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SERVICE QUALITY AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING STRATEGY AS PREDICTORS ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY AMONG SAMGYUPSAL CUSTOMERS IN DAVAO DEL NORTE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of service quality and relationship marketing strategy on customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte, Philippines. The research aimed to identify the level of service quality, relationship marketing strategy, and customer loyalty, as well as determine whether these variables significantly predict customer loyalty. A total of 350 respondents were included in the study. The study also utilized a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive–correlational research design, utilizing purposive sampling and validated survey questionnaires. Thorough analysis of data revealed that service quality, relationship marketing strategy, and customer loyalty were all rated at very high levels by the respondents. The results also indicated significant positive relationships between service quality and customer loyalty and between relationship marketing strategy and customer loyalty. Regression analysis further showed that assurance, reliability, tangibility, trust, communication, and customer focus significantly predicted customer loyalty. The results suggest that improving service delivery and strengthening relationship marketing practices are essential strategies for sustaining customer loyalty in the competitive restaurant industry and provide insights for restaurant managers in enhancing customer retention and long-term business performance.

Keywords: Service Quality, Relationship Marketing Strategy, Customer Loyalty, Samgyupsal Restaurants, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

In a highly competitive food service industry, developing and maintaining competitive advantage is essential for growth and success. One of the main challenges faced by restaurant owners is how to attract and retain customers. Customer loyalty refers to a customer's commitment or intention to repurchase a company's product or service. It helps derive revenue, growth, and overall performance. Creating and expanding a customer base is only possible when consumers are fully satisfied with the company's offerings. Considering the high competition from local and international brands, creating customer loyalty offers competitive advantage to business owners.

A study by Biriukova (2020, p. 4) revealed that restaurant businesses incur an additional five to 25 times the cost of attracting a new customer than the cost of keeping them. The same study found out the direct relationship between customer loyalty and financial performance, wherein a mere five percent (5%) increase in customer loyalty translates to a 25 to 95% increase in profits. This highlights the importance of developing strategies that focus on increasing customer loyalty (Biriukova 2020, p.4).

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the factors that drive customer loyalty. A study from Yum and Yoo (2023, p. 5) stated that service quality is one of the most predominant factors that affect customer loyalty. Service quality refers to the degree to which a service meets customer needs and expectations (Yum & Yoo 2023, p. 3). Organizations can also differentiate themselves from competition based on service quality. Customers remain loyal to firms that consistently maintain higher service quality than their competitors. In the restaurant industry, service quality is crucial in differentiating a business from its competitors because providing high quality services can enhance customer loyalty. Hence, restaurant managers and owners need to understand the elements of service quality that influence customer loyalty.

In addition, relationship marketing strategy is also a factor that significantly affects customer loyalty. Orellana-Treviños et al (2023, p. 694) posited that it emerged as one of the most powerful tools in cultivating customer loyalty. Companies use relationship marketing strategies to build and maintain long-term customer relationships. It involves creating an environment of sincerity, mutual trust, and loyalty with customers through interactive communication. Relationship marketing activities also encompass maintaining continuous cooperation to attract and retain customers (Orellana-Treviños et al 2023, p. 694). In the restaurant industry, some establishments realized the importance of relationship marketing strategies and used these marketing tools to gather information on customer preferences. Having this type of information is critical in designing strategies to provide a more effective and efficient customer service than the competitors.

The first independent variable of the study is service quality. Service quality plays a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty (Yum & Yoo 2023, p. 1). It is assessed through six indicators namely Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Product. Tangibility refers to the physical aspects of the service, such as equipment and other components of physical existence. These tangible cues influence first impressions and can reinforce a customer’s perception of professionalism and care. On the other hand, reliability involves consistently delivering on promises, whether it’s the quality of the food or the expected service experience.

Responsiveness, assurance, and empathy represent the more interpersonal elements of service. Responsiveness highlights the speed and effectiveness with which staff attend to customer needs. Assurance encompasses staff knowledge, professionalism, and courtesy. Empathy focuses on understanding customers' preferences or accommodating dietary needs. Finally, product encompasses the restaurant’s ability to offer a wide variety of menu options that cater to different customer preferences, as well as its consistency in delivering high-quality food and drinks. Together, these elements form a holistic view of service quality that is particularly vital in a competitive and customer-sensitive industry.

