

## **Quantitative Study on Food Aesthetics, Marketing Mix, and Customers' Satisfaction Among Restaurant Establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

Restaurant customers nowadays expect tasty food and aesthetic appeal as part of their overall experience. This study analyzed how the aesthetic value of restaurants affects customer satisfaction and the use of food aesthetics to build a consumer satisfaction model based on the image and atmosphere of the restaurant, the experiential value, as well as the consumption loyalty among restaurant establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines. The survey questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the customers, their assessment of the food aesthetics in food presentation, the respondents' perception of the impact of the marketing mix on customer satisfaction, and the level of their satisfaction. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed with 100 respondents selected using a random sampling technique. The study discovered that there was no significant relationship between the demographic profile and customers' satisfaction; there was a substantial connection between the assessment of food aesthetics in food presentation and customers' satisfaction, and there was a significant relationship between the perception of the marketing mix effects and customers' satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *food aesthetics, marketing mix, customers' satisfaction, restaurant establishments, promotional material*



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### **INTRODUCTION**

A fundamental requirement of every living person is food. On the other hand, artists suggest that "art" is important as well, especially in food presentation, to increase appetite. Providing appealing dishes not only demonstrates culinary ingenuity and talent, but it likewise influences the customers on how they feel about their meals. The plating and garnishing of a dish influence the customers' satisfaction and their appetite and makes them loyal guest (Alhelaili, 2015).

Restaurants, food service establishments, and hotels provide a significant portion of people's food supplies. This study is primarily concerned with how the senses of hearing, touch, taste, smell, and perception influence the perception of food, specifically how a well-organized position in a dish may be perceived differently than a sloppy arrangement, with implications for customer perceptions. The fundamental concept underlying this research is that taste is more than just a

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matter of flavor; it is dependent on the interaction of the five senses. The interaction of taste and sight is the focus of this research paper.

Fluency, pleasantness, usefulness, and tidiness were discovered as drivers of aesthetic pleasure in lunch meals. People preferred colorful food containing bright contrasts for lunch, as well as natural and simple colors and food-specific colors. Food should not be monotonous; it should be varied, and interesting colors are preferred. The colors of lunch meals are typically those of veggies; a higher number of hues suggests more (Paakki et al., 2019).

Aesthetic responses to parts of the environment around us influence most of our day-by-day choices and decisions (Naukkarinen, 2011; Palmer et al., 2013). The consumer, according to Venkatesh and Meamber (2008), is an aesthetic subject in an aestheticized daily life. They discovered that hedonism, sensory experiences, and emotions are all linked to aesthetic experiences. Aesthetics, according to Shimamura (2014), can be anything hedonistic to an experience that is sensory and similar to a preference, namely interesting or not, be approached or avoided, or be liked or disliked. According to the words of Markovic (2012), "aesthetic experience" is enjoyable, although the "object" is possible to be satisfying or unpleasing. Nonetheless, based on Venkatesh and Meamber, 2008, in the literature on the consumer, these "aesthetic experiences" are usually equivalent to satisfaction for the customers. It was also stated by Blijlevens et al. (2017) that "beautiful", "attractive", "pleasing to see," and "nice to see" are features for aesthetic pleasure.

Generally speaking, in 2012, based on Augustin et al. and in 2010, based on Jacobsen, "aesthetics" is linked to the fine arts and concepts like beauty, the senses, a pleasant feeling, and creativity. "Everyday aesthetics" has recently expanded the scope of aesthetics to include all of the items and activities that we encounter in our daily lives, based on Melchionne (2013) and Saito (2001). Food is an essential part of our daily lives. A crucial aspect of our daily existence is food, and as a result, everyday aesthetics is closely related to food. However, the majority of food aesthetics study has been on fine dining, visual composition of food in the place, and plating visuality (Spence et al., 2014; Velasco et al., 2016; and Zellner et al., 2010). Regular food aesthetics is a subject that hasn't gotten much attention.

The role of aesthetics in daily life can be defined in a variety of ways. It might be viewed as a particular luxury that interrupts the usual day (Haapala, 2010; Leddy, 2012), or it can be viewed as the ordinary itself that is aesthetically appealing (Melchionne, 2013; Naukkarinen, 2013). The first point of view represents the conventional idea of aesthetics as it relates to fine arts, beauty, and disinterestedness; aesthetics is something exceptional, an unexpected experience that breaks up the monotony of daily life and something we pay additional attention to. The following second viewpoint emphasizes the utility and practicality of aesthetics; something cannot be lovely unless it's helpful (Saito, 2001).

The theory of fluency (Palmer et al., 2013; Reber, 2012) states that the visual of a product's appeal is linked to its fluent (uncomplicated) perception. According to Reber (2012), visual stimuli that are simple to process (fluently) produce a good emotion that can be related to the aesthetic pleasure and beauty of the visual stimuli. In addition to the object's visual quality, previous exposure to the object has an impact on how quickly the stimulus may be processed (Reber, 2012). If a product is recognizable and simple to notice and recognize, it is seen to have a more pleasing aesthetic.

The body and mind support a complete and multimodal aesthetic perception of everyday objects and activities (Saito, 2001; Saito, 2007). Similarly, food-related elements, personal characteristics, and situational factors all contribute to meal pleasure (Haugaard and Lähteenmäki, 2017). The overall enjoyment of a meal is determined by how well these diverse components work together. Meal pleasure is closely connected with a good appraisal of the quality of the food (both the food consumed and the buffet selection) and a pleasant atmosphere (Haugaard et al., 2016).

When eating food, appearance and color are among the first sensory stimuli that are noticed (Delwiche, 2012; Zellner, 2015). The first appraisal of food is conducted by sight, especially at a buffet. According to Helldan et al. (2013), lunch is a significant portion of daily eating in Finland, accounting for 23% of men's daily calorie intake and, on the other hand, 21% of women's. A buffet lunch, whether in a corporate canteen or a restaurant, is a common working-day lunch. Based on Bruns et al. (2002) and Shankar et al. (2010), food selections have been proven to be substantially influenced by the food's look, expectations influenced by the appearance, and visual quality. Aside from sensory factors, there are several additional factors that influence options on food, such as societal and psychological factors, economic concerns, and so on. Thus, the colors and the aesthetic element of food were given greater attention and importance (Sobal et al., 2014; Edwards et al., 2013; Köster, 2009; Bruns et al., 2002).

From this vantage point, it is obvious that food aesthetics should not be considered a secondary consideration because it potentially has an impact on customer food preferences. There are many ways to define aesthetics in daily life. The first point of view shows the conventional comprehension of beauty about the disinterestedness, aesthetics, and fine arts wherein "aesthetics" is somehow exquisite an unexpectable moment. The second point of view represents the contemporary understanding of aesthetics concerning the fine arts, beauty, and disinterestedness.

Experiences are times in life that don't come by accident but rather as a result of a carefully thought-out scenario that permeates society. As a result, an experience is created when content, sensory, and emotional elements are presented to customers. People frequently go to restaurants to eat, drink and experience new things. Customers today demand not only a delicious meal but also a welcoming dining experience with top-notch service. Restaurants place a strong emphasis on aesthetic appeal as a component of the overall dining experience. Aesthetic importance addresses the five senses of the consumer, including sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

The aesthetic value of a restaurant is the ambiance created to affect patron preferences and actions. The physical attributes and make-up of the produced environment have an impact on how emotionally appealing a restaurant is perceived by customers. By adding more aesthetics to the fundamental aesthetic value elements of their restaurants, such as music, design, temperature, cleanliness, lighting, colors, and aroma, restaurateurs can assist guests in having unique experiences. By offering unique and memorable experiences, businesses can boost customer satisfaction while also influencing the likelihood that customers will return by fostering customer loyalty.

The ambiance established in a restaurant to influence customers' tastes and behavior is its aesthetic value. Customers' perceptions of a restaurant's emotional appeal are influenced by its physical characteristics and interior composition. Restaurant owners can help customers have unique experiences by enhancing the basic aesthetic value aspects of their establishments, such as

music, design, temperature, cleanliness, lighting, colors, and aroma. Businesses may increase customer satisfaction and influence the likelihood that consumers will return by cultivating customer loyalty by providing distinctive and memorable experiences. The study looked at how customers rated five aspects of experiential dining and how that influenced dis-confirmation and behavioral purpose in themed restaurants. The study's participants were chosen via a convenient sampling process in selected food aesthetics restaurants in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines.

