



Investigating the Key Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

Case of Start-up Restaurant in Finland

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The restaurant sector in Finland has seen growth, However, start-up restaurants face hurdles, including intense competition, elevated operating costs, and limited brand visibility. Many fail within first three years due to financial instability and inadequate customer satisfaction. This research “investigates key factors influencing customer satisfaction in start-up restaurants”, using Company X, a fried chicken restaurant in Tampere, as a case study.

The study highlights four independent variables: marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization, with customer satisfaction being the dependent variable. A quantitative approach was taken, with the help of a survey collecting data from 50 participants, including dine-in customers. It uses a Likert scale to assess variables, and data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression techniques

The results showed menu innovation strongly influenced customer satisfaction, highlighting the need for unique and attractive menu options. Marketing strategies had a notable positive effect, especially via digital platforms and targeted advertising. Location indicated a moderate link with satisfaction, stressing accessibility and convenience as key factors. Digitalization, through online ordering systems and social media interaction, proved critical for improving customer experience. Regression analysis validated the combined impact of these variables.

The study concludes by providing actionable recommendations to optimize marketing efforts, innovate menu offerings, leverage digital tools, and improve customer experience. These findings contribute to understanding the unique challenges faced by start-up restaurants and offer practical strategies to enhance customer satisfaction, ensuring long-term growth and sustainability in Finland’s competitive restaurant industry.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Start-up Restaurants, Marketing Strategies, Menu Innovation, Digitalization.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

From changes in consumer preferences to an increase in disposable income, Finnish restaurants have dramatically increased in demand for unique experiences within the last ten years (Garieri, 2023). As stated in the report by the Finnish Hospitality Association, the sector contributed more than €15.3 billion to the national economy in 2023, showing the importance of this business to the economic landscape of the country (MARA, 2024). However, it should be noticed that the growing competition within the industry and the consequent high costs of operations have combined to ensure that restaurant startups are so burdensome to maintain profitability.

The competitive market, through which most startup restaurants have low financial means and hence no brand recognition and poor customer loyalty, exacerbates the survival of the restaurants (Lundén et al., 2021). According to studies, most new restaurants in Finland go bankrupt within the first three years due to financial vulnerability and poor customer satisfaction (Arslan et al., 2022). This is further exacerbated by the rapid growth of established restaurant chains that often have control over the best locations and benefit from economies of scale, making conditions even more unfavourable for start-ups.

Furthermore, the digitalization of the restaurant business-additional online food ordering platforms, social media marketing, and digital payment systems-offer new opportunities and challenges to new firms (Timilsina, 2017). Whereas online platforms serve as a low-cost way to reach customers for start-up restaurants, most of them do not have the capabilities for proper utilization. Instead, the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this stress, as it had to grapple with restrictions in indoor dining and changed consumer behaviours in ordering food online (Arslan et al., 2022).

Taking into account marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, menu innovation, location, and digitization, the key success indicators influencing customer satisfaction in restaurants of young businesses in Finland are evaluated by this study. With the goal of providing industry participants and business owners with insightful information about increasing customer satisfaction, which is crucial for retaining customers and ensuring long-term viability.

Even though the restaurant industry in Finland is expanding quickly, new companies still have a difficult time getting started and staying in business long enough to maintain high

customer satisfaction ratings. Due to a variety of internal and external obstacles, including but not limited to limited access to financial resources, the inability to draw in and keep customers, and competition from well-established brands, many new restaurants struggle to achieve and then maintain profitable operations (AN et al., 2019). These difficulties are made worse by the fact that a large number of food startup founders have never dealt with the complexities of running a restaurant, like active inventory management, hiring, and marketing concerns (Garieri, 2023).

Several studies have identified marketing, customer satisfaction, and menu innovation as key influences on restaurant success (AN et al., 2019; Cho et al., 2020; Healy & Mac Con lomaire, 2019), yet there seems to be a lack of empirical research specifically investigating the start-up sector of the Finnish restaurant industry, which possesses distinct characteristics relative to other markets.

These challenges call for identifying key elements impacting customer satisfaction in start-up restaurants and strategies that may help overcome these barriers. To this end, the study contributes to an understanding of how start-up restaurants in Finland can enhance customer satisfaction to sustain growth in the increasingly competitive and digitized marketplace.

1.2 The research question and the objectives

The primary focus of this study is to determine the drivers of customer satisfaction for startup restaurants in Finland concerning marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization. Based on the analysis of these variables' relationships with customer satisfaction, effective recommendations for improvement will be provided to increase customer retention, leading to long-term success in the competitive restaurant business.

The main research question for this study is:

What factors determine the level of customer satisfaction at Company X, located in Tampere, Finland?

The associated research questions are:

1. "What is the impact of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction at Company X?"
2. "How does menu innovation contribute to customer satisfaction at Company X?"
3. "What is the role of location in shaping customer satisfaction at Company X?"

4. "How does digitalization enhance the relationship between marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and customer satisfaction at Company X?"

To achieve the aim of this research, the following objectives have been established:

1. To evaluate the impact of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction in start-up restaurants in Finland.
2. To analyze the influence of menu innovation on customer satisfaction.
3. To examine the role of location in determining customer satisfaction in start-up restaurants.
4. To assess the moderating role of digitalization in the relationship between marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and customer satisfaction.

Commissioning company:

The commission company would like to remain anonymous. So, the commissioning company would be hereafter named as Company X throughout the thesis.

1.3 Information about Commissioning Company

Company X is an Asian restaurant located in Tampere Finland, specializing in authentic Korean cuisine. Established in November 2022, the restaurant aims to provide a unique dining experience by offering a focused menu from Asian style. Despite its innovative concept, Company X faces significant challenges typical of new businesses, including limited brand recognition and stiff competition from established local and international food outlets.

Furthermore, the restaurant operates with limited resources and relies heavily on delivery platforms like Wolt and Foodora to reach its customers. While digital tools provide an opportunity to increase visibility, how such platforms and marketing strategies are used effectively is still at question. Strong customer contentment and loyalty play a paramount role in a restaurant's success, as happy customers are more likely to return and recommend the restaurant to people around them.

This is a thesis aimed at the study of factors that may determine customer satisfaction in the case of Company X, focusing on some very critical areas like marketing strategies, innovative menus, location, and the role of digitalization. This thesis looks for actionable insights that Company X may be in need of, make improvements in customer satisfaction, achieve better customer retention, and use digital tools in ways whereby dining becomes a memorable experience.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research's weight can be viewed from a set of perspectives. The research focus meets the literature gap, focusing on the challenges of start-up restaurants in Finland, especially with regard to customer satisfaction, as a vital determinant of business sustainability and growth. Studies, previously, have stressed over the generics of the restaurant industry, not giving much consideration for start-ups and their particular problems, like lack of market presence, limited resource bases, and challenges in retaining customers. The following research places much emphasis on customer satisfaction and its drivers, namely marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization. This study therefore provides an understanding of those factors that have a bearing on customer perceptions and loyalty, hence a source of useful guidelines to enhance operational effectiveness.

The study has practical implications for entrepreneurs starting new restaurants because it will help them determine the primary determinants of customer satisfaction. This will help them create innovative menu items, establish efficient marketing strategies, and locate their establishments in areas that meet customer expectations. Furthermore, the survey found that digitalization is a moderator that offers start-ups the chance to use digital technologies to raise consumer satisfaction and engagement levels. Restaurant owners will be able to make wise judgments that will secure their companies' existence and prosperity thanks to this useful knowledge.

Third, the findings can contribute to policymakers and stakeholders in the industry. Understanding those factors that influence customer satisfaction will also help policymakers to devise supportive measures for startup restaurants, whether in the form of providing digital infrastructure, developing skills related to digital marketing, or incentivizing innovation. Focusing on the needs of startups, these initiatives can help spur entrepreneurship, boost economic growth, and increase the competitiveness of Finland's restaurant industry.

The study also contributes to the literature through its empirical evidence for an understanding of marketing strategies, menu innovation, and location regarding their relationship with consumer satisfaction, with digitalization. The results not only provide deep insight into the above-mentioned relationship but also set the runway for future studies. From here, scholars can build on this study by researching other regions or

industries for factors that drive customer satisfaction in order to expand knowledge in this area.