The second independent variable of the study is relationship marketing strategy. In the context of the food service industry, relationship marketing strategy is another crucial factor in driving customer loyalty and long-term business success (Orellana-Treviños et al 2023, p. 694). This variable revolves around three elements namely Trust, Customer Focus, and Communication. Trust ensures customers have confidence in the business's ability to deliver consistent, high-quality products and services. In an industry where word-of-mouth and repeat business are vital, building and maintaining trust can significantly influence customer retention.

Equally important is a genuine customer focus, which involves understanding and responding to customers’ needs and preferences. This could mean remembering a regular diner’s favorite dish or tailoring menu options based on customer feedback. When customers feel valued and understood, it strengthens their

emotional connection to the brand. Lastly, communication fosters ongoing engagement with customers through regular updates, feedback, and personalized interactions. Consistent and transparent communication not only keeps customers informed but also makes them feel heard and appreciated (Orellana-Treviños et al 2023, p. 695).

The dependent variable of the study is customer loyalty. It remains a central focus in the food service industry, especially in an environment where competition is intense and customer preferences evolve rapidly. Customer loyalty can be understood through four dimensions namely Cognitive Loyalty, Affective Loyalty, Conative Loyalty, and Action Loyalty. Cognitive loyalty refers to a customer's rational preference for a particular brand based on perceived value or quality (Seduram et al 2022, p. 2). In the context of a restaurant, this might mean a customer consistently returns because they believe the food offers better taste or portion sizes compared to competitors. It represents the initial stage of loyalty, where decisions are driven more by logic than emotion.

As the relationship deepens, affective loyalty comes into play, where customers develop emotional bonds with a brand (Seduram et al 2022, p. 3). This could stem from positive dining experiences, friendly staff interactions, or a welcoming atmosphere. Following this, conative loyalty reflects a stronger level of commitment, where customers not only enjoy the brand but also have a firm intention to revisit (Seduram et al 2022, p. 3). Finally, action loyalty is the most concrete form, shown when customers repeatedly choose the same establishment, recommend it to friends, post positive reviews, or are even willing to pay a premium for the experience (Seduram et al 2022, p. 4). For food service businesses, understanding and nurturing these dimensions is key to building a loyal customer base that goes beyond occasional visits.

In this study, the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty is anchored on the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al (1988, as cited in Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010). This model identifies key dimensions of service quality. In the context of the food service industry, these dimensions are highly relevant, as customers often judge restaurants not only by the quality of food but also by the cleanliness of the environment, speed of service, staff behavior, and consistency in delivering promised standards. When these aspects are effectively managed, they significantly enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty through repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.

In addition, the relationship between relationship marketing strategy and customer loyalty is anchored in the Relationship Marketing Theory by Berry (1983, as cited by Gaurav 2008, p. 8). This theory posits that trust and commitment are the two fundamental factors of a successful relationship. Businesses following this principle forge strong and long-lasting customer relationships by providing excellent service quality and managing customer value. As a result, sellers and customers develop cooperative behavior and both parties fulfill their needs. Customers feel valued because they get the product or service that they are paying for. And in return, the business receives loyal customers, which are important in increasing sales and reducing marketing costs.

Despite the wealth of literature emphasizing the critical role of service quality and relationship marketing in enhancing customer loyalty, there is a noticeable gap in research focused on how these factors work together in the Philippine food service industry. Most existing studies are centered on Western or more developed Asian markets, such as Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, making it unclear how these insights apply locally, where consumer behavior and market dynamics differ. Although some studies have explored customer loyalty within local settings, it often addresses general themes like customer satisfaction rather than examining how specific elements of service quality and relationship marketing impact the stages of customer loyalty (Nugraha and Sitio, 2020). Moreover, the combined effect of service quality and relationship marketing is rarely explored in tandem, despite its potential relevance in a fast-growing, competitive food industry shaped by rapid urbanization and the entry of global food brands.

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of service quality and relationship marketing strategy on customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte. The research determined the level of service quality in terms of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Product. In addition, the study aimed to ascertain the level of relationship marketing strategy in terms of Trust, Customer focus, and Communication. Also, it examined the level of customer loyalty in terms of Cognitive loyalty, Affective loyalty, Conative loyalty, and Action loyalty. Furthermore, it aimed to determine if there is significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty, as well as relationship marketing strategy and customer loyalty. Lastly, the study aimed to know the domain of service quality and relationship marketing strategy that influences customer loyalty.

In this study, the researcher tested several hypotheses. The first hypothesis asserted that there is no significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between relationship marketing strategy and customer loyalty. The third hypothesis proposed that there is no domain of service quality that influences customer loyalty. The fourth hypothesis stated that there is no domain of relationship marketing strategy that influences customer loyalty.