Thus, this study aimed to determine the relationship between food aesthetics, marketing mix, and customers' satisfaction among restaurant establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to find the answer to the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondent in terms of:
  - 1.1. Age
  - 1.2. Sex
  - 1.3. Monthly Income
  - 1.4. Employment Status
  - 1.5. Most Visited Restaurant
2. What is the assessment of the respondents to the food aesthetics in food presentation?
  - 2.1. Symmetry
  - 2.2. Balance
  - 2.3. Clarity
  - 2.4. Pattern repetition
3. What is the perception of the respondents on the impact of marketing mix on customer satisfaction in terms of?
  - 3.1. Product
  - 3.2. Price
  - 3.3. Promotion
  - 3.4. Place
4. What is the respondent's mean level of customer satisfaction in terms of?
  - 4.1. Food Quality
  - 4.2. Menu Variety
  - 4.3. Customer Service
  - 4.4. Cleanliness
5. Is there any significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and customers' satisfaction?
6. Is there any significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of food aesthetics in food presentation and customers' satisfaction?
7. Is there any significant relationship between respondents' perception of the impact of the marketing mix and customers' satisfaction?
8. Based on the findings, what promotional material can be developed?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Food Aesthetics**

Abstract art and aesthetics are related to human perception (Abstract Art, 2015). "A collection of principles concerned with the nature and enjoyment of beauty," according to the dictionary, is the definition of aesthetics (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). This holds true for the idea of food presentation as well. Food presentation is governed by a set of established guidelines. In order to give food an appealing and acceptable appearance, culinary aesthetics is, therefore, more akin to a discipline. Despite the fact that individuals from different origins and cultures may adopt different methods for establishing and upholding these values, this discipline is universal.

The appreciation of food's visual attractiveness is a part of the definition of aesthetics. This implies that opinions on how much people value food's aesthetics vary subjectively. People from various cultures and backgrounds may view food differently, and they frequently do so based on their personal history, their particular cultural lenses, as well as environmental considerations like the types of meals that are available where they live.

As a result of industrialization, globalization, and other economic issues, more people worldwide are becoming increasingly conscious about the appearance of their food. According to the World Bank, the food and agriculture industry contributed 10% of the world economy's output or nearly US\$4.8 trillion in 2006. (Murray, 2007). According to various reports, the worldwide restaurant business is currently valued at more than \$2 trillion U.S. dollars. This figure is likely to climb as more modern families struggle with a lack of time and seek out convenience in addition to enjoying dining out. Chefs with experience, talent, and culinary training are in high demand.

Food is becoming more and more appreciated as a kind of art worldwide (Gopnik, 2009). People in the wealthier nations of the globe are beginning to understand the significance of food beyond just that which is necessary for survival, and on a global scale, it is becoming increasingly clear that eating and drinking are ways for us to express our own creativity and uniqueness. Additionally, thoughtful meal presentations can strengthen our bonds with others and demonstrate our unwavering affection, generosity, and hospitality to our friends and loved ones. This has an impact on our own lifestyle and taste, enabling us to more completely appreciate our relationships with others and our sense of community.

Whether food can be regarded as art is a key subject in the field of food aesthetics. Some people are in agreement, yet others are dubious or vehemently opposed (Gopnik, 2009). The debate over whether or not food may be art covers a wide range of topics, including the issue of originality (such as whether or not most food preparation just involves following other people's recipes) and the idea of food as a need or utility, among other issues. Hunger and food justice are two additional challenges raised by the notion of food as art. Some writers contend that because of intrinsic or qualitative distinctions, food is not art. Others contend that in order for food presentation to qualify as art, it must be paired with other, more well-known art forms, such as music or dance. Food and design, or how food is presented, differ significantly, as noted by art critics like Blake Gopnik (2009). For instance, some claim that only the presentation of a meal, and not the food itself, could conceivably be called art. These authors make a distinction between using food as a building material and making food sculptures. This argument is comparable to the distinction between oil paint colors and a finished picture that has been tastefully framed and is on exhibit in an art gallery or other exquisitely designed structure. In this way, art isn't about the tools an artist uses; it's about what's in their head.

Despite these objections, it is possible to argue that food possesses artistic aspects that can include a wide range of human emotions. A sand sculpture on a beach, an ice sculpture, a flash mob street performance, or other types of performance art all seem to be fleeting art forms that can be compared to food preparation because of the effort and creativity involved as well as the transient nature of food. When the tide comes in, one may imagine the waves "eating" away at the sand sculptures, an image that resembles the chewing of food until all of it is consumed. The melting of an ice sculpture and the departure of a bird provide a similar comparison.

The fact that food may transcend cultural barriers in an artistic way due to its inherent features that create a potent aesthetic sensation through the spectrum of senses, including taste, sight, touch, smell, and even hearing, in the human body is another argument in favor of food as art. Food cannot be separated from culture from the perspective that it is art. It can be argued that culture would not exist without art, and as food is such a large component of culture, it is linked to all other forms of art as well as to the history, ethnicity, and other aspects of distinct cultures.

In terms of social and economic history, industrial food production and growing skill specialization appear to have influenced more individuals to have the time, means, knowledge, and capacity to view food as art, at least in industrialized countries where food is abundant. But not everything in the world has access to food, and not everyone can enjoy food for its aesthetic aspects because of this relative wealth. According to the United Nations, roughly a billion people are either food insecure or lack access to clean drinking water (UNDESA, 2014). One's country or region of residence, and in particular where they stand economically, have a significant impact on how they are perceived. Thus, it is further explored that food's aesthetics in an effort to evaluate if the way it is presented qualifies as art.

### **Symmetry**

In the past, judgments on food plating in a fine dining establishment have relied on the chef's intuition, which was occasionally informed by a set of general guidelines. One such regulation is that plates should be served with odd instead of even numbers of items on them (Woods et al., 2016). Another rule is that shapes with sharp angles shouldn't face the dinner. Beyond this, the composition mainly depends on the components giving the meal its flavor and the cooks, chefs, or restaurant's approach.

Somehow, the techniques were influenced by fashions and trends, usually similar to what happens in the world of art: Ranging from vertical food arrangements idealized by architecture in Careme's day, towards the present-day plating fads toward asymmetry, to the balanced attributes on 32 cm white plates with individualized monograms used by the majority of chefs during the nouvelle-cuisine (still a "mark" of that style of cooking), and even through to (Abrams (2013), Deroy et al. (2014), Spence and Piqueras-Fiszman (2014), Spence et al. (2014), Styler and Lazarus (2006), Yang (2011).

We have an indication wherein the art of plate presentation may, later on, be influenced by further scientific approaches because several psychologists and sensory scientists have recently shown an inquisitiveness in systematically measuring people's preferences when it comes to various plate presentation configurations (cf. Abrams, 2013). And although the general public frequently chooses the chef's judgment, this may not always be the case. People seem to be prepared to spend more for centered compositions, and not balanced plate presentation, for

example, is seldom chosen over more balanced compositions according to Michel et al. (2015). However, keep in mind that when it comes to the visual appeal of food, context could be a crucial consideration.

Based on Arnheim, Banich et al., Gotdon and Gardner, Locher and McManus et al. (1974; 1989; 1974; 1996; 1993, respectively) experimental aesthetics research over many years has revealed a definite preference for visual balance. Surely, visual aesthetics studies have consistently shown that centrally located objects are frequently preferred (Palmer et al., 2013) and that preference declines proportionately the farther the object is moved from the center (Palmer et al., 2008). Although this has primarily been researched in relation to visual items, the plating may also be covered. The "Power of the Center" refers to this bias in spatial composition that appears to affect a viewer's assessment of two-dimensional compositions (Arnheim, 1986; Palmer et al., 2008). It might, at least in part, explain why people seem to enjoy having their food placed in the center of the plate (e.g., Michel et al., 2015b).

The community's tendency to favor balanced versus not balanced meal compositions may also be reflected in this "centre bias." Participants in a study by Zellner et al. (2010) were asked to assess a plate of food's aesthetic appeal and flavor in either a balanced or an unbalanced configuration. Slices of water chestnut and tahini made up the meal (that was either colored or naturally uncoloured). Participants in this study gave the balanced presentation higher aesthetic appeal ratings than the unbalanced arrangement, but they did not find it to be any more 'tasty. The appeal of red pepper hummus topped with a romaine leaf, three baby carrots, three cherry tomatoes, and four pita chips were then evaluated by Zellner et al. (2011). Surprisingly, the balanced presentation of this cuisine did not receive higher ratings for attractiveness, but it did receive higher ratings for taste when compared to the unbalanced presentation. In other words, when food was presented in a balanced way, it was enjoyed, but when it was given in an uneven way, it was neither strongly loved nor despised. Further research by Zellner et al. (2011) revealed that the taste of the food in their studies might not have been affected by the balance of the presentation but rather by its neatness. In this experiment, the balance of a chicken "salad" on top of a lettuce leaf was maintained, although the degree of messiness or tidiness changed (the chicken was put in either a neat mound in the leaf's center or in a scattered but balanced manner). Although the flavor of the meal in the neat presentation was scored better, it was not determined that it was more beautiful than the messy presentation.