Therefore, this study will contribute to both the theoretical and the practical aspects that address some of the critical challenges faced by restaurants in Finland in starting up, while at the same time providing actionable insights for customer satisfaction improvements capable of contributing toward sustainable business.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis is presented thereafter:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic of the research is introduced in this chapter, as well as the background, identification of the problem to be addressed in Company X, and the setting of the objectives and questions. This chapter also highlights the significance of the study and gives an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews theories and models concerning the factors of customer satisfaction that exist in restaurants. This covers models including the Consumer Decision Process Model, the Howard and Sheth Model, Theory of Reasoned Action, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Zeithaml's Model of Perceived Quality and Value. The empirical results drawn from the restaurant industry are discussed to contextualize the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, strategy of sampling, methods of data collection, and analytical techniques. It outlines a quantitative approach through a survey in order to collect data from customers of Company X and describes the analytical techniques used to identify trends and relationships between variables.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter discusses the results of the data analysis, following the trends, correlations, and relationships among independent variables and the dependent variable. It also relates the findings to the research objectives and questions.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Based on the findings, this chapter provides actionable recommendations for Company X. Strategies for improving marketing effectiveness, enhancing customer satisfaction, leveraging digitalization, and optimizing menu innovation are presented, tailored specifically to the needs of Company X.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The study's main conclusions are outlined in the last chapter, along with their consequences for Company X. It lists the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for more research.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

In the case of Company X, an Asian restaurant in Tampere, Finland, the research's theoretical framework provides a foundation for comprehending the key elements that influence customer contentment. With established consumer behaviour theories and models, the framework provides a restructured approach to pinpointing how consumers make their decisions, create value perceptions, and finally choose a restaurant to patronize. This chapter draws on a number of influential theories in consumer behaviour and marketing including the CDP Model; Blackwell et al., 2001, the Howard and Sheth Model, 1969, the TRA, Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, TPB, Ajzen, 1985 and Zeithaml's Model of Perceived Quality and Value, 1988. These models explain the dynamics between consumer attitudes and perceived value with actual behaviour thus, they enlighten Company X on how it might succeed in its aim within the realm of customer acquisition and customer retention.

2.2 Theoretical Reviews

2.2.1 Consumer Decision Process Model

2.2.1.1 Overview of the Capability Development Platform Model

According to Dadfar et al. (2013), the CDP Model provides an integrated insight into the stages that consumers pass through in making purchase decisions, which range from need recognition to post-purchase evaluation. The model identifies the process of decision-making by dividing it into distinct stages, defined as need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, the act of purchase, and post-purchase behaviour. Each stage represents an aspect that the consumer faces during his journey with the brand; it

also helps the business in predicting and manipulating consumer response at each stage (Attreya, 2018). The changes in the CDP Model are immense in number since its inception in 1968 and keep updating themselves according to new trends and patterns emerging in consumer behaviour with the help of advancement in technology and globalization.

2.2.1.2 Relevance to Restaurant Industry

Thus, CDP model applications have been pretty wide in the sectors of restaurants and hospitality since understanding the processes that a consumer goes through in deciding on consumption is very important for realizing effective marketing and service delivery. In this regard, Panwar et al. (2019) realized that the CDP model helps in explaining how needs are developed among customers in the food industries based on social and environmental cues, especially at dining. Bommel et al. (2014) also showed that information search and alternative evaluation stages are core steps in the competitive restaurant market environment, with increasingly informed consumers relying on online review recommendations and social media for restaurant selections. The model helps illustrate how restaurants can position themselves to capture this crucial stage of consumer attention.

Figure 1 Consumer decision process model (Panwar et al., 2019)



The CDP model provides Restaurant Industry with a useful structure from which to understand the way in which potential customers might make a decision in terms of whether or not they would visit the restaurants. In this case, the need recognition stage will emerge at such a time when consumers recognize their need for something different: international food, as a result of rose through social media or trends in local food. They are more likely to search for restaurants related reviews, menu information, and promotions, especially through digital platforms such as Google and food delivery applications. In the information search stage, customers may compare restaurants with other similar local restaurants based on menu variety, pricing, convenience, among other

factors (Attreya, 2018). The purchase decision stage is the very final choice to dine in or take delivery service orders online through restaurants, encouraged by the marketing and accessibility. Finally, the post-purchase evaluation will allow the restaurant to gauge customer satisfaction for loyalty, while feedback on social media and/or review platforms helps near-future customer decisions.

Various studies relating to CDP models in restaurants have given small emphasis on the importance of the stages relating to information search and evaluation. In fact, Chen and Peng (2020) established that digital reviews and social media presence were major influencers of the above stages of the CDP model. In addition, the researchers Kim et al. (2018) have established that restaurants with distinct selling propositions, like authentic food, usually attract customers who seek special dining experiences. Application of the CDP model in the case of Company X will enhance its ability to clearly comprehend how the consumers are moving exactly through each stage and thereby allow restaurants to develop effective marketing strategies.

2.2.2 Howard and Sheth Model

2.2.2.1 Overview of the Model

The theory was developed in 1969 by Howard and Sheth as an attempt to find systematically the cause of consumer behaviour for a complicated buying situation. This model is extremely helpful in the analyses of brand choice, personal preference, and social factors in consumer decisions where there are large sets of alternatives. Consumer decisions which are a sequence of inputs and perceptual and learning constructs are described by the model. There is a heavy emphasis on the significance of external inputs, like marketing messages and internal processing, such as consumer beliefs and their attitudes, which act like a base for forming purchase intentions.

A 2024 article by Arpit Mishra evaluates the model's relevance, showcasing its strengths in mapping consumer behaviour while pointing out its limitations in addressing modern factors like technology, social media, and cultural diversity. Mishra argues that the model's linear approach might not fully capture the complexities of contemporary consumer journeys influenced by digital advancements and emotional factors.

The Howard-Sheth model which was referenced in a 2024 guide on modelling complex buying behaviour, recognised the comprehensive framework for understanding consumer decision-making. The guide focusses on the model's attention to psychological variables

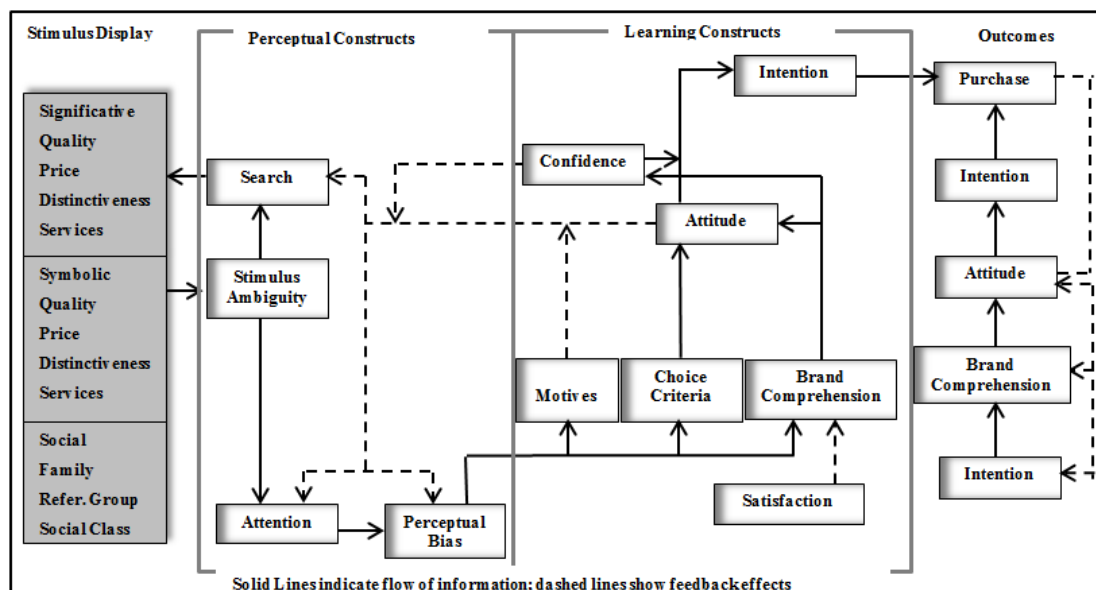
and cognitive processes, which are relevant for analysing complex purchasing behaviours.

Recent evaluations have shown that, despite the Howard-Sheth Model offering useful insights into consumer behaviour, there is a need to incorporate modern elements like digital technology, social media influence, and cultural factors to gain a clearer understanding of today's consumers.

2.2.2.2 Applicability to New Restaurants

This is relevant in exploring how new or less-established brands maintain loyalty while shaping consumer perception. To be more specific, a competitive dilemma that each startup restaurant must face is establishing brand differentiation and setting a good initial impression. This model gives an idea of how brand identity, advertising, and service quality influence the consumer's choice for a start-up over an established restaurant. For instance, new restaurants can use branding efforts to reinforce positive associations, thus making first-time customers return (Newman & Dhar, 2014).

