International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

Customer Feedback and Service Enhancement: Basis for a Strategic Development Plan in Selected Fast-Food Restaurants in Nueva Ecija

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Abstract
This study evaluates the role of customer feedback in driving service enhancement and strategic development in the fast-food industry. Focusing on selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, the research examines key service factors such as food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff friendliness, and cleanliness. Using a structured survey questionnaire, data were gathered from customers to assess how feedback influences service delivery and improvement strategies.

The findings reveal that customer feedback significantly contributes to enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Among the identified service factors, food quality, staff friendliness, and order accuracy emerged as the most critical elements influencing customer loyalty and repeat visits. Based on the results, a strategic development plan was formulated to help fast-food restaurants effectively utilize customer feedback in addressing service gaps, fostering continuous improvement, and maintaining competitiveness in the market.

Introduction
Customer satisfaction is a vital indicator of service success and long-term sustainability in the fast-food industry. In this highly competitive environment, customer feedback serves as an essential mechanism for identifying strengths, detecting weaknesses, and guiding the implementation of effective service strategies. Feedback collected through surveys, online reviews, and direct interactions provides critical insights into customer perceptions of food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff attitude, and cleanliness. When systematically managed, this feedback becomes the foundation for both service enhancement and strategic planning.

In Talavera, Nueva Ecija, the presence of established fast-food chains such as McDonald's and Chowking highlights the growing demand for affordable, accessible, and efficient dining options. With intensifying competition, these restaurants must not only maintain service consistency but also adapt to evolving customer expectations. Integrating customer feedback into operations enables fast-food establishments to improve service quality, strengthen customer loyalty, and secure a competitive advantage.

This study, Customer Feedback and Service Enhancement: Basis for a Strategic Development Plan in Selected Fast-Food Restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, investigates how feedback is collected, analyzed, and utilized to guide service improvements. It further aims to develop a strategic plan that aligns customer insights with operational practices, offering a structured approach for both established and emerging food businesses to thrive in a dynamic market.

Conceptual Framework
The framework of this study is anchored on the idea that customer feedback serves as a critical foundation for service enhancement in the fast-food industry. Customer feedback, obtained through various channels such as surveys, social media,

and direct communication, acts as the independent variable that influences the overall service improvement of selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija.
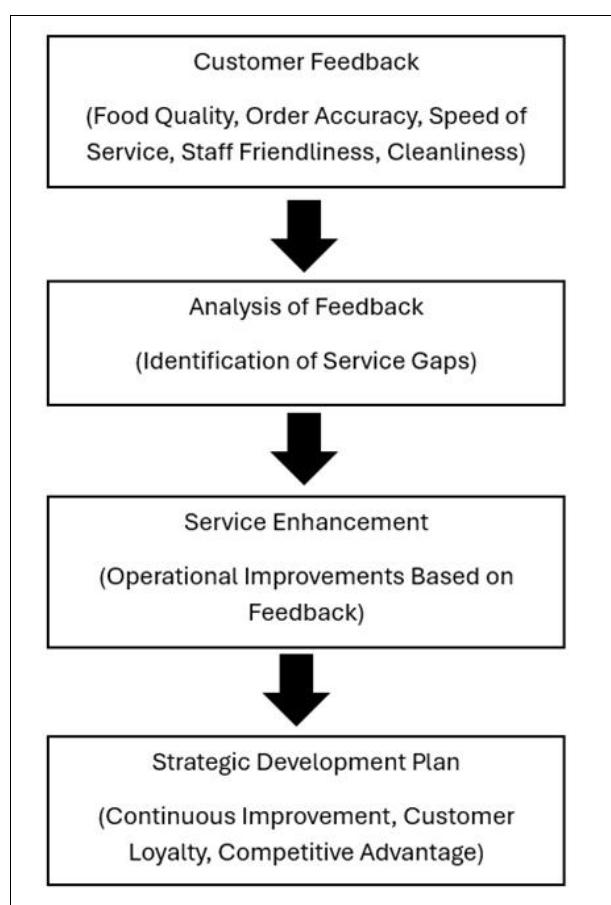

Fig 1: Research Paradigm

The framework illustrates how customer feedback directly impacts key service factors—food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff friendliness, and cleanliness. These service factors act as mediating variables, reflecting how feedback is processed and translated into measurable aspects of customer experience.