### **Balance**

In the past, judgments on food plating in a fine dining establishment have relied on the chef's intuition, which was occasionally informed by a set of general guidelines. One such regulation is that plates should be served with odd rather than even numbers of items on them (refuted in Woods et al., 2016). Another rule is that shapes with sharp angles shouldn't face the dinner. Beyond this, the composition mainly depends on the components giving the meal its flavor and the chef's or restaurant's approach.

Thus, such styles have been influenced by trends and fashion, very similar to what happens in the art world: Diversifying from vertical food arrangements idealized by architecture from Carême's time to the present-day asymmetrical plating trends to the equal characteristics or

compositions on 32 cm white plates with personalized monograms used by most of the chefs during the nouvelle-cuisine (still a "mark" of that style of cooking), and even through to the use of geometric shapes based on Abrams (2013), Deroy et al. (2014), Spence and Piqueras-Fiszman (2014), Spence et al. (2014), Styler and Lazarus (2006), Yang (2011).

An indication that the practice of plate presentation may, later on, be influenced by a more scientific approach is the recent interest among certain psychologists and sensory scientists in systematically examining people's preferences with regard to various plating arrangements (cf. Abrams, 2013). And although the general public frequently chooses the chef's judgment, this may not always be the case. People seem to be prepared to spend more for centered compositions, and unbalanced plating, for example, is not always chosen over more balanced compositions (Michel et al., 2015a). However, keep in mind that when it comes to the visual appeal of food, context could be a crucial consideration. For example, an unequal assembly at a test restaurant may not be as similar to assembly in a standardized quick-service (or fast food) restaurant (Edwards et al., 2003).

For the balance of visuals, a clear preference has been found in experimental aesthetics research over a long period of time, according to Arnheim (1974), Banich et al. (1989), Gordon and Gardner (1974); Locher (1996), and McManus et al. (1993). On the other hand, according to Palmer et al. (2013)'s research on visual aesthetics, centrally positioned things are usually favored, and that preference decreases proportionately the farther the object is from the center, based on Palmer et al. (2008). Although plating may also be covered, aesthetic items have received the most of the research attention. The bias in spatial composition known as "The Power of the Center" is what appears to influence how viewers evaluate two-dimensional compositions (Arnheim, 1986; Palmer et al., 2008). It could, at least in part, explain why individuals seem to prefer their meal to be served in the middle of the plate (e.g., Michel et al., 2015b).

The tendency for people to favor balanced versus unbalanced meal compositions may also be reflected in this "centre bias." Participants in a study by Zellner et al. (2010) were asked to assess a plate of food's aesthetic appeal and flavor in either a balanced or an unbalanced configuration. Slices of water chestnut and tahini made up the meal (that was either coloured or naturally uncoloured). Participants in this study gave the balanced presentation higher aesthetic appeal ratings than the unbalanced arrangement, but they did not find it to be any more 'tasty. The appeal of red pepper hummus topped with a romaine leaf, three baby carrots, three cherry tomatoes, and four pita chips were then evaluated by Zellner et al. (2011). Surprisingly, the balanced presentation of this cuisine did not receive higher ratings for attractiveness, but it did receive higher ratings for taste when compared to the unbalanced presentation. In other words, when food was presented in a balanced way, it was enjoyed, but when it was given in an uneven way, it was neither strongly loved nor despised. In their subsequent research, Zellner et al. (2011) suggested that the neatness of the presentation, rather than its balance, may have had an impact on the taste of the food. In this experiment, the balance of a chicken "salad" on top of a lettuce leaf was maintained, although the degree of messiness or neatness varied (the chicken was placed in either a neat mound in the center of the leaf or spread out in a messy but balanced manner). Although the flavor of the meal in the neat presentation scored better, it was not determined that it was more beautiful than the messy presentation.

Based on past studies, Zellner (2015) made the following assertion: "While balance may be a significant visual contributor to the appeal of visual art, it is less significant than neatness when it

comes to food presentation." However, take note of how this differs from Michel et al. (2014) 's findings, which found that in a realistic dining environment, a balanced presentation was significantly favored over one that wasn't balanced and that a more complex food presentation was enjoyed more than a clean one (Michel et al., 2015a) which is the entrée where the similar food characteristics or composition of elements were put to the plate's other side. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the visual aspects of the food and the subsequent eating experience undoubtedly involve a complex interaction of factors, each of which deserves consideration, it is currently unclear what is the most appropriate interpretation for the few studies that have been published to date on the subject of balanced versus unbalanced plating.

An experiment's findings were narrowly focused on one plate compositional feature. To further understand the significance of balance to people's plating preferences, people's preferences for various food photos that differed in terms of the spatial arrangement of the edible ingredients on the plate were studied.

### **Clarity**

The art of changing, processing, arranging, or decorating food to increase its aesthetic appeal is known as food presentation. In many different phases of food preparation, like the way meats are tied or sewn, the kind of cut used in chopping and slicing meats or vegetables, and the type of mold used in a poured dish, chefs frequently take the visual presentation of dishes into consideration. The food may be garnished with edible or inedible decorations, such as intricately frosted cakes, ornate occasionally sculptural edibles, sauces, seeds, powders, or other toppings, or it may be drizzled with sauce (Styler & Lazarus, 2006).

Cooks frequently pay special attention to plate presentation, selecting ingredients and methods to produce a particular result, adhering to a set layout, and wiping away drips. Some ingredients, like shells, are not to be consumed at all and are just included to complement other items, like a parsley garnish. The final thing the cook does before serving the dish is to examine it visually. When food is brought to the table, diners are frequently mesmerized by it and appear to be consuming the entire meal. However, even the most magnificent sculpture will crumble when a knife, fork, or spoon is used, making plate presentation meaningless (Styler & Lazarus, 2006).

The idea of aesthetics is what appeals to and pleases the senses. The best marketing strategy a food service establishment can do is to present enticing, mouthwatering cuisine. Often, the quality of food being provided is rated based on the way it looks. Foods that are poorly presented convey to customers that the restaurant does not prioritize their satisfaction. Offering appetizing food not only demonstrates originality and culinary expertise but also gives clients a positive mealtime experience. When serving food in different venues, how a meal looks will affect customer pleasure and may also have an impact on a client's nutritional status because they are more likely to eat if the dish looks delicious. It's not always necessary to spend a lot of money and labor to present a beautiful supper. The essential components of an appealing plate presentation are ambition and creative meal planning (Zhang et al., 2022).

### **Pattern Repetition**

An often-overlooked component of the creative food photographer's toolkit is pattern and texture. However, you actually need to become tuned in to repeat patterns in order to make the most of using them. In this article, we'll discuss some strategies for increasing your pattern awareness and offer ideas for adding more texture and pattern to your regular food photography. The natural environment is full of patterns and textures, which naturally include the food we eat. When photographing some meals, they are actually almost impossible to avoid; just consider the texture of bread or orange skins (Campo et al., 2017).

These kinds of patterns and textures are so ubiquitous that it's probable that they've already been captured on camera. Learning to detect patterns and textures is the first step, so to speak. Not just existing patterns but possible patterns as well, since mastering pattern creation is a key component of successfully dealing with patterns. Some of the patterns in food photography are called macro patterns, regimental patterns, and random repetition. Macro patterns are simply put; patterns that already naturally exist in food are the simplest to shoot. Consider the feel of a biscuit, the pits in a citrus peel, the rocky terrain of fried batter, or the surreal fractals of Romanesco broccoli. On the other hand, some patterns consist of discrete components that, when seen individually, are all significantly dissimilar from one another but, when seen collectively, have the same appearance—like troops on parade (Putra et al., 2020).

Consider bricks as an illustration. When arranged in a wall, bricks have a remarkably similar appearance and are all positioned similarly. However, if each brick is closely studied individually, significant variances will become apparent. Photographing biscuits, chocolates, or any other mass-produced food laid out geometrically would provide a similar effect. This will produce a very organized effect that is almost mathematical. There are some patterns made out of a variety of quite distinct things that, when seen collectively, exhibit a certain regularity. Not every pattern involves repetition (Campo et al., 2017).

### **Marketing Mix (4Ps)**

The foundation of commercial operations is a marketing activity through which a company can generate sales income and profit. Marketing activities are made up of the marketing mix, which consists of a number of pertinent solutions that help clients meet (national) needs and accomplish business goals. The four Ps, or the marketing mix, are a group of manageable marketing elements that a company employs to achieve the intended response in the targeted market. Customer loyalty and satisfaction are the results of marketing, which includes Product, Price, Promotion, and Place (Wahab et al., 2015).