Figure 2 Howard and Sheth model

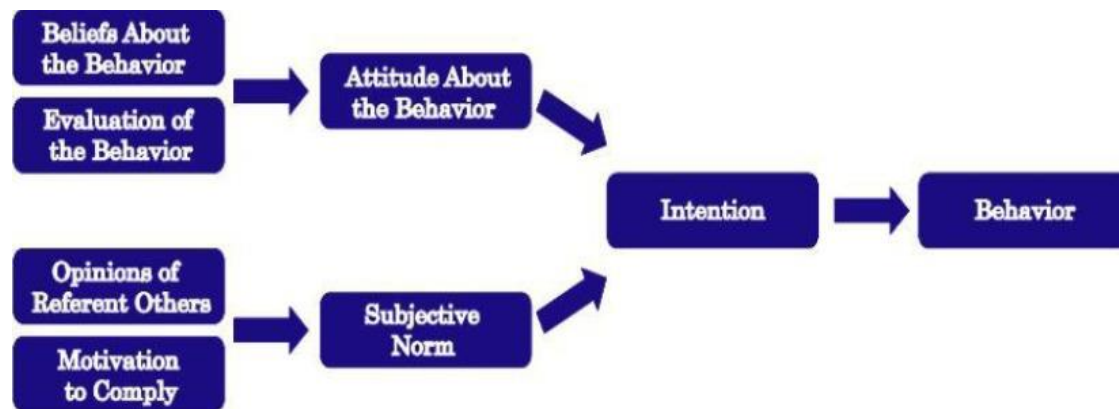


Research into the Howard and Sheth Model, such as Sweeney and Soutar 2001, demonstrates the levels of brand loyalty and awareness that are key components in retaining customers for new ventures. Indeed, research has shown that a positive customer experience, and a further solidified Brand identity, can result in greater loyalty, returning customers from those base experiences. These insights also informed Company

X to grow a well-focused brand identity that would augur well with its target audience, using both the traditional and digital marketing channels to secure its brand reputation.

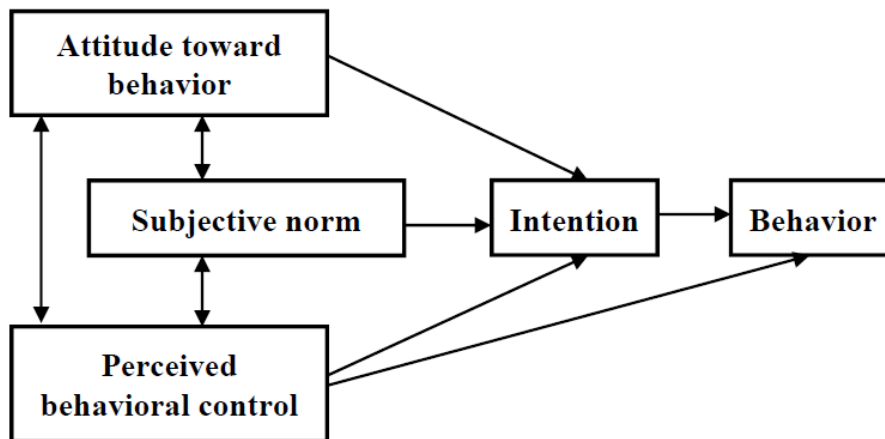
2.2.3 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Figure 3 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975)



Among the pioneering single conceptual frameworks explaining the association between attitudes, intentions, and behaviour are the TRA of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and its extension, the TPB by Ajzen (1985). The centrepiece of the TRA is that an individual's behaviour is a function of the intention to perform it, which is influenced by attitudes toward the behaviour itself and subjective norms. TPB adds to this by including perceived behavioural control, which is a factor taken into consideration to show things that might enable or impede one's capability to execute the behaviour.

Figure 4 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985)



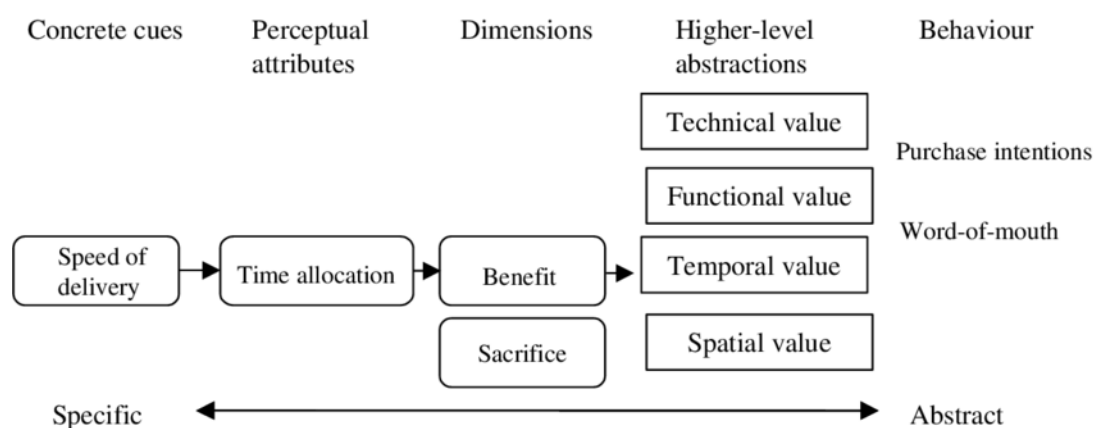
2.2.3.1 Applications in Dining Choices

Both the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) have been applied to gauge how consumer attitudes and perceived social norms affect dining and food choices. For example, Bagozzi et al. (2000) and Conner et al. (2002) describe how dining preferences are shaped not just by individual tastes but also social influences and perceived accessibility. Bagozzi et al. (2000) conclude that subjective norms and perceived behavioural control significantly impact customers in the food industry. These works show how attitudes, social expectations, and perceived ease related to choices made by consumers in the restaurant sector.

2.2.4 Zeithaml Model of Perceived Quality and Value

Zeithaml model (1988) has related internal product features like ingredients and style of preparation with external features like price and advertising, which together affect perceived quality and value. This model shows that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are of equal importance in shaping the consumers' perceptions and satisfaction derived from a product or service.

Figure 5 Zeithaml's Model of Perceived Quality and Value (Zeithmal, 1988)



The Zeithaml model finds quite a lot of relevance in the restaurant industry, where factors of food served, prices, and atmosphere play a considerable role in shaping up the quality perceptions of customers. The perceived quality and value, as Parasuraman et al. note in their 1988 study, have strong positive effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially in service-based industries (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Research has demonstrated the applicability of Zeithaml's model to the restaurant industry. For instance, Sweeney and Soutar (2001), examined the effect of perceived quality and value on customer loyalty and determined categorically that perceived value is usually superior, the higher the level of customer loyalty in highly competitive markets (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). who found out that service quality in itself directly impacts customer satisfaction, particularly in situations where consumers tend to merge their needs for quality with those of convenience. These studies suggest that the two key dimensions of internal product qualities and external marketing strategies can be basic stimuli for Company X to significantly improve customer loyalty and brand reputation.

2.3 Summary and Theoretical Framework

This chapter synthesizes various theoretical insights to set an overall framework for analyzing the factors that influence customer satisfaction in the subject case of Company X. The CDP Model, the Howard and Sheth Model, the TRA, the TPB, and Zeithaml's Model of Perceived Quality and Value, singly and in combination, offer varying explanations of aspects of consumer behavior. Together, these models reveal how consumer attitude, brand awareness, convenience, and perceived quality interactively shape satisfaction, loyalty, and behavior.

First, the CDP Model explains how customers perceive their needs, search for information, evaluate alternatives, make purchasing decisions, and reflect upon experiences after the purchase. It pinpoints and addresses those important touch points where customer satisfaction in Company X can be molded in the context of creating an interesting online presence, along with ensuring dining experiences that are consistent.

This is regarding brand loyalty itself, the Howard and Sheth Model, focused on one brand perceived due to external stimuli such as marketing messages and word of mouth. The model shall enable the firm to appreciate how Company X requires proper branding through effective marketing in ensuring good perceptions about authenticity and quality are achieved and translating to customer satisfaction and customer retention.

Thirdly, the theories of TRA and TPB set a model that indicates how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control of behavior have their influence on customers' intentions and choices. These theories may be very important for Company X in providing an answer to how social influences and ease of digital ordering affect customers' trial and repurchase intentions toward restaurants.

Lastly, the Zeithaml's Model of Perceived Quality and Value identifies the intrinsic product attributes in terms of the food quality and style of preparation and extrinsic ones like pricing and advertising in forming customers' perceived value. The model further pinpoints delivering a quality product with communicating the value to customers as necessary for effectively raising satisfaction and loyalty.

Integration of these theories will provide comprehensive grounds for investigation in drivers of customer satisfaction at Company X. The CDP Model explains the process a consumer follows in making purchasing decisions, while the Howard and Sheth Model highlights how branding and its subsequent marketing are effective in retaining customers. On the other hand, TRA and TPB examine the influence of social influence and facilitating factors on customers' behavior, while in Zeithaml's Model, the factors of perceived quality and value are recognized as important for the creation of satisfaction and loyalty.

These theories cumulatively help interpret how the strategies of marketing, menu innovation, location, and digitalization affect the customer's satisfaction and give realistic recommendations as to how Company X can retain its customers through service improvement.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology to be used for this study to investigate factors influencing customer satisfaction with Company X, a rapidly expanding Korean fried chicken startup restaurant. In addition, this proposal explains the design, strategy for

sampling, the techniques of data collection, and methods of analysis for this research. By focusing on customer satisfaction as the main dependent variable, the study will investigate how marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization contribute to shaping customer perceptions and loyalty.