The process component of the framework highlights the systematic approach taken by fast-food restaurants to prioritize and act upon customer feedback. This involves analyzing collected feedback, identifying critical issues, and developing strategies for improvement.

The dependent variable in this study is service enhancement, which is measured through increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat patronage. The feedback loop ensures that improvements are sustained and continuously refined.

Finally, the framework culminates in the proposed strategic development plan, which integrates customer insights into actionable strategies for operational efficiency and competitive advantage. This plan serves as the practical application of the study, guiding both established and emerging fast-food restaurants in aligning their services with customer needs and expectations.

Statement of the Problem
This study aims to determine how customer feedback can be systematically utilized to enhance service quality and guide the creation of a strategic development plan for selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How may the respondents be described in terms of:
   1.1 Sex
   1.2 Age
   1.3 Student Status
   1.4 Frequency of Visit
   1.5 Type of Customer Feedback Given
2. How may the fast-food restaurants improve their service in terms of:
   2.1 Food Quality
   2.2 Order Accuracy
   2.3 Speed of Service
   2.4 Staff Friendliness
   2.5 Cleanliness
3. How can collected customer feedback be prioritized and acted upon to ensure effective service improvement in fast-food restaurants?
4. What strategic development plan may be proposed for selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija based on the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation
This study focuses on examining how customer feedback influences service enhancement in selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. The research highlights five key service factors: food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff friendliness, and cleanliness. Data were collected from customers of selected fast-food chains within Talavera during a defined period to capture relevant insights and trends.

The study does not include other variables that may influence service quality, such as pricing strategies, employee training, or broader organizational policies. Furthermore, while the findings provide valuable insights for fast-food businesses, they may not be generalizable to industries outside the food service sector. The primary focus remains on creating a strategic development plan based on customer feedback to improve service quality within the specific context of fast-food restaurants.

Research Methodology
This research employed a **descriptive design** to investigate the role of customer feedback in service enhancement and its application as a basis for a strategic development plan for selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija.

▪ **Respondents:** Customers were selected using **simple random sampling** to ensure a representative sample.
▪ **Instrument:** A structured **survey questionnaire**, consisting of both closed-ended (Likert-scale) and open-ended questions, was utilized to measure perceptions of food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff friendliness, and cleanliness.
▪ **Data Gathering:** Proper permits were secured prior to data collection. Questionnaires were distributed and retrieved within the study period.
▪ **Data Analysis:** Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. A four-point Likert scale was applied to assess customer satisfaction levels. Qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to provide deeper insights.

- **Ethical Considerations:** Informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed.

The results of the analysis served as the foundation for formulating a **strategic development plan** aimed at enhancing customer experience and ensuring sustainable service improvement.

Results and Discussion
1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution as to the Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 18	3	6%
19–24	38	76%
25–34	9	18%
35–44	0	0%
45 and above	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Most respondents (76%) were between 19–24 years old, representing students and early professionals. This demographic values convenience, affordability, and social interaction, suggesting that fast-food strategies should focus on budget-friendly promotions and digital engagement.

Table 1.2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution as to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	36%
Female	32	64%
Total	50	100%

The majority of respondents were female (64%). This indicates that service improvements, such as healthier menu options and enhanced cleanliness, should be prioritized to align with the preferences of female customers, who often influence dining decisions.

Table 1.3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution as to Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
High School Graduate	10	20%
College/Vocational	39	78%
College Graduate	1	2%
Total	50	100%

The majority of respondents (78%) were college/vocational students, confirming that students represent the largest consumer segment. Strategic plans should therefore focus on affordability, speed, and accessibility.

Table 1.4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution as to Frequency of Visit

Frequency of Visit	Frequency	Percentage
Every day	5	10%
Once a week	30	60%
Twice a week	11	22%
Thrice a week	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Most respondents (60%) visit fast-food restaurants once a week. This reflects a steady flow of repeat customers, emphasizing the need for consistent service delivery.

Table 1.5: Frequency and Percentage Distribution as to Common Feedback/Complaints

Feedback/Complaint	Frequency	Percentage
Food Quality	28	56%
Order Accuracy	2	4%
Speed of Service	14	28%
Cleanliness	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Food quality (56%) was the most common feedback, followed by speed of service (28%). This confirms that maintaining consistent taste, freshness, and portion sizes should be the top priority in strategic planning.