### **Product**

According to Verma and Singh (2017), referenced in Iorait (2016), a product is "a physical good or service that the consumer is prepared to pay for. This comprises half of the consumer-purchased tangible things, such as furniture, clothing, and food, as well as intangible commodities, specifically services. The company develops its products to satisfy the demands and desires of its customers. Most businesses today are required to develop goods that are suitable for consumers' wants by providing novel goods.

### **Price**

According to Iorait (2016), "pricing is viewed as the only aspect of the marketing mix, generating income and the essential component in determining customer pleasure and loyalty." Price can be thought of as the product's exchange value. Price is the main factor to consider when evaluating a product; hence every company should have a price management strategy. In addition to providing competitive pricing, businesses must balance the cost of the quantity and quality of their products. Customer happiness and loyalty are also influenced by price.

### **Promotion**

According to Iorait (2016), "the marketing mix's promotion is a tool that helps spread information, stimulate purchases, and affects the buy decision process." Offering, selling, and promoting things to consumers is known as promotion. Promotion needs to be engaging so that consumers will continue to purchase and consume the products.

### **Place**

"Distribution refers to operations that are done to deliver a product or service to customers," Pordehghan (2015) noted. Even though distribution and position are the 4P's most basic concepts, they are crucial. Distribution, often known as the place, is the process of getting things to customers. It is also possible to say that place facilitates customers' access to or discovery of the products. Businesses must manage their placement strategy so that customers can readily find their products (Paniandi et al., 2018).

### **Customer Satisfaction**

The main success criterion for a commercial entity is customer happiness (Adikaram & Khatibi, 2016). "A person's feelings of joy or disappointment that result from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) to expectations," claim Kotler and Keller (2009) and Kotler et al. (2010). S. and Khadka. Customer happiness, as noted by A. Sudari et al. (2019) in Management Science Letters, is dynamic and relative. Customer expectations should be taken into consideration when working to increase customer satisfaction, and it can be deduced that this feeling is a result of how well a product meets or surpasses the expectations of the customer, who has expectations for the product's performance. Six fundamental ideas of customer happiness have been developed by specialists. The approach theories of assimilation theory, contrast theory, assimilation contrast theory, negativity theory, hypothesis testing theory, and disconfirmation theory were offered by Isaac and Rusu (2014). This study is related to the disconfirmation theory, which discusses what buyers expect from the items. Expectations may relate to a quality standard that is measured against a product's performance or actual quality. Customers then assess the products to see if they satisfy or dissatisfy them.

Success can be measured in large part by customer satisfaction. You can find opportunities to improve your food service program and give your customers the greatest possible experience by knowing how you stack up against similar institutions. The relationship between a customer's expectations and their feelings leads to customer satisfaction. To clarify, customer satisfaction is defined as the difference between the projected level of service quality and the client's involvement or feelings following the perception of the service (Bateson & Hoffman, 2010).

In the present era, everyone has observed how business is expanding each day quickly. When it comes to business, there are always two sides involved: buyers and sellers. Whereas buyers are always concerned with quality, sellers are always concerned with profit. The world of today depends on business-end participation in at least three key activities. Many academics have debated this issue and claimed that the first activity is production, which is creating a good or offering a service. The second is service businesses, which use employee abilities to provide activities and support to meet consumer wants as opposed to manufacturing, where firms first develop items that customers then purchase to fulfill demands (Burrow & Everard, 2009). In a similar vein, Herson (2001) contends that customer satisfaction and service quality offer a conceptual framework that should be helpful in comprehending, considering, and discussing service quality and customer satisfaction, what they are, how they are formed, and how a subject can change in response to both internal, controllable forces and external, uncontrollable factors.

Customer satisfaction is crucial since it provides insight into the company's advantages and disadvantages. It encourages displaying composure when delivering higher-quality goods and services to both the workforce and the public. Learning about strengths and weaknesses is beneficial, but so is being able to influence competitive strengths and weaknesses.

The business manager and staff, whether it be a restaurant or any other type of company, must have good communication skills. The individual must be capable of communicating clearly and politely in a competent language.

### **Food Quality**

According to Sulek and Hensley, the most crucial element of a restaurant experience is the food (2014). As a result, several food traits and components, like food quality, are relevant. Previous studies have looked at numerous food quality features because it is known how important food quality is to the restaurant industry. Researchers generally describe food quality in terms of presentation, a diverse menu, healthy choices, flavor, temperature, as well as freshness, according to certain reviews of the literature. Meanwhile, Kivela et al. (1999) mentioned that another sensory component of food quality is temperature. In 2004, Delwiche asserted that temperature influences how food flavors are obtained; this will interact with other sensory qualities like taste, smell, and sight.

### **Menu Variety**

The term "variety" is well-known in economics because it refers to one of the most popular company strategies. Depending on how it is interpreted, variety may take on a different form. Starting with the choice of raw materials, how they are processed, and when they are prepared for serving, the range of menus offers a wide variety of foods that consumers need in order to suit their needs. Customers will find it simpler to select the meal that suits their tastes thanks to the variety of menu options. Menu delivery is a crucial component of internal marketing and serves as a selling feature for restaurants to offer their food and beverages to consumers, claim Reynolds and Taylor (2009). The menu will convey what you have to offer, show the level of service you desire, and show the surroundings your visitors will encounter. Menus are lists of food items that it offers company owners based on client requirements and requests (Rosalin & Soetanto, 2006), among other aspects. Typically, menus are created to meet the objectives of the business owner. Additionally,

menus can act as a consumer base for food selections; well-designed menus can draw customers' attention to more products available for purchase (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2013).

### **Customer Service**

In today's increasingly competitive world, firms might engage in resources focusing on customer experience management. The brand's actions, such as marketing, research, advertising, etc., have a significant impact on customer experience. (Hyken, 2018). However, the author has discovered three crucial interrelated factors that are crucial for providing quality customer service. The first is that all data must be compiled, meaning that regardless of where the customer contacts you or through which channel, it should be presented as a single, comprehensive report (O'Donnell and Boyle, 2008). Second, everything is a large team, and clients don't really care which department they are speaking to, especially in times of crisis. So that the teams can work together to offer a personalized customer experience, technology must be in place (Ripsam and Bouquet, 2016).

### **Cleanliness**

Understanding what client wants is crucial for managing service businesses because it enables management to make the best use of their limited resources. There is little evidence to support the idea that cleanliness is one of the numerous aspects influencing the customer experience (Lockyer, 2003; Scarcelli, 2007). What exact aspects of cleanliness are crucial to customers when choosing a hotel, restaurant, or retail establishment is yet unknown. The majority of consumers never see how a service institution runs on the inside. However, this hidden region may be a customer's main concern, if not the only consideration, when selecting a specific service provider, leading to unhappiness (Yamanaka et al., 2003). For instance, the dining area and tables, the kitchen, and the restrooms are all considered part of the state of a restaurant's cleanliness. Similar conditions in the kitchen may be indicated by the general cleanliness of the eating area, the appearance of the staff (Ryu and Jang, 2008; Stevens et al., 1995), and the state of the servers' station. According to Scarcelli (2007), another issue is the possibility of contracting foodborne illnesses, which could be brought on by inappropriate handling of the food or by the establishment's sanitary procedures, such as subpar food handlers' and servers' personal hygiene. Some studies were discovered that suitably calibrated and specified the consumers' views of the quality of service as well as cleanliness, in spite of this concern for the latter as a key factor in determining service quality. The significance of cleanliness in travel agencies was generally evaluated and found to be a significant factor of professionalism and attention to detail by SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and Ivanov (2007). According to Huang et al. (2006), the Taiwan national passenger highway rest stops' service quality and general cleanliness were evaluated. Andaleb (2001) evaluated the cleanliness of hospital services using only some things such as clean toilets, rooms, and also wards. In 2003, Bienstock et al. employed four broad statements—two for general food safety and two for dining room and restroom cleanliness—to assess restaurant food safety and sanitation procedures in relation to patron views of superior service.

They discovered that the connection between service quality and food safety and cleanliness was not always clear to customers. Overall cabin cleanliness was shown to be significant to customers by Atalik and Arslan (2009) as part of their research on customer loyalty and airlines.