Quantitative approach: The study identifies the main drivers of customer satisfaction, and therefore, the relationships among the variables can best be analysed by using a quantitative approach. Here, the research design is cross-sectional because it will be able to capture the perceptions of consumers at one point in time. This will generate structured and numerical data that can be analysed through robust statistical methods in order to come up with actionable insights. This approach has been supported by Bryman, 2016, as suitable.

This chapter discusses each of the methodological aspects in depth to ensure that they align with the objectives of the study and that ethical rigor is maintained during the research process.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Quantitative Approach

The quantitative approach was adopted because, with this kind of approach, the hypotheses that deal with the statistical effects of a couple of the independent variables in relation to customer satisfaction can be performed. Quantitative methods may suit studies that generally seek to generalize the findings-for instance, one that analyses consumer behaviour within controlled settings where both structured data collections and numerical data analysis are warranting. Quantitative methods will be warranted because the given study will tend to find patterns and relationships among the variables that would influence customer satisfaction at Company X. The approach offers objectivity regarding the impact of each factor on customer retention, development growth, and customer satisfaction in the course of pursuing the objective.

3.2.2 Cross-sectional survey

The present study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, which is generally ideal in capturing the attitudes, preferences, and behavioural patterns of consumers at any one specific moment in time. Applications of cross-sectional studies are generally extensive within research related to consumer behaviour as a method of measuring current attitudes and perceptions of consumers in dynamic fluctuating environments, which are no

strangers to the restaurant industry itself. Cross-sectional surveys are appropriate for yielding a snapshot, hence suiting the study's aim in understanding those factors affecting Company X's customer satisfaction amidst competition and evolving market trends.

3.2.3 Explanatory Research

This is an explanatory study since the study will look into the relationship of more than one IV to the dependent variable, which is customer satisfaction. Explanatory studies light up the cause-and-effect links among the variables under study by determining the contribution of each IV, such as customer satisfaction and marketing, to the variation in the DV. This approach justifies the study because it precisely measures the impact that each of these factors has before providing data-driven recommendations on how Company X can ensure growth.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

3.3.1 Target Population

The population of interest targeted by this research would be customers who have visited or ordered restaurant services from Company X within the Tampere region. It is possible to capture a wide range of consumer preferences and experiences by include both dine-in and online clients in the population. This ensures that their representation is quite diversified. Therefore, this would be appropriate to confirm the elements that most significantly impact customer satisfaction in a local context—which is actually the goal of this study.

3.3.2 Sampling Method

A convenience sampling approach was used to reach customers who have engaged with Company X. Convenience sampling is an effective method in contexts where the research is targeted to gather data from an accessible group of participants (Creswell, 2013). Thus, although convenience sampling reduces generalisability, it has practical advantages in studies of the kind covered below, where participants are related to the research goals. It can draw on the experience of customers that have received service from Company X by administrating a survey.

3.3.3 Sample Size Justification

In that respect, a sufficiently appropriate sample size would be of essence in ensuring the reliability and validity of such findings. The study will try to sample data from approximately

50 participants to provide a substantial amount of power for analyses, factoring in possible dropouts or incomplete responses.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

3.4.1 Survey Instrument

The research instrument is designed in such a way that, among others, demographic information, independent variables, and dependent variable are measured both with multiple-choice and Likert scale questions. A Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) has been applied in measuring each of these IVs, extending to the DV, which is customer satisfaction. According to Bryman, 2016, a pilot test of the survey was conducted on 10 participants to ensure clarity and relevance. The variables involved and some sample questions that were posed through the use of the survey can be seen in the table below. Table 1: Summary of Variables and Sample Questions.

3.4.2 Distribution of Questionnaires

The survey was in fact issued both physically and online for maximum reach. For the customers dining in, paper surveys were available at the restaurant, while for the online customers, this survey can also be shared digitally by the links provided on Wolt and Foodora platforms. Such a mixed-method distribution allows the collection of varied responses from both in-person and digital clientele to ensure broader data representation.

3.4.3 Ethical Issues

In this investigation, ethical considerations were closely adhered to. All study participants gave their informed consent, and replies were guaranteed to remain anonymous and confidential. The study also complies with data protection laws; all information gathered will be kept private and used only for scholarly research. Participants were permitted to leave the survey at any time without providing a reason, adhering to guidelines that guaranteed the study's ethical integrity

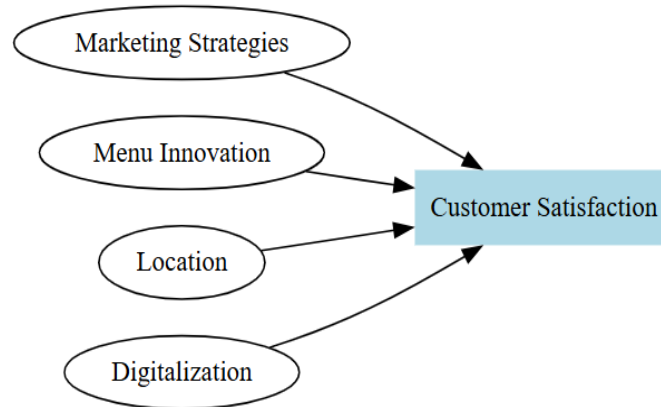
3.5 Measurement of Variables

3.5.1 Conceptual Framework

This study follows a conceptual framework wherein there are multiple IVs and a single DV, which is customer satisfaction. These independent variables will be marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization. It explores how these different factors, in isolation and in combination, help in the satisfaction of customers for Company X.

This structure will provide a broadened base for identifying actionable insights and hereby help in improving customer satisfaction to retain customers and ensure loyalty.

Figure 6 Conceptual framework



3.6 Operationalization of Variables

In order to quantify the variables involved in this research, each IV and DV will be operationalized by a set of Likert-scale statements. The table below depicts important dimensions for each of the variables together with sample survey items that may form part of the actual survey.

Table 1 Operationalization of variables

Variable	Dimension	Scale
Marketing Strategies	Effectiveness of promotions	1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
	Brand communication	1 to 5
Menu Innovation	Uniqueness of menu	1 to 5
	Variety and appeal	1 to 5
Location	Accessibility	1 to 5
	Proximity	1 to 5

Digitalization	Ease of online ordering	1 to 5
	Digital engagement	1 to 5
Customer Satisfaction (DV)	Overall satisfaction	1 to 5
	Likelihood of return	1 to 5

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

First of all, summary statistics-mean, median, and standard deviation-will be utilized to summarize demographic characteristics and responses to each question in the questionnaire. This descriptive analysis will give an overview of the profiles of the respondents and general trends in their perceptions with regard to marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, digitalization, and customer satisfaction at Company X. The Microsoft Excel software shall be employed because, among other things, it offers tools for efficient calculation and visualization of these descriptive statistics.

3.7.2 Correlation Analysis

The company will, therefore, make use of some correlation analysis to study the relationship that will exist between the independent variables-marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization-and the dependent variable, which is customer satisfaction. The coefficients of the correlation will describe the direction of the relationship, whether positive or negative, and its strength. This would indicate the strongest relations with customer satisfaction and thus shed light on which area the company should focus more on. All the calculations will be done in Excel, utilizing its statistical functions to carry out efficient computation and visualization of data.

3.7.3 Regression Analysis

The individual and combined effects of the IVs on customer satisfaction will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis. This will quantify separately the contribution of each IV, namely marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization, to the variation in customer satisfaction while controlling for the influence of other variables. In turn, the regression analysis will yield practical implications of what variables bear the

most significant concern to customer satisfaction regarding Company X. The multiple regression analysis will be done using Excel, which also has tools such as the Data Analysis Tool Pak for performing multiple regression analyses.

3.8 Summary

The chapter has elaborated on the methodological approach to be followed in the research study on factors influencing customer satisfaction at Company X. The research design adopted for this study is a quantitative cross-sectional survey. For the purpose of this research, data collection was done among a purposeful sample of customers in Tampere. In this chapter, the strategy concerning sampling, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations were put forward to ensure rigour and ethics in the collection of data.

To enable structured examination of the correlations between the independent variables of marketing tactics, menu innovation, location, and digitalization and the dependent variable of customer satisfaction, all of the variables in this study have been measured using a Likert scale. Using Excel, the data analysis will be based on multiple regression analysis, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics to determine and measure each factor's impact on customer satisfaction.

In order to provide actionable insight into the factors influencing customer satisfaction at Company X, the methodological foundation for this chapter serves as the basis for the empirical analysis and interpretation of results in the following chapter.