In terms of the significance of the study, from a global perspective, the results of this study provide additional insights on the relationship of service quality and relationship marketing strategy to the loyalty of a restaurant customer. Similarly, it is a good addition to the growing worldwide literature and research that focuses on the three main topics of this study namely, service quality, relationship marketing strategy, and customer loyalty. Consequently, this study is beneficial to employees and managers as this provides a better understanding of what drives loyalty among customers. Furthermore, this study helps food business owners and organizations in developing strategies to increase loyalty among customers and minimize exposure to competition. Finally, the results of this study are beneficial for future researchers who might be interested in conducting a similar study and replicating it but in a different setting or with different respondents. The information contained in this study provides good input as reference in the studies that will be conducted by these future researchers.

This study is aligned with the following Research Priority Areas: Sustainable Urbanization under the Environment; and Food & Security under the Agriculture-related Studies programs. It is associated with Sustainable Development Goals numbers (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth; (9) Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; and (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities.

The conceptual framework of this study follows the principle of the relationship between two independent variables and one dependent variable. The two independent variables are service quality and relationship marketing strategy while customer loyalty is the dependent variable.

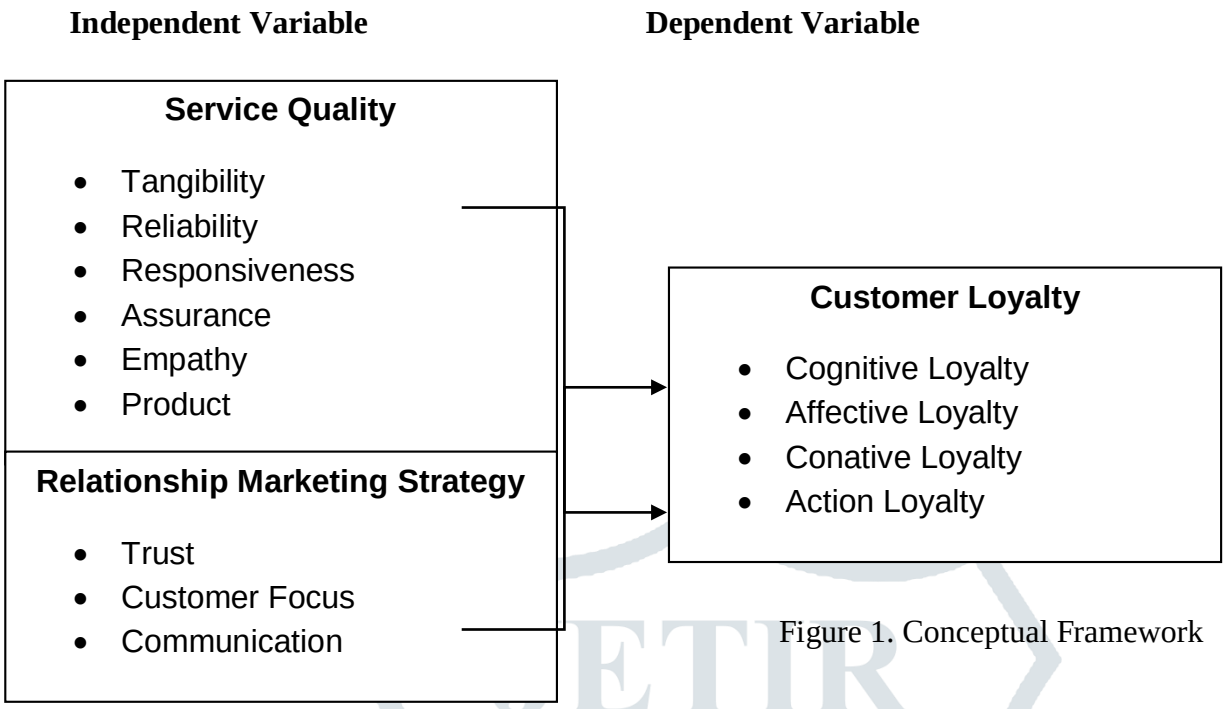

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHOD

This section describes the procedures and approaches used in conducting the study. It covers the research respondents, including their selection and characteristics, as well as the materials and instruments utilized to measure the variables of the study. It also presents the research design and procedures, outlining how the data were collected and analyzed to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Research Respondent

This study focused on samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte. It aimed to gather insights from regular customers who possess adequate experience and familiarity with the dining environment and service offerings of samgyupsal restaurants. To ensure the reliability and relevance of the data, individuals below 18 years of age and those who have dined at a samgyupsal establishment fewer than two times, were excluded.