Another crucial element of cleanliness is hygiene. It has been discovered that hygiene may improve the caliber of services. In 1991, according to Brown et al., hygiene was a crucial element that can improve the satisfaction of customer service; yet, if it isn't obvious to the consumer, it can result in discontent. According to Silvestro and Johnston (1990), the lack of hygiene is an important factor in customer dissatisfaction with service quality. In Thailand, cleanliness and hygienic conditions in the dining room, restrooms, utensils, and staff are the most important considerations for patrons (Threevitaya, 2003). For instance, they recommended that cutlery and the table's cleanliness be considered hygienic issues. Customers would evaluate a food service establishment as providing poor or low quality of service if it did not fulfill the requirements of food hygiene and cleanliness expected by the customers, according to Zeithaml et al. (1990) and Aksoydan (2007). In these two studies, the term "hygiene" was used to refer to the general cleanliness of the staff, the food, and the food service facility. Finally, a service quality metric for retail establishments was created by Dabholkar et al. in 1996. Only one factor—"The business features clean, beautiful and handy public areas (restrooms, fitting rooms)"—was evaluated in this measurement. Lockyer's study was the only one to try a more thorough evaluation of the cleanliness factor (2003). In that study, a 31-item survey was used to evaluate hotel cleanliness.

### **Food Stimuli**

Nearly all Asian nations' economies are growing and developing significantly because of the service sector (Viot, 2012). (Lovelock CH, 2007). The restaurant business also helps the Indian economy expand. Middle-class customers and their families place a higher value on fine dining (Lee J H, 2011). (Wu, 2009). Intense rivalry makes it difficult for restaurants to maintain profitability and expansion (Canon Tong, 2014). Gaining new clients is proving to be highly expensive, as it is in any sector. Getting a new customer is ten times more expensive than keeping an old one (Peelen, 2003). The destiny of every firm is greatly influenced by the recommendations of customers. Positive word-of-mouth is viewed as a form of free-walking advertising from which businesses can profit greatly (Chamvilailuk R, 2013). (Rust R T, 2006). In the restaurant industry, brand awareness is more lucrative since customers believe that well-known branded restaurants prepare food in a hygienic manner, making it safe for eating (Gurbuz, 2008). Three key aspects of service quality are food quality, physical atmosphere (ambiance), and employee service (Dutta K, 2014). (Ryu K, 2012). In addition to service and ambiance, Bujisic has discovered that one of the most prevalent characteristics of a high-quality restaurant is its food (Bujisic M, 2014). Previous research has demonstrated that a restaurant's atmosphere and the cuisine it serves can have a significant impact on the dining experience (Chen, 2015). The level of a diner's contentment and his upcoming behavioral intentions are influenced by the caliber of the food, the caliber of the service, and the actual setting of a restaurant (Ryu K, 2012). The atmosphere affects diners' feelings, both good and bad (Liu Y, 2009). Researchers have discovered that changing a restaurant's interior layout and introducing a booking system that helps staff seat patrons can dramatically improve diners' experiences (Chen, 2015). Providing a unique brand experience is essential in the restaurant industry since customers have access to a wide range of dining options (Ananda Sabil Hussein, 2015). The main causes of service failure in restaurants are slow service (long waits for seating, which affects the ambiance, cuisine, and bill), staff confusion of orders, and mistakes in the kitchen (Ernest Cyril de Run, 2008). Due to diners switching to other restaurants, these mistakes cost

restaurateurs money (Keaveney, 1995). Since judging service, quality is tough because service qualities vary, measuring diner satisfaction is fairly difficult (Poolthong Y, 2009). Higher brand loyalty is correlated with positive feelings and satisfaction (Jang S, 2009). (Jeon S M, 2012). The diner's positive perception of their dining experience influences their opinion of the restaurant, which encourages them to support its reputation and brand (Ananda Sabil Hussein, 2015). In service companies, customer loyalty is absolutely essential (Asuncion B, 2004). Since it costs six times more to acquire a new customer than it does to keep an existing one, restaurateurs gain profit from a loyal customer base in terms of economic performance as well as the potential for new business (Rai K R, 2012). The subdimensions of consumer loyalty include repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth (Boonlertvanich, 2011). An explanation for the influence of stimuli on individual reactions through organism effects has been put out by Mehrabian and Russell (Mehrabian A, 1974). In order to investigate the effects of ambiance, food, and eating experience on diner loyalty, the researcher in this report used the MR Model. As a result, the environment and the food operate as stimuli, the dining experience as an organism effect, and diner loyalty as an individual response.

### **MR Model**

The MR model can be used to study value, attitude, and behavior most effectively. Values influence attitudes and behaviors (Rajani, 2010). An essential component influencing conduct is someone's mindset (Ajzen, 2005). The MR model has been used in a variety of contexts by academics, including retail marketing (Kaltcheva V. D., 2006), online shopping (Koo D M, 2010), tourist shopping behavior (Yuksel, 2007), restaurant management (Jang S. S., 2009), and shopping (Ong F. S., 2011), among others.

### **Synthesis**

The related literature and studies, which are presented, gave a clear oversight and conceptualization of this research. This literature discusses food aesthetics, marketing mix, and customer satisfaction. In the Gopnik research from 2009, the issue of whether or not food qualifies as art is one of the major issues in the field of food aesthetics. Some people are in agreement, yet others are dubious or vehemently opposed. People seem to be prepared to spend more for centered compositions, and unbalanced plating, for example, is not always chosen over more balanced compositions (Michel et al., 2015a). Based on past investigations, the study by Zellner (2015, p. 166) made the following conclusion: "While balance may be a significant visual contribution to the appeal of visual art, it is less significant than neatness when it comes to food presentation."

In the 2015 study by Wahhabi et al., customer loyalty and satisfaction are the results of marketing, which includes "Product", "Price", "Promotion", and "Place". Marketing activities are made up of the marketing mix, which consists of a number of pertinent solutions that help clients meet (national) needs and accomplish business goals.

According to a 2018 study by Hyken, brand activities like marketing, research, and advertising have a significant impact on customer experience. Given the intense competition in today's market, firms can allocate resources to managing the customer experience. Thus, to

determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, the following hypotheses will be treated under a .05 level of significance.

There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile and customers' satisfaction.

There is no significant relationship between the assessment of food aesthetics in food presentation and customers' satisfaction.

There is no significant relationship between the perception of the impact of the marketing mix and customers' satisfaction.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopted the quantitative type of research and descriptive-correlational research design. It was anchored on the Theoretical Framework of Prettiness in terms of Classical Aesthetics (Nikolova and Inman 2015) and serving size decisions (Suher, Raghunathan, and Hoyer 2016). Its "level of customer satisfaction in food presentations" was based on Adikaram & Khatibi (2016) in terms of food quality, menu variety, customer service, and cleanliness and its marketing mix of Neil Borden as cited by Kotler (2012).

The conceptual framework of the study adapted the IV - DV Model, which shows the relationship between the three (3) independent variables 1. demographic profile such as age, sex, monthly income, employment status, and most visited restaurant. 2. aesthetics in food presentation with its indicators such as symmetry, balance, clarity, and pattern repetition. 3. Perception in marketing with its indicators such as product, price, promotion, and place. The dependent variable is the customers' satisfaction which, i.e., measures with its indicators such as food quality, menu variety, customer service, and cleanliness. Moreover, the line connecting the independent variables' box and the dependent variable box represents their relationship, i.e., subject for hypothesis testing.

The study focuses on food aesthetics, marketing mix, and customer satisfaction among restaurant establishments in Calamba City, in the province of Laguna, Philippines. The Sources of information were collected from one hundred (100) customers of the ten (10) restaurants and distributed survey questionnaire. Part one of the questionnaire aims to gather the demographic profile of consumer satisfaction based on their age, sex, monthly income, employment status, and most visited restaurant. Part two of the questionnaire aims to gather the assessment of the respondents with regards to the level of consumer satisfaction in terms of service quality, food quality, physical environment, price fairness, and social interaction. The respondents of the study are one hundred (100) customers who eat at Calamba City, Laguna; the study utilizes non-probability technique sampling where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher.

The researchers created a request letter for the respondents, which was appended to the Google Form. The survey questionnaire was designed to be filled out by hundred (100) respondents. The second and the last section of the questionnaire was created by the researchers, while the third section was adapted from the study of Strategic Marketing Mix on Organizational Objectives of Food and Beverage. It passed the validation process of five (5) validators. The first portion contains the respondents' profile; the second section contains the Food Aesthetics; the third section contains the Marketing Mix; and the last part is the level of customer satisfaction. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using a pilot test, which was completed by 30 respondents.

The survey questionnaire underwent a reliability test. The Likert scale was also used to measure the respondent's assessment of Food Aesthetics on Consumers' Satisfaction.