4 Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In order to satisfy the research aim and objectives stated in Chapter One, this chapter presents and analyzes the data gathered from a start-up restaurant in Finland. There were four steps involved in the data analysis process. In order to obtain crucial information about the clients, the initial step entailed looking at the demographic profile. In the second phase, the basic properties of the research variables and their patterns were investigated using descriptive statistics. Correlation analysis was used in the third step to evaluate the connections between the variables. Finally, regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses and assess the effects. The software SPSS version 30.0.0 was used for all analyses

4.2 Pilot Test Result

To make sure that respondents understand the question and to determine an accurate response rate, the pilot test is conducted. Pilot data was collected on 24th of January 2025.

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Marketing Strategies	.951
Menu Innovation	.796
Location	.822
Digitalization	.895
Customer Satisfaction	.773

In this study Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7 then all variables are in acceptable level. Especially it assured the level of internal consistency and which shows the questionnaire is reliable. Then this questionnaire was used for master data collection on 26th of January 2025.

4.3 Reliability

The degree to which the items on a scale are associated and represent the same underlying notion is measured by the Cronbach's Alpha value. Better internal consistency reliability is indicated by a higher Cronbach's Alpha. Generally speaking, a number greater than 0.7 is regarded as the acceptable level for the variables' reliability test.

Table 3 Reliability Analysis

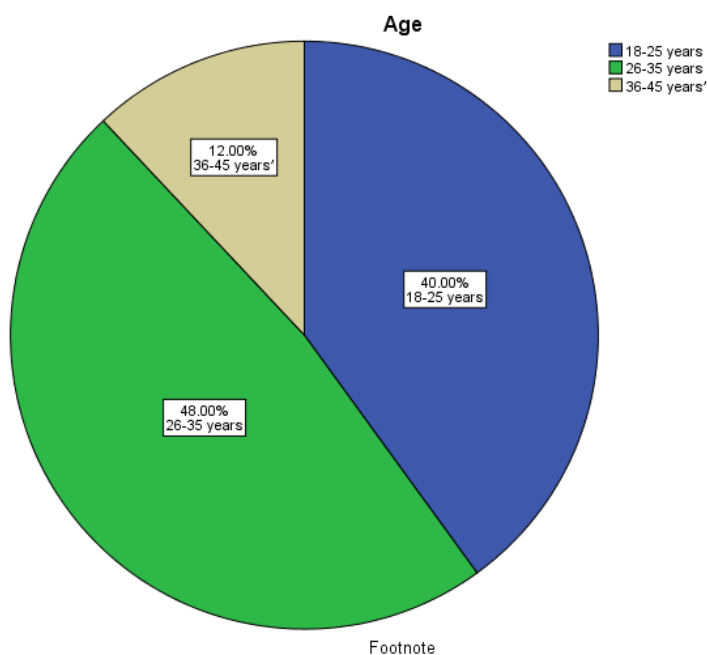
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Marketing Strategies	.742
Menu Innovation	.702
Location	.756
Digitalization	.728
Customer Satisfaction	.786
Overall	.902

Table 3 indicates that the independent variable, marketing strategies, menu innovation, location and digitalization have high alpha values of 0.742, 0.702, 0.756 and 0.728, respectively which suggest great consistency between their components. Furthermore, the questionnaire's good internal consistency and reliability are indicated by its overall alpha score of 0.902. These alpha values show that the items on the scale reliably capture the ideas intended as a whole and within each construct. Hence it offers solid basis for insightful analysis and interpretation for our data.

4.4 Demographic profile

4.4.1 Age

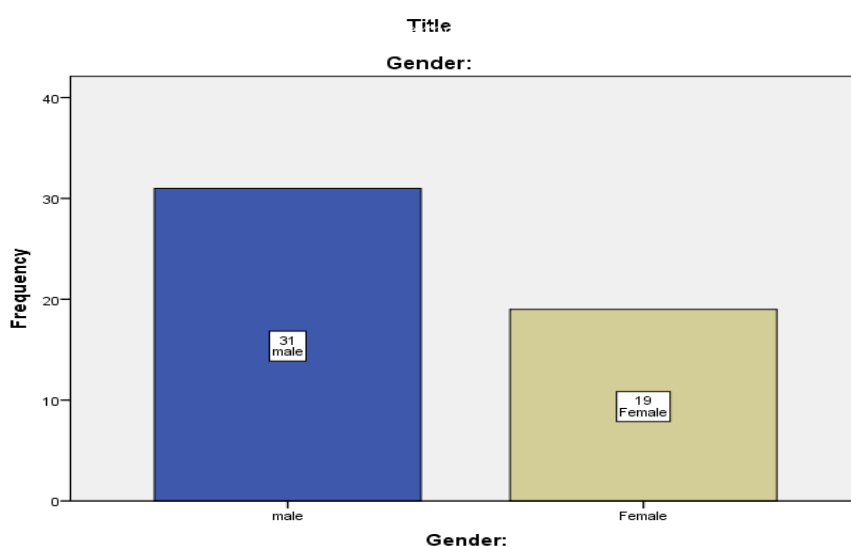
Figure 7 Age



As shown in Figure 7, the majority of customers (48%) fall within the age group of 26–35 years. Meanwhile, 40% of customers are aged between 18–25 years, and only 12% belong to the 36–45 age group.

4.4.2 Gender

Figure 8 Gender



Gender analysis is most important because of from this respondent of 100 there are 31 male respondents and 19 are female for this study. As percentage it was 62% of male and 38% of

females is in this sample. The following figure illustrates the gender distribution within the selected sample.

4.4.3 Level of education

Figure 9 Level of education

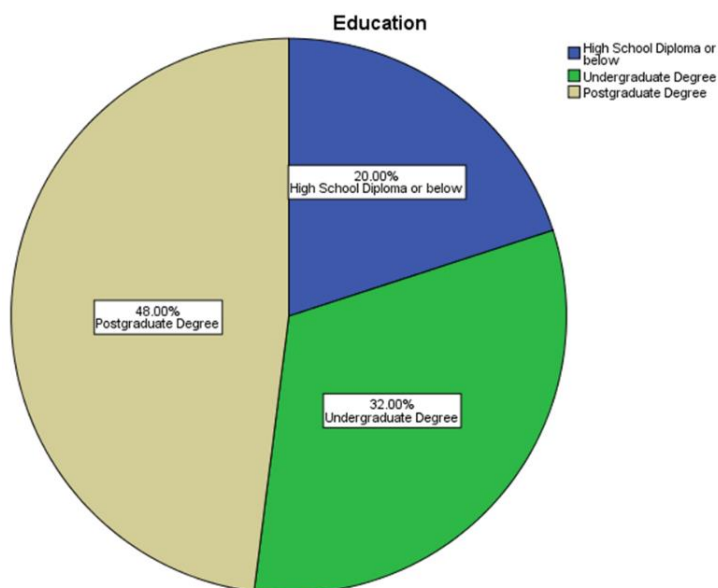


Figure 9 highlighted the educational background of 50 participants. The data shows that 20% have a high school diploma or below, 32% hold an undergraduate degree, and 48% possess a postgraduate degree. This distribution provides valuable insights into the educational diversity of the study population.

4.4.4 Employment status

Figure 10 Employment status

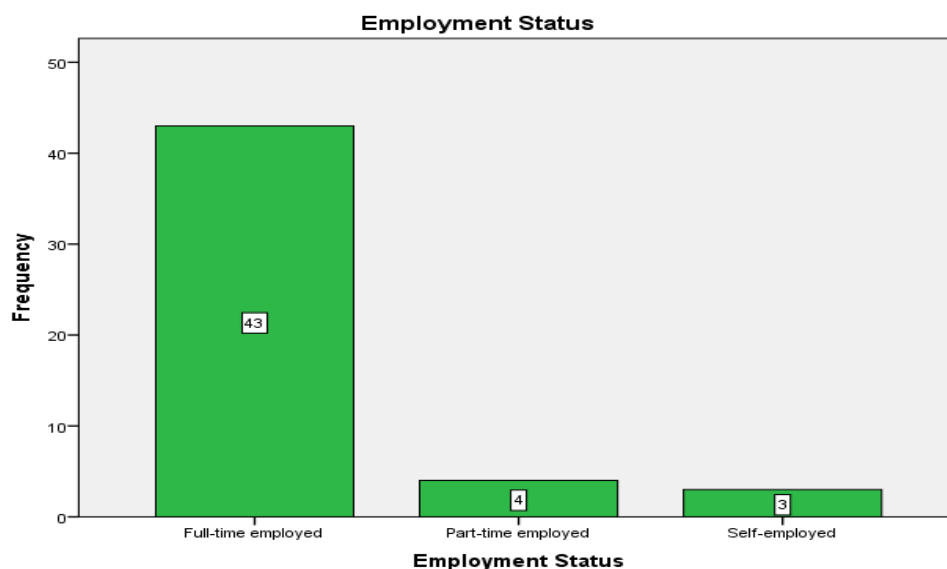


Figure 10 presented the employment status of 50 customer. The majority, 86% are full-time employed, while 8% work part-time, and 6% are self-employed. This data providing insights into the participants' professional engagement.