The study was conducted in selected samgyupsal restaurants located in Davao del Norte. It employed purposive sampling to ensure that data were gathered from individuals who have relevant experience in dining at samgyupsal establishments. This sampling technique allows the researcher to deliberately select respondents who can provide meaningful and reliable insights aligned with the objectives of the study. According to Makwana et al. (2023, p. 5), purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on participants who possess specific characteristics, thereby enhancing the relevance and depth of the findings.

The respondents of the study consisted of customers from selected samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte who are at least 18 years old and have actual dining experience in such establishments. To establish the scope of the study, an estimated population of samgyupsal customers was derived using both secondary and primary data sources. The number of registered samgyupsal restaurant establishments in the province was obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), while a one-week observation of actual foot traffic in a selected restaurant indicated an average of 50 customers per day. Considering that these establishments operate daily, this figure was multiplied across seven days and the 12 identified restaurants, resulting in an estimated weekly customer volume of 4,200. A total of 350 respondents were included in the study, and this

sample size was deemed sufficient to ensure a statistically acceptable level of confidence and to support reliable quantitative analysis, particularly for correlation and regression techniques.

Research Instrument

The instrument of this study is a structured survey questionnaire. For customer loyalty, the survey items were adopted from Bobalca, Gatej and Ciobanu (2012, p. 626), which comprehensively measures cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty. In addition, the items for measuring service quality were based on the SERVQUAL model and were adopted from Daniel and Berinyuy (2010, p. 50). Meanwhile, the items for the relationship marketing strategy construct were adopted from the framework proposed by Gaurav (2008, p. 11). The three variables have the same intervals for their range of means from 1.00 - 1.79, 1.80 - 2.59, 2.60 - 3.39, 3.40 - 4.19, and 4.20 - 5.00. These means are interpreted using consistent descriptive levels, ranging from very low to very high. Furthermore, the descriptive interpretation for customer loyalty ranges from rarely or never evident to strongly evident. Meanwhile, the service quality and relationship marketing strategy's descriptive interpretation ranges from rarely or never observed to consistently observed.

Additionally, all survey items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 where 5 stands for strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 2 disagree, and 1 strongly disagree. The first part of the survey questionnaire is the demographic profile which provides general information about the respondent's age, gender, educational level, and frequency of dining in the samgyupsal store. The second part is the statements from each variable, with a total of 53 items. The first independent variable is service quality, with 23 items from the following indicators: tangibility (1-4), reliability (5-8), responsiveness (9-12), assurance (13-16), empathy (17-21), and product (22-23). The second independent variable is relationship marketing strategy with 17 items from the following indicators: trust (1-7), customer focus (8-14), and communication (15-17). Lastly, the dependent variable is customer loyalty, with 13 items from the following indicators: cognitive loyalty (1-3), affective loyalty (4-8), conative loyalty (9-10), and action loyalty (11-13).

Prior to the full-scale data collection, a pilot testing was conducted to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the research instrument. The researcher surveyed 50 samgyupsal customers from establishments outside the primary research locale but with similar characteristics to the target respondents. A sample size of 50 respondents is considered adequate for pilot testing to identify potential issues and improve questionnaire structure. The results indicate that the Customer Loyalty variable obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.906. Additionally, the Service Quality variable yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.933, while the Relationship Marketing Strategy variable recorded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.949. These results suggest that the research instrument had high reliability.

Design and Procedure

This study is a quantitative, non-experimental research design, specifically utilizing a correlational approach to explore the relationship between service quality, relationship marketing strategy, and customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte. This design is appropriate for examining natural variations in customer experiences without manipulating any variables, making it particularly suitable for studying consumer behavior in a real-world food service setting.

To analyze the data, the study used descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores were computed to measure the levels of each variable, while standard deviation was used to assess data dispersion. Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was applied to determine the degree and direction of association between variables. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to identify which specific indicators within service quality and relationship marketing strategy significantly predict customer loyalty.

To promote clarity and ease of response, the study's objectives and instructions were incorporated directly into the survey questionnaire. Respondents were given adequate time to complete the instrument. Data collection began only after the research proposal was carefully reviewed and approved by the University of Mindanao Ethics and Research Committee (UMERC).