During the quantitative phase of the research, after confirming the validity of the questionnaire, the researchers requested permission from the respondents to answer the survey questionnaire via a consent on Google Form. The surveys were distributed to the intended respondents by the researchers. Following the completion of the questionnaire, the researchers collected all the data, sorted it, tabulated it, and subjected it to statistical treatment and analysis. The retrieval of the questionnaire was after the customer answered all the questions. After that, they interpret and analyze the data. The researchers used tabulation form and other formulas needed to compute the result of the survey. The researchers also made sure that all collected data were treated with utmost confidentiality to protect the information of the respondents. Data collection started on December 1, 2022, to February 7, 2022.

The statistical test and measures included were frequency, percentage distribution, weighted mean, Chi-Square, and Pearson Correlation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The result of reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha depicted in Table 1 showed an  $\alpha$  value of 0.945, which indicates an "Excellent" internal consistency.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Consistency
Symmetry	5	0.879	Good
Balanced	5	0.828	Good
Clarity	5	0.834	Good
Patter Repetition	5	0.863	Good
Food Quality	5	0.856	Good
Menu Variety	5	0.910	Excellent
Customer Service	5	0.910	Excellent
Cleanliness	5	0.927	Excellent
Product	5	0.861	Good
Price	5	0.891	Good
Promotion	5	0.913	Excellent
Place	5	0.838	Good
Overall	60	0.945	Excellent

$\alpha \geq 0.9$ : Excellent;  $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ : Good;  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ : Acceptable;  $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ : Questionable;  $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ : Poor;  $> \alpha$ : Unacceptable;

The Likert scale shown in Table 2 measured the respondents' assessment of Food Aesthetics on Consumers' Satisfaction. The results of the response were interpreted using the scale below.

Table 2. Rating of Food Aesthetics on Consumers' Satisfaction

Rating Scale	Intervals	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.51 - 4.00	Strongly Agree/ Very Satisfied
3	2.51 - 3.50	Agree/Satisfied
2	1.51 - 2.50	Disagree/ Dissatisfied
1	1.00 - 1.50	Strongly Disagree/ Very Dissatisfied

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### Profile of the Respondents

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Most Visited Restaurants, Sex, Age, Employment Status, and Monthly Income

Restaurants	f	Sex		Age			Employment Status			Monthly Income		
		Male	Female	16-20	21-25	26-30	Student	Employed	Unemployed	below 10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-30,000
Pizza Hut	17	8	9	3	13		19	2		18	1	1
Shakey's	30	13	17	7	22	1	15	8		17	6	1
Kenny Rogers	7	3	4	0	5	2	13	6	0	14	1	2
Max's Restaurant	22	10	12	3	19	1	19	5	1	21	6	2
Yellow Cab	8	4	4	2	4	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Others	16	4	12	3	12	1	7	1	3	3	2	0
	100	42	58	18	75	6	73	23	4	75	18	7

In Table 3, the distribution of respondents by most visited restaurants is shown. Shakey's has the highest frequency of 30 with a percentage of 30% while Yellow Cab has the lowest frequency of 8 with a percentage of 8%. This implies that the majority of respondents chose Shakey's as their most

visited restaurant. According to Elliot in 2006, because of the COVID-19 threat, consumers are predicted to prefer private dining restaurants or private tables in a restaurant. Hence, this prediction was based on many theories, which includes the behavioral inhibition system theory. The distribution of respondents by sex is shown in Table 3, where "female" has the highest frequency of 58 with a percentage of 58%, while the male has the lowest frequency of 42 with a percentage of 42%. This suggests that more women than men responded to the survey. Additionally, earlier research showed that women were more interested in organic food than men (Davis et al., 1995; Wandel & Bugge, 1997). Complementing these earlier studies is the finding from Koivisto, Hursti, and Magnusson (2003), indicating a higher proportion of women had favorable perceptions of and consumed organic products (Lockie et al., 2002; McEachern & McClean, 2002; Storstad & Bjorkhaug, 2003). In terms of age distribution, age 21-25 years old has the highest frequency of 75 with a percentage of 75%, while 31-35, 36-40, and 46-50 and above 50 have the lowest frequency of 0 with a percentage of 0%. This implies that the majority of the respondents are 21-25 years old. The observed age profile is similar to that of previous studies (Storey and Johnson 1987) and has a number of implications for the study that the age of 19 - 25 there is a greater number of consumers. The occupational distribution of respondents shows that student has the highest frequency of 73 with a percentage of 73%, while the unemployed have the lowest frequency of 4 with a percentage of 4%. Thus, this suggests that students make up the bulk of the respondents. Based on Abdul (2001) & Motevalli et al. (2011), only the university branch can succeed in this cutthroat market because it not only aligns its performance and activities with the needs and wants of students but also increases its own interests and profits by getting a larger market share and satisfying students' needs. The data on the monthly income of the respondents showed that "below 10,000" has the highest frequency of 75 with a percentage of 75%, while 40,001 - 50,000 and more than 50,001 has the lowest frequency of 0 with a percentage of 0%. This implies that the majority of the monthly income of the respondents is below 10,000. Income is a different aspect of the consumer demographic that is significant in determining the inclination to buy organic food. Award (2011) asserts that because it is often believed that green products are more expensive than conventional ones, income is positively correlated with green consumer behavior.

### **Assessment of the respondents on the Aesthetics in food presentation**

Table 4. Aesthetics in food presentation in terms of Symmetry

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. The food has a right proportion	3.47	Agree
2. The components of food presented are all equal	3.36	Agree
3. The food plating has unity and purpose	3.48	Agree
4. The plate used is relevant to the dish presented	3.50	Agree
5. Garnishes well presented	3.47	Agree

Composite Mean	3.46	Agree
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Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

As shown in Table 8, the assessment of the respondents on the aesthetics in food presentation in terms of symmetry. The composite mean is 3.46, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "The plate used is relevant to the dish presented." Has the highest mean of 3.50, which is interpreted as agree, while the indicator "The components of food presented are all equal" has the lowest mean of 3.36, which is interpreted as agree. This suggests that the majority of responders are focused on the plate that is relevant to the dish presented. According to Edwards et al. (2003), the context may be a crucial consideration in terms of the visual appeal of food. For instance, an asymmetrical presentation at an experimental restaurant wouldn't signify a similar thing as a similar arrangement in a regular quick service restaurant.

Table 5. Aesthetics in food presentation in terms of Balance

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Color of the food is visually attractive	3.58	Strongly Agree
2. Texture of the food is enticing to the appetite	3.53	Strongly Agree
3. Sizes are served appropriately	3.44	Agree
4. Shape is cut accordingly	3.43	Agree
5. Food is at the right temperature	3.54	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.50	Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

Shown in Table 5 is the assessment of the respondents on the aesthetics of food presentation in terms of balance. The composite mean is 3.50, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "Color of the food is visually attractive" obtained the highest mean of 3.58, which is interpreted as strongly agree while the indicator "Shape is cut accordingly" has the lowest mean of 3.43, which interprets as agree. The majority of the respondents are hence focused on the color of the food that is visually attractive. Participants in a study by Zellner et al. (2010) were asked to assess a plate of food's aesthetic appeal and flavor in either a balanced or imbalanced configuration.

Table 10. Aesthetics in food presentation in terms of Clarity

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Texture of the food is easily distinguished	3.43	Agree
2. Food is perfectly made and molded accordingly to its size, shape, and taste	3.47	Agree
3. There is a palatable taste in food	3.52	Strongly Agree
4. Nutrition Facts are stated before serving the foods	3.45	Agree

5. The food served employs healthy ingredients	3.42	Agree
Composite Mean	3.46	Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

In Table 6, the assessment of the respondents on the aesthetics of food presentation in terms of clarity can be observed. The composite mean is 3.46, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "There is a palatable taste of food" has the highest mean of 3.52, which is interpreted as strongly agree while the indicator "The food served employs healthy ingredients" has the lowest mean of 3.42, which is interpreted as agree. This suggests that the vast majority of the respondents are focused on the taste of the foods. The food may be garnished with edible or inedible decorations, such as intricately frosted cakes, ornate occasionally sculptural edibles, sauces, seeds, powders, or other garnishes, or it may be drizzled with sauce (Styler & Lazarus, 2006).

**Table 7. Aesthetics in food presentation in terms of Pattern Repetition**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. The color is combined perfectly and naturally	3.47	Agree
2. There is enough space for dish on the plate	3.46	Agree
3. The appearance of the food is healthy and arranged accordingly	3.47	Agree
4. The mixture and ingredients used are according to the routine	3.47	Agree
5. The food is not boring	3.51	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.48	Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

The assessment of the respondents on the aesthetics in food presentation in terms of pattern repetition is displayed in Table 7. The composite mean is 3.48, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "The food is not boring " has the highest mean of 3.51, which is interpreted as strongly agree while the indicator "There is enough space of dish on the plate" has the lowest mean of 3.46, which is interpreted as agree. This suggests that the majority of those surveyed are focused on the presentation of the food. Kuehn (2008) contends that the evaluation of food's capacity to convey the aesthetic in the ordinary precisely captures the experience of eating as art. The definition of food as art is found in the natural relationship between its preparation, display, and method of enjoyment.