4.4.5 Monthly income

Figure 11 Monthly income

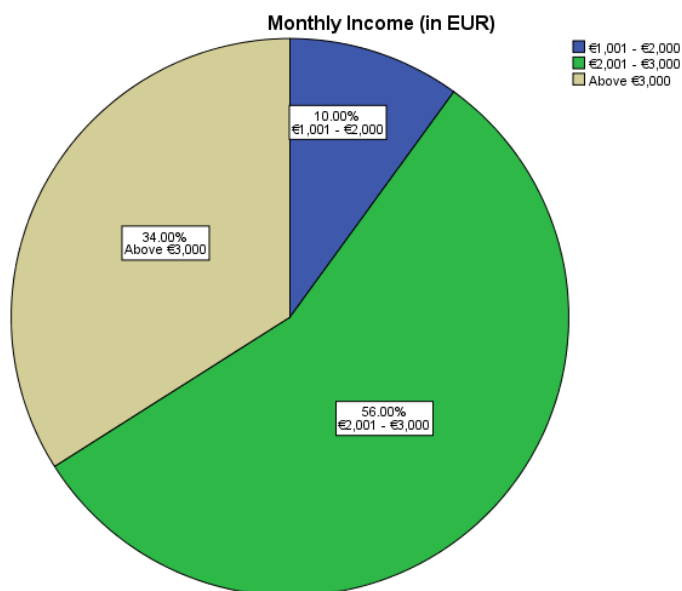
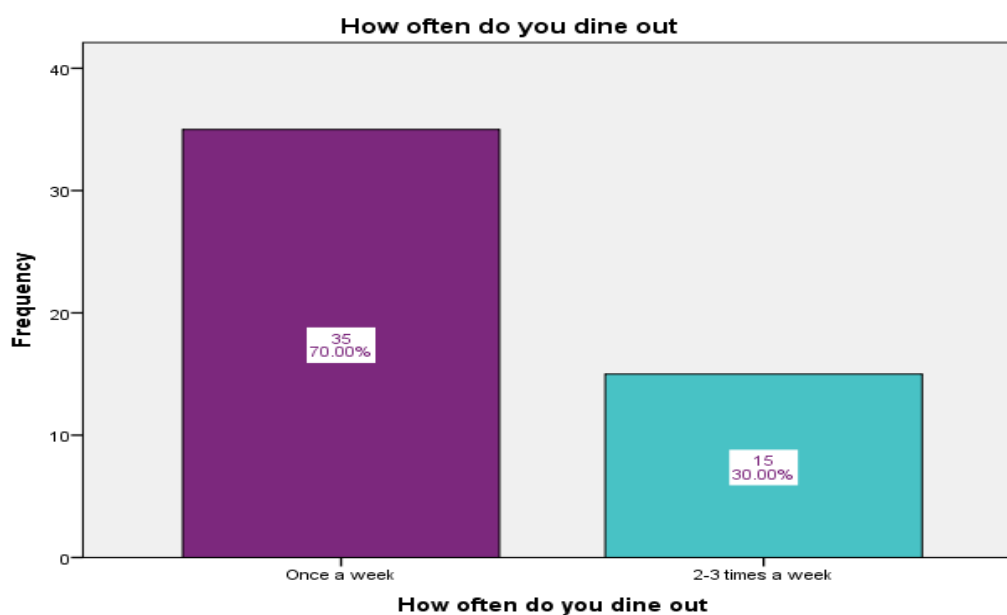


Figure 11 showed the distribution of monthly income among a sample of 50 individuals. The majority of respondents 56% earn between €2,001 and €3,000, followed by 34% who earn above €3,000. A smaller group 10% earns between €1,001 and €2,000.

4.4.6 How often do you dine out

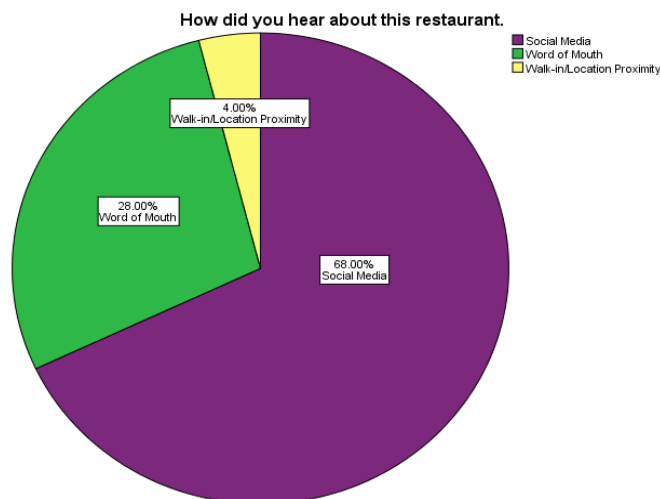
Figure 12 How often do you dine out



This study explores dining-out habits among 50 individuals. The findings reveal that 70% of participants dine out once a week, while the remaining 30% prefer eating out 2-3 times weekly. These results highlight the dominant preference for weekly dining-out routines in the sample.

4.4.7 How did you hear about this restaurant

Figure 13 How did you hear about this restaurant



The research investigated how customers discover restaurants. Out of 50 respondents, the majority 68% attributed their discovery to social media platforms, followed by 28% who relied on word of mouth. A smaller segment 4% became aware through walk-ins or proximity to the restaurant. These results emphasize the significant role of social media in driving restaurant visibility.

4.5 Descriptive statistics

Table 4 Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	50	2.80	5.00	4.1360	.51021
Marketing Strategies	50	2.80	5.00	4.3240	.51885
Menu Innovation	50	3.20	5.00	4.2720	.48783
Location	50	2.75	5.00	4.0350	.58904
Digitalization	50	2.60	5.00	4.2160	.59637
Valid N (listwise)	50				

The descriptive statistics emphasized key indicators of customer satisfaction. Marketing strategies received the highest mean score 4.324 with moderate variation 0.51885, outlining their role in improving customer experiences. Menu innovation followed closely with a mean of 4.272 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.48783, showing its importance and consistency in driving satisfaction. Digitalization also received a high mean score of 4.216, with a standard deviation of 0.59637, proving the growing importance of technology in improving customer experiences. Location, with the lowest mean 4.035 and the highest variation 0.58904, appears to be less influential than other variables. In general marketing strategies, menu innovation, and digitalization are the most important factors influencing customer satisfaction, with location playing a supporting part.

4.6 Correlations analysis

The purpose of the correlation analysis is to evaluate the direction and strength of the linear relationship between variables (Shi and Conrad, 2009). Despite powerful nonlinear correlations exhibiting little to no correlation, it does not mean causality or the assumption that there is a linear relationship. The Pearson product-moment correlation is the most widely used parametric methodology; however this method can be applied to both parametric and nonparametric variables.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
0.00-0.09	Negligible Correlation
0.10-0.39	Weak Correlation
0.40-0.69	Moderate Correlation
0.70-0.89	Strong Correlation
0.90-1.00	Very Strong Correlation

Table 6 Correlations

	Customer satisfaction	Marketing strategies	Menu innovation	Location	Digitalization
Customer satisfaction	1				
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
Marketing strategies	.549**	1			

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
Menu innovation	.708**	.619**	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Location	.609**	.613**	.545**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Digitalization	.553**	.379**	.352*	.388**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.007	.012	.005	.000

As indicated above, statistical significance of a data point can be determined. The table specifies that * denotes correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), while ** indicates correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This helps identify which values hold statistical relevance and statistically significant.

The analysis of the correlation coefficients in Table 4.6, along with their associated p-values, examines the relationships among customer satisfaction, marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization. All variables exhibit a positive association with customer satisfaction at the 0.05 significance level.

Marketing strategies demonstrate a moderate positive relationship with customer satisfaction, with a correlation coefficient of 0.549, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Menu innovation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.708, indicates a strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction, highlighting its critical role. Similarly, location and digitalization show moderate positive correlations with customer satisfaction, with coefficients of 0.609 and 0.553, respectively, both significant at the 0.05 level.

These findings underscore the importance of menu innovation, marketing strategies, location, and digitalization in enhancing customer satisfaction.

4.7 Regression Analysis

According to Shi and Conrad (2009), regression analysis looks at the relationship between one or more independent variables (the explanatory variables) and a dependent variable (the

observed or response variable) in order to interpret numerical data. The number of independent variables (simple vs. multiple regression), the linearity of the parameters (linear vs. nonlinear regression), and the distribution of the variables (ordinary vs. logistic regression) are some ways to classify statistical models. The following formula can be used to represent a regression model:

Equation 1- Linear regression

$$Y_t = f(X_t + \beta + \epsilon_t)$$

Table 7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.802 ^a	.643	.611	.31819
a. Predictors: (Constant), Digitalization, Menu Innovation, Location, Marketing Strategies				

The degree of correlation between the model and the dependent variable is shown in the model summary table. The linear connection between the dependent variable's observed and model-predicted values is shown by the multiple correlation coefficient, or R; a greater value denotes a stronger link. Furthermore, the model explains 64.3% of the variation in the dependent variable, according to R Square, the coefficient of determination, which is the squared value of R.

