can enable them to have a good or bad perception.

The overall weighted mean of 3.43 stipulated “good” from the customer perception in trying these product innovation strategies, which revealed that although the product innovation strategies bring positive experiences, the room for improvement is noticeable for the success of enhancing the customer's overall experience. The acknowledgement of this positive impact, together with the areas of refinement recognized by the customer, emphasizes the dynamic belief, expectation, interpretation, and perception, and also suggests opportunities for the QSRs on what to focus on to further elevate their efforts in enhancing customer experience.

**Table 7:** Perception regarding the Service Innovation Strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant

| Service Innovation                           | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|--|---------------|-----------------------|
| Increase service speed                       | <b>3.26</b>   | Good                  |
| Ensure order efficiency                      | <b>3.35</b>   | Good                  |
| Generate interactive order processing        | <b>3.35</b>   | Good                  |
| Provide order accessibility and transparency | <b>3.48</b>   | Good                  |
| <b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>                 | <b>3.36</b>   | Good                  |

Table 7 shows the customer perception of the service innovation strategies of the QSR and reveals the pivotal factor for enhancing customer experience. Providing order accessibility and transparency shows strong consistency with the general beliefs and expectations, interpretation, and perception, garnering a weighted mean of 3.48. This simply shows that among the four factors in the table, “order accessibility and transparency” was the pivotal factor for enhancing customer experience. Although the rating is good, it is worth noting that this factor gains the highest result right from the very start, which solidifies its contribution to the customer experience. This factor ranked highest in consecutive, revealing that for the view of the customer, once they access their order status and the other essential information to receive their orders, the higher the instances of positive perception, resulting in an enhanced customer experience. Customers, it seems, view this as a crucial factor to consider when making a purchase, and it makes the overall process all at ease. This is supported by the study of Kumar (2020), in which the results showed that as the technologies began to flourish, the restaurant industry adapted these to be able to be competitive in the industry. Moreover, the study also shows that customers also begun to accept these drastic changes and that it affects their purchasing behavior. The study shows that with technological advancement that enables access to information, it has become a great factor in attracting more customers.

Within the study’s framework, this emerges as a pivotal factor for enhancing customer experience. This could bring the greatest positive instances where customers find this convenient, easy to access, and enables them to see their order status in real-time. Service Innovation strategies that provide information to customers hinge on the success of the QSR to effectively elevate customer experiences.

However, the results show that increasing “service speed” is the least factor; nonetheless, it was still marked as good. It simply indicates that these service innovation strategies can increase speed, such as reducing queue time and time-efficient order processing. While this may not be viewed as the primary driver based on the result, the good perception still underscores its role in the enhancement of the customer experience. Customers view that with the help of the service innovation strategies, the time consumed for ordering, processing, and receiving their orders was efficiently managed, thereby contributing easily to the overall process that results in an enhanced customer experience. Increasing service speed is where restaurants create a strategy or invest in powered technology to speed up the overall service provision, starting from receiving orders, order fulfillment, and dispatch of orders, despite an overwhelming scenario, especially in fast food restaurants. This is similar to the study

conducted by Shahril et al. (2021), where the results have shown that customers want a faster service, so the time of waiting was effectively reduced. Shorter waiting time and shorter queue time will influence the customer experience and encourage them to patronize the product and the establishment.

The overall weighted mean of 3.36, labelling all the factors as “good,” implies that service innovation strategies could possibly enhance customer experiences by effectively executing these. However, as the results only show good perception, it is good to note that there is room for more refinement and where to focus so that it will be achievable to enhance the customer's experience.

## 5 Conclusion

This study focused on the customers' perception regarding innovation strategies for enhancing their experience in a Quick-Service Restaurant. From the analysis of the results and findings, the customer's perception regarding innovation strategies spanning both product and service innovation for enhancing their experience in a QSR is shaped in reference to their general beliefs and expectations, down to the interpretation of their experience regarding the indicators provided. Considering the information above, the researchers conclude that product and service innovation strategies, specifically the personalization of orders and being provided with order accessibility and transparency, lead to enhancing the overall experience of customers. These factors allow customers to feel a greater sense of control, convenience, and satisfaction during their dining journey. Moreover, based on its perceived assessment in enhancing customer experience, it is further concluded that by the introduction of QSRs innovation strategies, the customers feel valued, as it brings positive instances for enhancing the experience of customers. Ultimately, the study highlights the crucial importance for QSRs to continuously improve and adapt their innovation strategies to tailor to the customers' diverse needs, preferences and adapt to technological advancement to gain a competitive advantage and enhance customer experience in a highly competitive food industry.

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