### **Perception of the respondents on the impact of Marketing Mix**

**Table 8. Impact of Marketing Mix in terms of Product**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
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Tourism and Sustainable Development Review Journal (TSDR), Vol. 3 (2), 25-56  
**Quantitative Study on Food Aesthetics, Marketing Mix, and Customers' Satisfaction Among Restaurant Establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines**

*Angelica F. Costales, Sherwin B. Sapin, Maria Agustina Rosario Bethzaida S. Decena, Sharon L. Ramos, Myrna O. Medrano*

1.	Produces varieties of menus.	3.49	Agree
2.	Menu varieties increase sales.	3.44	Agree
3.	Menu satisfied customers' cravings	3.59	Strongly Agree
4.	Customers complain about the quality of your products.	3.58	Strongly Agree
5.	The packaging is effective	3.51	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		3.52	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

In Table 8, where the perception of the respondents on the impact of the marketing mix in terms of product is seen, the composite mean is 3.52, which is interpreted as strongly agree. The indicator "Menu satisfied customers' cravings." Has the highest mean of 3.59, which is interpreted as strongly agree, while the indicator "Menu varieties increase sales." has the lowest mean of 3.49, which is interpreted as agree. This suggests that the majority of those who responded were focused on the menu that satisfied their cravings. According to Verma and Singh (2017), referenced in Lorait (2016), a product is "a physical good or service that the customer is willing to pay for. This covers around half of the tangible products that consumers purchase, such as services and apparel, and grocery items. The company develops its products to satisfy the demands and desires of its customers.

**Table 9. Impact of Marketing Mix in terms of Price**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Prices are reasonable	3.38	Agree
2. Prices of the products are appropriate.	3.41	Agree
3. The pricing strategy gives room for large customers.	3.50	Agree
4. The pricing allows credit terms.	3.44	Agree
5. The price allows customers for discount.	3.42	Agree
Composite Mean	3.43	Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

In Table 9, the perception of the respondents on the impact of the marketing mix in terms of price can be observed. The composite mean is 3.43, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "The pricing strategy gives room for a large customer." Has the highest mean of 3.50, which is interpreted as strongly agree, while the indicator "Prices are reasonable." has the lowest mean of 3.38, which is interpreted as agree. The majority of the respondents are hence focused on the pricing strategy. According to Lorait (2016), "pricing is viewed as the only aspect of the marketing mix, generating income and the essential component in determining customer pleasure and loyalty."

**Table 10. Impact of Marketing Mix in terms of Promotions**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. People know the products based on the promotional strategy.	3.47	Agree
2. The organization applies an advertising promotional strategy.	3.47	Agree
3. The social media flat form is effective.	3.51	Strongly Agree
4. The organization applies for sales promotion as a promotional strategy.	3.44	Agree
5. Promotional strategy influences the rate of purchase positively.	3.49	Agree
Composite Mean	3.48	Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

As shown in Table 10, the data on the perception of the respondents on the impact of the marketing mix in terms of promotion can be seen. The composite mean is 3.48, which is interpreted as agree. The indicator "The social media flat form is effective" Has the highest mean of 3.51, which is interpreted as strongly agree while the indicator "The organization applies for sales promotion as a promotional strategy." has the lowest mean of 3.44, which is interpreted as agree. This suggests that the vast majority of respondents are focused on the social media platform before buying it. According to Iorait (2016), "the marketing mix's promotion is a tool that helps spread information, stimulate purchases, and affects the buy decision process." Promotion needs to be engaging so that consumers will continue to purchase and consume the products.

**Table 11. Impact of Marketing Mix in terms of Place**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Location is accessible.	3.58	Strongly Agree
2. Locations have convenient transport.	3.55	Strongly Agree
3. Location is convenient for the customers.	3.65	Strongly Agree
4. Location has a parking space.	3.50	Strongly Agree
5. The location has a good ambiance.	3.59	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	3.57	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Strongly Agree; 3.50-2.51 Agree; 2.50-1.51 Disagree; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Disagree

In Table 11, the perception of the respondents on the impact of the marketing mix in terms of place is shown. The composite mean is 3.57, which is interpreted as strongly agree. The indicator "Location is convenient for the customers." Has the highest mean of 3.65, which is interpreted as strongly agreeing, while indicating "Locations have a convenient transport" has the lowest mean of

3.55, which is interpreted as agree. This implies that the majority of the respondents are focused on the ambiance of the restaurants. "Distribution refers to operations that are done to deliver a product or service to customers," Pordehghan (2015) noted. As described by Paniandi et al. (2018), businesses must manage their placement strategy so that customers can readily find their products.

### 3.4. Respondents' Mean Level of Customer Satisfaction

Table 12. Customer Satisfaction in terms of Food Quality

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. The food serves at the right temperature.	3.44	Satisfied
2. How was the taste of the food?	3.53	Very Satisfied
3. The serving size is appropriate.	3.51	Very Satisfied
4. The ingredients are fresh.	3.40	Satisfied
5. The presentation of the food is aesthetically pleasing and enticing to the appetite.	3.58	Very Satisfied
Composite Mean	3.49	Satisfied

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Very Satisfied; 3.50-2.51 Satisfied; 2.50-1.51 Dissatisfied; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Dissatisfied

Shown in Table 12 is the respondent's mean level of customer satisfaction in terms of food quality. The composite mean is 3.49, which is interpreted as satisfied. The indicator "The presentation of the food is aesthetically pleasing and enticing to the appetite" has the highest mean of 3.58, which is interpreted as very satisfied while indicating "The food served at the right temperature." has the lowest mean of 3.44, which is interpreted as satisfied. Thereby indicating that the majority of responses are focused on the taste when it comes to the quality of food. To meet the demands and expectations of customers, food quality is required. Sulek and Hensley (2004) looked into the relative importance of the physical environment, service, and food quality in a full-service restaurant. They found that although food quality only accounted for 17 percent of repeat patronage intentions, it appeared to be the most significant predictor of customer satisfaction.

Table 13. Customer Satisfaction in terms of Menu Variety

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. The foods on the menu are at a reasonable price.	3.41	Satisfied
2. The menu is well-organized and easy for the eyes.	3.49	Satisfied
3. The foods combined in combos complement each other.	3.51	Very Satisfied
4. The menu offers a wide variety of choices.	3.46	Satisfied
5. The choices in the menu fit the target customers.	3.49	Satisfied
Composite Mean	3.47	Satisfied

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Very Satisfied; 3.50-2.51 Satisfied; 2.50-1.51 Dissatisfied; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Dissatisfied

Shown in Table 13. is the respondent's mean level of customer satisfaction in terms of menu variety. The composite mean is 3.45, which is interpreted as satisfied. The indicator "The foods combined in combos complement each other." Has the highest mean of 3.51, which is interpreted as very satisfied while the indicator "The menu offers a wide variety of choices." has the lowest mean of 3.46 which is interpreted as satisfied. It appears from this that the majority of responses are focused on the foods combined. Menu delivery is a crucial component of internal marketing and serves as a selling feature for restaurants to offer their food and beverages to consumers, claim Reynolds and Taylor (2009). The menu will convey what you have to offer, show the level of service you desire, and show the surroundings your visitors will encounter.

**Table 14. Customer Satisfaction in terms of Customer Service**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. The crews and staff are warm, welcoming, and hospitable upon entry to the restaurants.	3.55	Very Satisfied
2. The crews and staff are presentable.	3.60	Very Satisfied
3. How was the waiting time in taking the orders?	3.39	Satisfied
4. How was the serving time of the ordered food?	3.40	Satisfied
5. The customer service satisfying enough for the customers to come back?	3.56	Very Satisfied
Composite Mean	3.50	Satisfied

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Very Satisfied; 3.50-2.51 Satisfied; 2.50-1.51 Dissatisfied; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Dissatisfied

In Table 14, the respondent's mean level of customer satisfaction in terms of customer service can be observed. The composite mean is 3.50, which is interpreted as satisfied. The indicator "The crews and staff are presentable." Has the highest mean of 3.60, which is interpreted as very satisfied, while the indicator "How was the waiting time in taking the orders?" has the lowest mean of 3.39, which is interpreted as satisfied. This implies that the majority of the respondents are focused on the presentable of the staff. According to the research of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1994, service quality can be determined by contrasting client expectations with actual service experiences. Therefore, the gap between service expectations and how customers actually perceive their experiences affects service quality.