Table 8 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.199	4	2.050	20.245	.000 ^b
	Residual	4.556	45	.101		
	Total	12.755	49			
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Menu Innovation, Digitalization, Location						

The results of the ANOVA analysis are shown in this table, which also indicates if the group means differ in a way that is statistically significant. The statistical significance of the difference is confirmed by the significance value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold

Table 9 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.129	.464		.277	.783
1 Marketing Strategies	.303	.124	.003	2.442	.000
1 Menu Innovation	.499	.124	.477	4.026	.000
1 Location	.205	.103	.236	1.985	.003
1 Digitalization	.252	.085	.295	2.976	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

According to the table above, the marketing strategies regression coefficient was 0.303 and the significance value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This suggests that marketing tactics and customer happiness have a statistically significant linear relationship. In particular, it indicates that the newly opened restaurant's customer satisfaction should rise by 0.303 for every unit increase in marketing tactics.

The regression coefficient of menu innovation is 0.499 and respective sig value is less than standard level of 0.05. Therefore, there is a statistically linear relationship between menu innovation and customer satisfaction. Consequently, one unit change in menu innovation is expected to result in a 0.499 change in overall customer satisfaction.

The significance value was 0.03 and the regression coefficient for restaurant location was 0.205, both of which are below the conventional cutoff point of 0.05. Thus, location and customer happiness have a linear connection that is statistically significant. This implies that customer satisfaction should rise by 0.003 for every unit increase in location

The digitalization regression coefficient is 0.452, and the associated significance value is less than the conventional cutoff point of 0.05. Thus, digitalization and customer happiness have a linear relationship that is statistically significant. This suggests that customer satisfaction should rise by 0.252 for every unit increase in digitalization.

The regression equation can be created using the table above.

Equation 2 Regression equation for the results

$$\text{Customer Satisfaction} = 0.129 + 0.303 \text{ MK_ST} + 0.499 \text{ MN_IN} + 0.205 \text{ LN} + 0.252 \text{ DG} + \epsilon$$

4.8 Testing of Hypothesis

The study used correlation coefficient analysis to test the assumptions and guarantee accurate results. Investigating the critical elements that affect patron satisfaction at a new restaurant in Finland was the main goal of the study. This was accomplished by formulating particular hypotheses and testing them against the research data to draw conclusions. The following were the study's hypotheses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant relationship between menu innovation and customer satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant relationship between location and customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a significant relationship between digitalization and customer satisfaction.

The correlation analysis for each of the study's variables is shown in Table 6. At the 0.05 level, the marketing strategies correlation coefficient was 0.549 and the significance value was 0.000, indicating statistical significance. Hypothesis H1 was thus validated.

With a significance value of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient of 0.314 for menu innovation, statistical significance was confirmed at the 0.05 level. Hypothesis H2 was thus validated.

At the 0.05 level, statistical significance was shown by the location correlation coefficient of 0.609 and the significance value of 0.000. Hypothesis H3 was thus validated.

Finally, the correlation coefficient of digitalization was 0.553. And the sig-value was 0.000. It indicated that it was statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hypothesis H4 was accepted.

4.9 Chapter Summary

A thorough review of the study's findings is provided in this chapter. The presentation of the descriptive statistics for the measurement tools comes after a summary of the participants' demographic characteristics. The correlation and regression analyses of the measuring tools, as well as the associated findings, are then covered in the chapter. Lastly, the results are

shown about how the independent variables affect the dependent variable, customer satisfaction.

5 Recommendations

The analysis provides a strong correlation (0.549) between marketing strategies and customer satisfaction, emphasizing the value of effective marketing in keeping and attracting customers. In order to take advantage of this, businesses should focus on creating a stronger digital presence. Since 68% of customers discovered the restaurant through social media, platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are ideal starting points. Posting frequently, shareable content, highlighting customer feedback, and partnering with influencers would significantly impact visibility. Businesses should also explore targeted advertising, using data to create campaigns aimed at specific demographics, particularly those aged 26 to 35, who represent nearly half of their audience. Additionally, implementing loyalty programmes, such as discounts for frequent visitors or exclusive offers for regulars, can strengthen relationships and encourage satisfied customers to share their experiences.

Menu innovation demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with customer satisfaction, reflected in a regression coefficient of 0.499. This emphasizes the need for unique and appealing menu options to enhance the dining experience. To leverage this, businesses should broaden their offerings by trying seasonal specials or fusion dishes while preserving the authenticity of the original cuisine. Introducing plant-based options can also draw in health-conscious or vegetarian patrons. Actively integrating customer feedback through in-house surveys or online forms can help refine menu options and ensure they align with customer expectations. Additionally, focusing on the presentation and packaging of dishes, including eco-friendly and visually appealing designs for both dine-in and delivery, can further elevate the overall dining experience.

While location demonstrated a moderate positive relationship with customer satisfaction (correlation coefficient = 0.609), it remains a critical factor for the success of start-ups. To enhance accessibility, businesses can invest in clear signage and wayfinding tools, as well as collaborate with local businesses for co-marketing opportunities. Strengthening partnerships with delivery platforms like Wolt and Foodora can ensure fast, reliable delivery services, appealing to customers who prioritize convenience. Additionally, exploring future expansion in areas with high foot traffic or a significant young adult population can help tap into key customer segments and drive growth.

Digitalization showed a statistically significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction (correlation coefficient = 0.553), highlighting its growing role in the restaurant industry. To leverage this, businesses can enhance online ordering systems by ensuring accurate menu listings, transparent pricing, and user-friendly navigation. Having an online reservation system can also work to increase convenience and minimise waiting times for dine-in customers. With the extra data gathered, analysis can reveal insights into preferences and ordering habits, facilitating data-driven menu updates, targeted promotions, and personalised marketing. Lastly, engaging customers through interactive digital experiences, like online contests, live cooking sessions, or exclusive social media offers, can strengthen connections and loyalty.

Customer satisfaction heavily depends on the overall dining experience, which includes service quality, ambiance, and value for money. To improve this, businesses should focus on effective staff training, concentrating on communication, problem-solving, and cultural sensitivity to ensure consistent, positive interactions. Enhancing the ambiance by fostering a welcoming and culturally authentic atmosphere through music, interior design, and lighting can also greatly enrich the dining experience. Moreover, offering high-quality food at competitive prices, with meal bundles or combos, increases value for money, especially for groups and families, helping boost customer satisfaction.

The study identified key demographic trends, noting that full-time employed customers represent 86% and the 26-35 age group makes up 48% of respondents. To address these findings, businesses can opt for flexible operating hours, extending availability during evenings and weekends to suit working professionals. Targeting young adults with tailored promotions, like hosting events, offering student discounts, or introducing Instagram-worthy menu items, can be attractive. The idea of engaging with local communities through collaborations or cultural events can strengthen ties and draw in a wider customer base.

To improve, reliable methods for collecting and analysing customer feedback must be set up. Real-time feedback tools, such as digital kiosks or QR codes at tables, enable customers to share their dining experiences instantly. To boost participation, offering small incentives like discounts or complimentary items can raise engagement with feedback surveys. Regularly analysing feedback trends helps identify recurring issues or emerging patterns, enabling businesses to make data-driven decisions and address customer needs effectively.

Contribution to the theory includes In applying the model to every business company, such as Company X, it shows how brand communication can play a very important role in attracting

both first-time and repeat customers, or at least promotes customer loyalty. Using the language of the model, the input variables would then come in with marketing messages, social media presence, and word-of-mouth recommendations which, put together, mould or shape consumer perception about Company X's authenticity and good quality. The perceptual constructs include the customer's perception of Company X as an authentic regional Korean food company; the learning constructs include customer satisfaction and the probability to repurchase. Company X will create Line branding harmony in a way to raise awareness, which in turn fuels loyalty long term (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

TRA and TPB may also be suggested for Company X based on the customers' attitudes towards Korean food. Considering the social influences as well as digital ordering ease that hopefully will attract patrons, The positive attitude towards international cuisines -one which may be enrooted by social norms that nurture dining diversity- may allow customers to visit Company X. Also, perceived behavioural control, such as facilitation of ordering through online platforms like Walt and Foodora, will positively affect the intentions of the customers. In sum, both theories can provide strategic clues for Company X in terms of marketing strategies that can then be used to communicate the perceived ease with which its Korean dishes are prepared and consumed.

In this regard, the model by Zeithaml would indicate that Company X would do very well to use its perceived quality through a well-conceptualized menu and effective marketing. Touting authentic high-quality preparation of the food items at very competitive costs might lead to a higher customer perception of value, which then manifests itself in customers revisiting more often and recommending the restaurants to friends and family. Furthermore, focusing on peripheral cues such as advertising, online reviews, and affiliation with delivery services like Wolt and Foodora might make Company X distinctive and, therefore, more attractive to the customers who value convenience-quality combinations most. These measures taken all together will become, in all probability, the guarantee of general customer satisfaction and a reputable standing of Company X within the highly competitive dining market of Tampere.