2. How may the fast-food restaurants improve their service?

Table 2.1: Customer Feedback on Food Quality *(Dependent Variable: Service Improvement — Indicator: Food Quality)*

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The food served meets my expectations in terms of taste and flavor.	3.18	Agree
The food I received was fresh and made with high-quality ingredients.	3.12	Agree
The portion sizes of the food are appropriate for the price paid.	3.20	Agree
The food was served at the correct temperature (hot food was hot, cold food was cold).	3.44	Strongly Agree
The presentation of the food was appealing.	3.20	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.23	Agree

The respondents generally agreed (AWM = 3.23) that food quality meets expectations, particularly with food served at the correct temperature (WM = 3.44). This implies that while food freshness, portion size, and presentation are satisfactory, consistency in overall food quality remains an essential area for continuous improvement.

Table 2.2: Customer Feedback on Order Accuracy *(Dependent Variable: Service Improvement — Indicator: Order Accuracy)*

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
My order was delivered accurately with no mistakes or missing items.	3.20	Agree
Special requests (e.g., adding/removing ingredients) were followed correctly.	3.40	Agree
I still receive incorrect or incomplete orders.	2.80	Agree
I received unintended additional items in my order.	2.80	Agree
My orders are inaccurate during peak hours (lunch/dinner rush).	2.78	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.00	Agree

With an AWM of 3.00, order accuracy is the lowest-rated indicator among service factors. Although respondents agreed that most orders are accurate, recurring mistakes—especially during peak hours—highlight the need for improved order-checking systems.

Table 2.3: Customer Feedback on Speed of Service *(Dependent Variable: Service Improvement — Indicator: Speed of Service)*

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The time it took to receive my food was reasonable.	3.16	Agree
The staff worked efficiently to serve me quickly.	3.16	Agree
Service was slow during peak hours.	3.80	Strongly Agree
I was satisfied with the waiting time for my order.	3.20	Agree
I received my orders within the expected time frame.	3.20	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	**3.30**	**Strongly Agree**

Speed of service received the highest rating (AWM = 3.30), with respondents strongly agreeing that service remains efficient even at busy hours. This demonstrates that fast-food restaurants in Talavera excel in delivering timely service, which is a strong driver of customer satisfaction.

Table 2.4: Customer Feedback on Staff Friendliness *(Dependent Variable: Service Improvement — Indicator: Staff Friendliness)*

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The staff were friendly.	3.18	Agree
The staff were welcoming.	3.22	Agree
The staff guided me through their menu.	3.12	Agree
The staff were helpful.	3.10	Agree
The staff were easy to find when I needed them.	3.10	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	**3.14**	**Agree**

Staff friendliness was rated positively (AWM = 3.14), showing that customers generally view employees as approachable and helpful. However, the slightly lower scores compared to other service areas suggest opportunities for improvement in personalized customer engagement and attentiveness.

Table 2.5: Customer Feedback on Cleanliness *(Dependent Variable: Service Improvement — Indicator: Cleanliness)*

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The dining area was clean and well-maintained.	3.16	Agree
The restroom facilities were clean and hygienic.	3.20	Agree
The food I received was clean.	3.22	Agree
The staff wore proper and clean uniforms.	3.22	Agree
The tableware/dishware were clean (plates, utensils, glasses).	3.18	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	**3.20**	**Agree**

Cleanliness was rated favorably (AWM = 3.20), reflecting consistent sanitation practices in dining areas, restrooms, and food handling. This underscores hygiene as a maintained strength, though continuous monitoring is necessary to uphold customer trust.

3. How can collected customer feedback be prioritized and acted upon to ensure effective service improvement in fast-food restaurants?

Table 3.1 shows that **Food Quality (56%)** and **Speed of Service (28%)** are the most frequently cited feedback, making them **top priorities** for immediate improvement. Cleanliness (12%) remains moderately important, while Order Accuracy (4%)—though less frequent—should not be overlooked, as even small mistakes can impact overall satisfaction. Restaurants can maximize customer loyalty by addressing the highest-priority issues first, while continuously monitoring other service factors.