**Table 15. Respondent's Mean Level of Customer Satisfaction in terms of Cleanliness**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. How was the waste material collected?	3.47	Satisfied

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**Quantitative Study on Food Aesthetics, Marketing Mix, and Customers' Satisfaction Among Restaurant Establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines**

*Angelica F. Costales, Sherwin B. Sapin, Maria Agustina Rosario Bethzaida S. Decena, Sharon L. Ramos, Myrna O. Medrano*

2. Staff and crews are following proper hygiene.	3.54	Very Satisfied
3. Cubicles and handles are sanitized.	3.58	Very Satisfied
4. Tables, chairs, and utensils are sanitized.	3.63	Very Satisfied
5. How do you feel about the cleanliness of the restaurant?	3.60	Very Satisfied
Composite Mean	3.56	Very Satisfied

Legend: 4.00-3.51 Very Satisfied; 3.50-2.51 Satisfied; 2.50-1.51 Dissatisfied; 1.50-1.00 Strongly Dissatisfied

Shown in Table 15 is the respondent's mean level of customer satisfaction in terms of cleanliness. The composite mean is 3.50, which is interpreted as satisfied. The indicator "The crews and staff are presentable." Has the highest mean of 3.60, which is interpreted as very satisfied, while the indicator "How was the waiting time in taking the orders?" has the lowest mean of 3.39, which is interpreted as satisfied. This implies that the majority of the respondents are focused on the cleanliness of the restaurants. In Thailand, cleanliness and hygienic conditions in the dining room, restrooms, utensils, and staff are the most important considerations for patrons (Threemitaya, 2003). For instance, they recommended that cutlery and the table's cleanliness be considered hygienic issues. Customers would evaluate a food service establishment as providing poor or low service quality if it did not fulfill the requirements of food hygiene and cleanliness expected by the customers, according to Zeithaml et al. (1990) and Aksoydan (2007). In these two investigations, the term "hygiene" was used to refer to the general cleanliness of the staff, the food, and the dining facility.

### 3.5. Relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and customers' satisfaction

Table 16. Relationship between demographic profile and customers' satisfaction

Profile	Satisfaction	Chi-Square	df	Remarks
Age	Food Quality	12.297	21	Not Significant
	Menu Variety	17.217	24	Not Significant
	Customer Service	17.013	21	Not Significant
	Cleanliness	23.383	24	Not Significant
	Overall Satisfaction	80.848	75	Not Significant
Sex	Food Quality	3.532	7	Not Significant
	Menu Variety	14.084	8	Not Significant
	Customer Service	7.733	7	Not Significant
	Cleanliness	4.069	8	Not Significant
	Overall Satisfaction	21.114	25	Not Significant

Employment Status	Food Quality	15.645	14	Not Significant
	Menu Variety	22.465	16	Not Significant
	Customer Service	23.14	14	Not Significant
	Cleanliness	26.13	16	Not Significant
	Overall Satisfaction	69.432*	50	Significant
Monthly Income	Food Quality	10.096	14	Not Significant
	Menu Variety	9.505	16	Not Significant
	Customer Service	12.725	14	Not Significant
	Cleanliness	14.285	16	Not Significant
	Overall Satisfaction	35.023	50	Not Significant
Most Visited Restaurant	Food Quality	41.629	49	Not Significant
	Menu Variety	66.043	56	Not Significant
	Customer Service	43.114	49	Not Significant
	Cleanliness	65.221	56	Not Significant
	Overall Satisfaction	165.017	175	Not Significant

Shown in table 16 is the relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and customers' satisfaction. There is no significant relationship was found in demographic profile in terms of age, sex, monthly income and most visited restaurant and customers' satisfaction with the computed of chi-square [ $\chi^2(75) = 80.848$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ], [ $\chi^2(25) = 21.114$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ], [ $\chi^2(50) = 35.023$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ], [ $\chi^2(175) = 35.023$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ] respectively. There is significant relationship was found in the demographic profile in terms of employment status with the computed chi-square [ $\chi^2(50) = 69.432$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ] respectively.

### 3.6. Relationship between food aesthetics in food presentation and consumers satisfaction

Table 17. Test of Relationship between aesthetics in food presentation and consumers satisfaction

Aesthetics in Food Presentation	Consumers satisfaction		Decision on $H_0$	Interpretation
	Pearson's r	p-value		
Symmetry	.632**	<.01	Reject	Significant
Balance	.766**	<.01	Reject	Significant
Clarity	.810**	<.01	Reject	Significant
Pattern Repetition	.764**	<.01	Reject	Significant

\*\* - Correlation is Significant @  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

As shown in Table 17, data on the assessment of food aesthetics in food presentation and consumers' satisfaction was obtained. Pearson's-r of aesthetics in food presentation in terms of

symmetry, balance, clarity and pattern repetition, and consumers' satisfaction. There is a significant relationship between aesthetics in food presentation in terms of symmetry, balance, clarity, and pattern repetition, and consumers' satisfaction with the computed p-value is less than 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the Pearson's-r (.632, .766, .810 and .764) respectively were all highly significant.

### 3.7. Relationship between the impact of the marketing mix and consumers satisfaction

Table 18. Test of Relationship between the impact of the marketing mix and consumers satisfaction

Perception on Marketing Mix	Consumers satisfaction			
	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision on H <sub>0</sub>	Interpretation
Product	.761**	<.01	Significant	Reject
Price	.662**	<.01	Significant	Reject
Promotion	.745**	<.01	Significant	Reject
Place	.671**	<.01	Significant	Reject

\*\* - Correlation is Significant @ p-value < 0.01

Shown in Table 18 is the relationship between the impact of the marketing mix and consumer satisfaction. Pearson's-r of aesthetics was obtained in the perception of the impact of the marketing mix in terms of product, price, promotion, place, and customers' satisfaction. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between aesthetics in the marketing mix in terms of product, price, promotion, and place, and customers' satisfaction with the p-value is less than 0.01 level of significance. Hence, the Pearson's-r (.761, .662, .745, and, .671) respectively were all highly significant.

## CONCLUSION

A restaurant provides a distinctive experience to its customers in order to encourage them to return. The loyalty of a customer is influenced by their dining satisfaction, and the ambiance is a factor in it. The conduct of this study observed significant impacts of the different factors under the food aesthetics, marketing mix, and satisfaction of customers in the restaurants located in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines.

It was found that the majority of the respondents are between 21 to 25 years old, female, and are students with a monthly income below P10,000. The study also revealed that the most visited restaurant in the area by the customers is Shakey's. In terms of the aesthetics in food preparation,

symmetry, balance, clarity, and pattern repetition are agreed to be factors that affect the visual appeal of food in the eyes of the customers. In fact, among the four indicators, the majority of the respondents were focused on the color of the food that is visually attractive. Kuehn (2008) contends that the evaluation of food's capacity to convey the aesthetic in the ordinary precisely captures the experience of eating as art. As for the marketing mix, results showed that among the 4Ps, which include the product, price, promotion, and place, all agreed to influence the customers' perspective on the restaurant's food and services. In fact, the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the convenience of the restaurant's location as having an impact on customers. Relatively, food quality, menu variety, customer service, as well as cleanliness affects the satisfaction of the customers with regard to their dining experience at the restaurant. Cleanliness and sanitation of the tables, chairs, and utensils are important for the customers. They would evaluate a food service establishment as providing poor or low service quality if it did not fulfill the requirements of food hygiene and cleanliness expected by the customers, according to Zeithaml et al. (1990) and Aksoydan (2007).

Thus, based on the statistical tests, no significant relationship was found between the demographic profile and customers' satisfaction. As for the assessment of food, there is a significant relationship between food presentation and customers' satisfaction. Also, there is a significant relationship between the patrons' perception of the impact of the marketing mix and customers' satisfaction.

Authors recommend that restaurants must also focus on the quality of the food that they will serve, and it should be presented similarly or better than the advertised meals. Modern business tools and strategies are also recommended to be used by restaurants in order to streamline their processes and provide smooth transactions that may lead to faster customer service and increased satisfaction among customers.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study focuses on food aesthetics, marketing mix, and customer satisfaction among restaurant establishments in Calamba City, Laguna, Philippines. The result of this research may not be applicable to other hospitality-related establishments due to the different situations and conditions. Also, cultural practices and systems of different places and countries may also vary. Findings in the study are only within the set frameworks used by the authors. Hence, a similar study must be conducted on larger establishments to determine a wider range of information on challenges and strategies during the covid-19 pandemic. Finally, the researchers recommend that future researchers conduct a study about consumers' perceptions of the food aesthetics in a restaurant after the pandemic.

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