Sustainability is a growing priority for modern consumers, making eco-friendly practices a valuable way to enhance a restaurant's appeal. Adopting sustainable sourcing by using locally sourced ingredients can reduce the carbon footprint while supporting local farmers.

For promoting sustainable practices, restaurants can transition to biodegradable or reusable packaging for takeout and delivery showcasing a commitment to environmental responsibility.

While investing in energy-efficient appliances and implementing effective inventory management can reduce energy consumption and waste.

Implementing these recommendations will assist Company X and start-up restaurants in successfully tackling customer satisfaction challenges. By experimenting with different marketing strategies, innovating menus, employing digital tools, and prioritising the overall customer experience, restaurants can boost customer loyalty, operational efficiency, and long-term growth. These measures not only connect with the research findings but also offer practical insights for sustained success in Finland's competitive restaurant landscape.

6 Conclusion

Digitalization, location, menu innovation, and marketing tactics all have a big impact on customer happiness as per the survey. Menu innovation stood out as the most crucial element, highlighting the need of a distinctive and enticing menu. A significant positive impact is brought to life by marketing techniques, effective brand communication and promotions shaping consumer attitudes.

With a moderate impact, location laid the emphases on the importance of accessibility and ease, while digitization was essential for improving consumer connections via social media and online platforms. The regression analysis showed consumer happiness was influenced most by menu innovation, which was followed by location, digitization, and marketing tactics. The results emphasize the significance of a well-rounded strategy that gives innovation, marketing, digital tools, and location optimization top priority in order to optimize customer happiness.

Concentrating on a few crucial areas in order to improve client happiness and performance is necessary for start-up restaurants. to begin with, improving marketing initiatives with focused digital advertisements and social media campaigns will raise awareness and include a larger audience, fostering the development of a devoted customer base. Additionally, menu innovation is essential; providing distinctive, superior meals that are in line with consumer preferences and current trends makes the dining experience novel and sets the restaurant apart in a crowded market. Even in situations when moving is not an option, optimizing the location by making it more accessible and fostering a friendly atmosphere can greatly improve the entire client experience. Lastly, restaurants may improve accessibility, expedite operations, and maintain customer connections by utilizing digital tools like an easy-to-use online ordering system, collaborations with delivery services like Wolt and Foodora, and active

social media participation. When combined, these tactics can promote long-term success, client loyalty, and expansion.

The study emphasizes how important it is for companies to maintain flexibility and use digital tools in order to address conventional difficulties. In the future, it would be fascinating to investigate additional factors like customer service excellence or a dedication to sustainability, as they could both help us better understand what makes customers happy. To succeed in today's competitive industry, start-ups must continuously innovate and stay abreast of what consumers truly desire. That's the secret to creating long-term success.

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Factors Influencing Sales Performance in Start-up Restaurants in Finland

Consent Form for Participation in Survey Research

Researcher:

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Email: Sajith22000@student.hamk.fi

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the key factors that influence the sales performance of start-up restaurants in Finland, focusing on elements such as marketing strategies, customer satisfaction, menu innovation, location, and digitalization.

Participation:

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any point during the survey without providing any reason and without facing any consequences. The survey is expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality:

All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. No personal information will be collected that could be used to identify you. The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes and will be stored securely in compliance with data protection regulations.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this survey. The results of this study may benefit the academic community by providing insights into the factors that influence the success of start-up restaurants, and restaurant owners may gain a better understanding of strategies to improve their sales performance.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please contact Sajith Herath Mudiyansele at Sajith22000@student.hamk.fi

By clicking "Next" and completing this survey, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above and consent to participate in this study.

Survey Instructions

Instructions for Participants:

1. **Read the Consent Form:** Please ensure that you have read the consent form above and understand the purpose and your rights as a participant.
2. **Answer Honestly:** There are no right or wrong answers. Your honest responses will contribute significantly to the research.
3. **Completion Time:** The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
4. **Multiple-Choice Questions:** Some sections contain multiple-choice questions. Select the answer that best represents your situation.

5. **Likert Scale Questions:** Other sections use a scale of 1 to 5, where:
 - 1 = Strongly Disagree
 - 2 = Disagree
 - 3 = Neutral
 - 4 = Agree
 - 5 = Strongly Agree
6. **Confidentiality:** Your responses are completely anonymous, and no personal information will be linked to your answers.
7. **Optional Withdrawal:** You can withdraw from the survey at any time without providing a reason by closing the browser window.
8. **Submit:** Once you have completed all questions, click “Submit” to finalize your responses.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Demographic Questions

1. **Age:**
 - 18-25
 - 26-35
 - 36-45
 - 46-55
 - 56 and above
2. **Gender:**
 - Male
 - Female
 - Prefer not to say
3. **Level of Education:**
 - High School Diploma or below
 - Undergraduate Degree
 - Postgraduate Degree
 - Other (Specify)
4. **Employment Status:**
 - Full-time employed
 - Part-time employed
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed
 - Student
 - Retired

5. Monthly Income (in EUR):

- Below €1,000
- €1,001 - €2,000
- €2,001 - €3,000
- Above €3,000

6. How often do you dine out?

- Once a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a month
- Occasionally
- Rarely/Never

7. How did you hear about this restaurant?

- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Online Reviews
- Walk-in/Location Proximity
- Other (Specify)

Marketing Strategies

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The restaurant's marketing efforts (e.g., advertisements, promotions) effectively caught my attention.					
2	I frequently see this restaurant's promotions on social media platforms.					
3	The restaurant's marketing strategies influence my decision to visit.					
4	Discounts and promotional offers provided by the restaurant encourage me to visit more often.					
5	The restaurant's online presence (website, social media) is well-maintained and informative.					

Menu Innovation

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The restaurant offers a diverse and innovative menu that appeals to me.					
2	I find the restaurant's menu items unique compared to other restaurants.					
3	I am likely to return to the restaurant due to its interesting menu options.					
4	The menu reflects the latest trends in dining and food preferences.					
5	The restaurant regularly updates its menu with new items.					

Location

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The location of the restaurant is convenient for me.					
2	The restaurant is easily accessible and has sufficient parking.					
3	The surrounding area enhances the overall dining experience.					
4	The restaurant's location influences my decision to visit.					
5	I am likely to visit the restaurant more often due to its location.					

Digitalization

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The availability of online ordering influences my decision to dine at this restaurant.					
2	I find the restaurant's online delivery services easy to use.					
3	The restaurant's use of digital tools (online payment, reservation systems) enhances the overall experience.					
4	I am more likely to visit a restaurant that offers online promotions and discounts.					

5	The restaurant's presence on food delivery platforms (e.g., Uber Eats) encourages me to place orders.					
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Customer Satisfaction

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am satisfied with the overall dining experience at this restaurant.					
2	The quality of service provided at the restaurant meets my expectations.					
3	The food quality at the restaurant is consistently good.					
4	I am likely to recommend this restaurant to others based on my experience.					
5	The restaurant staffs are responsive and attentive to customer needs.					

Appendix 2 Data Management Plan

Introduction

This Data Management Plan (DMP) describes the procedures for collecting, storing, analysing, and ensuring the security and confidentiality of data used in the study "Investigating the Key Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction, Case of Start-up Restaurant in Finland". The plan ensures that ethical research standards are fulfilled and enhancing data integrity and accessibility.

Data collection

Data for this study were gathered through a structured survey of customers of Company X, a Korean fried chicken restaurant in Tampere, Finland. The survey used a Likert scale and multiple-choice questions to evaluate customer satisfaction via marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization. The data collection process followed ethical guidelines, which included obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring voluntary participation.

Data storage and security

To maintain data integrity and security, all collected data is stored in a number of formats. The raw data, containing the original survey responses, is stored in CSV format. Processed data, including cleaned and analyzed data, is saved in Excel and SPSS format. A backup strategy has been implemented, and data copies are securely stored on an encrypted cloud storage system and an external hard drive. Additionally, anonymity techniques ensure that personal identifiers are not collected, preserving participant anonymity.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 30.0.0. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize key demographic characteristics and customer satisfaction trends. Correlation analysis was used to assess the relationships between independent variables and customer satisfaction. Regression analysis determined the impact of marketing strategies, menu innovation, location, and digitalization on customer satisfaction.

Data sharing and accessibility

Internally, data is accessible to the research team for analysis and reporting. Externally, aggregated and anonymized datasets may be shared with academic and industry stakeholders upon request, ensuring no personally identifiable information is disclosed. The summarized findings will be included in the thesis and made available through the university's digital repository for long-term access.

Data retention and disposal

Data will be retained for one year after this study is assessed and approved to allow for follow-up research or validation. After the retention period, all digital files will be permanently deleted from storage devices, and any hard copies will be shredded to ensure data confidentiality.