Table 3.1: Prioritization of Customer Feedback for Service Improvement (Independent Variable: Customer Feedback — Dependent Variable: Service Improvement)

Feedback Category	Frequency (%)	Priority Level	Recommended Action
Food Quality	56%	**High**	Standardize recipes, regular quality checks, monitor freshness of ingredients
Speed of Service	28%	**High**	Increase staff during peak hours, streamline order processing system
Cleanliness	12%	**Moderate**	Conduct routine inspections, enforce stricter hygiene protocols
Order Accuracy	4%	**Low**	Improve POS/order checking system, provide training on attention to detail

4. Strategic Development Plan Proposed for selected fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija based on the findings of the study

Table 4.1: Strategic Development Plan for Selected Fast-Food Restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija

Key Area of Feedback	Findings from the Study	Strategic Action Plan	Expected Outcome
Food Quality	Customers rated food quality positively but emphasized consistency in freshness, taste, and portion sizes.	- Implement strict kitchen quality checks. - Train staff in food preparation standards. - Regularly review supplier quality.	Consistent taste, freshness, and portion control leading to higher customer satisfaction.
Order Accuracy	Lowest-rated area; errors occur especially during peak hours.	- Introduce order double-checking system. - Use digital order tracking screens. - Assign accuracy monitors per shift.	Reduced order errors, increased trust in service, improved customer loyalty.
Speed of Service	Rated as the strongest area, with customers satisfied even during peak hours.	- Maintain efficient staff scheduling. - Continue use of queue management systems. - Provide incentives for staff efficiency.	Sustained fast service, reinforcing customer loyalty and repeat visits.
Staff Friendliness	Rated positively but lower compared to other areas.	- Conduct regular customer service training. - Implement reward system for positive feedback.	Improved customer-staff interactions, friendlier atmosphere, higher customer

		- Encourage personalized greetings and assistance.	retention.
Cleanliness	Rated favorably but requires consistent monitoring.	- Conduct hourly sanitation checks. - Assign cleaning responsibilities per shift. - Use visible sanitation logs to reassure customers.	Improved hygiene perception, compliance with health standards, increased trust.
Feedback Collection	Customers prefer simple, accessible ways to give feedback.	- Provide multiple feedback channels (comment cards, QR surveys, social media). - Offer small incentives (discounts, loyalty points) for feedback. - Create a feedback analysis team.	Higher feedback participation, stronger data-driven decisions, continuous service improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendation
Conclusion
The study revealed that customer feedback serves as a critical tool in identifying areas of improvement for fast-food restaurants in Talavera, Nueva Ecija. Respondents highlighted key service dimensions such as food quality, order accuracy, speed of service, staff friendliness, and cleanliness as the most influential factors in shaping customer satisfaction. Analysis of the collected feedback showed that while customers generally recognized the value of fast-food restaurants in providing affordable and accessible meals, gaps in service delivery were evident. These include inconsistencies in food preparation, occasional delays in service, and varying levels of customer engagement by staff.

The findings affirm that continuous integration of customer feedback into management decisions can lead to operational improvements, stronger customer loyalty, and enhanced competitiveness. Moreover, the development of a strategic plan anchored on customer insights ensures that restaurants remain responsive to evolving consumer needs and market demands.

Recommendations
1. **Establish a Structured Feedback System** – Restaurants should implement systematic tools such as suggestion boxes, digital surveys, or customer feedback applications to gather real-time insights.
2. **Prioritize Staff Training** – Regular training on customer service, food safety, and order accuracy is recommended to minimize service gaps and enhance overall customer experience.
3. **Improve Operational Efficiency** – Restaurants should adopt standardized procedures and technology-driven solutions (e.g., digital ordering systems, kitchen display monitors) to reduce waiting times and improve order accuracy.
4. **Strengthen Cleanliness and Hygiene Practices** – Enhanced sanitation protocols and visible cleaning routines will not only meet customer expectations but also build trust and confidence in food safety.
5. **Develop a Strategic Service Improvement Plan** – Based on the study's findings, a long-term plan focusing on continuous service enhancement, customer loyalty programs, and competitive pricing should be implemented.
6. **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation** – Management should conduct periodic assessments of feedback-driven initiatives to measure progress, identify new gaps, and adjust strategies accordingly.

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