For the data gathering process, respondents were selected using the appropriate sampling technique based on the study's inclusion criteria. The validated survey questionnaires were then distributed to qualified samgyupsal customers. After all questionnaires were retrieved, the responses were organized, coded, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted in accordance with the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics, particularly the computation of the mean, were used to determine the levels of service quality, relationship marketing strategy, and customer loyalty. To examine the relationships among variables, Pearson's r correlation coefficient was employed. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine whether the independent variables significantly predicted customer loyalty at a specified level of significance.

The study strictly adhered to established ethical standards by the UMERC. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were not subjected to any form of coercion or undue influence. They were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The comfort and well-being of the participants were prioritized throughout the research process. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all personal information and survey responses were treated with strict confidentiality. The identities of the respondents were not disclosed, and all data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

Since all participants were consenting adults, parental consent was not required. The study did not pose significant physical, psychological, or socioeconomic risks, and all survey responses were handled with confidentiality and care. Moreover, respondents benefited from increased awareness of their business's competitive advantage, dynamic capabilities, and performance levels, which could guide their future strategies. They also received tangible tokens for their participation.

The researcher affirms that this study upholds the principles of academic integrity at all stages of the research process. To maintain these standards, plagiarism was strictly avoided, with all ideas, data, and information from other sources properly acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic guidelines. Even similarities flagged by tools such as Turnitin and Grammarly were carefully reviewed in the study. Also, fabrication, falsification, and misinterpretation of data were avoided. All information presented in this study is authentic, gathered through legitimate means, and accurately reported, with no data invented, altered, or manipulated to achieve favorable results.

In addition, the researcher ensured transparency, honesty, and objectivity throughout the conduct, analysis, and reporting of the research. Every effort was made to prevent any conflict of interest that could compromise the credibility of the findings. The researcher declares that no personal, financial, or professional interests influenced the study in any way. This strong commitment to ethical research practices reinforces the reliability and trustworthiness of the results. Consequently, the study affirms that the respondents' benefits had no connection to, nor did they contribute to, any inaccuracies in the information presented.

Moreover, the researcher, a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Accountancy, co-authors this study with Dr. Stilo Floyd Schneider, the research adviser. The research underwent revisions based on adviser's recommendations and adhered to the University's ethical guidelines. It also followed the processes set by UM Tagum College's Graduate School before, during, and after the study's conduct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and results of the study are presented in this chapter. The data were analyzed based on the identified indicators, highlighting the key results of the research. Furthermore, the implications of these findings are discussed and supported by relevant literature and expert perspectives to strengthen the interpretation of the results.

Level of Service Quality Among Samgyupsal Customers in Davao del Norte

The results presented in Table 1 reflect the level of service quality among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte based on various indicators. The overall mean score of 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.488 is described as Very High, indicating that customers generally perceive service quality of samgyupsal restaurants positively. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that respondents have consistent perceptions regarding the quality of service.

Table 1. Level of Service Quality

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Product	4.37	0.605	Very High
Responsiveness	4.34	0.607	Very High
Reliability	4.32	0.631	Very High
Empathy	4.32	0.629	Very High
Assurance	4.31	0.601	Very High
Tangibility	4.30	0.593	Very High
Overall	**4.33**	**0.511**	**Very High**

Among the indicators, product emerged as the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.605, indicating that customers perceive the food offerings of samgyupsal restaurants to be of very high quality, consistent with the findings of Ryu and Han (2021, p. 6), who emphasized the importance of product quality in shaping customer evaluations in restaurant settings. This was followed by responsiveness, which recorded a mean of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 0.607, suggesting that customers consistently observe prompt and efficient service. The next highest indicators were reliability and empathy, both with a mean of 4.32, with standard deviations of 0.631 and 0.629, respectively, indicating that customers perceive the restaurant as dependable and observe attentive, customer-oriented service. These findings align with Hanaysha (2022, p. 608), who noted that efficient service delivery and customer-oriented interactions contribute to positive service perceptions. Subsequently, assurance recorded a mean of 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.601, reflecting customers' confidence in staff competence and professionalism, while tangibility emerged as the lowest indicator, with a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.593, indicating positive perceptions of the restaurant's physical environment, cleanliness, and overall appearance. These findings support Ryu and Han (2021, p. 8), who emphasized that well-managed service environments enhance overall customer satisfaction. Overall, the results indicate that the level of service quality among samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte is very high, demonstrating that customers generally experience favorable service conditions across all dimensions.

The relatively close mean scores across all indicators further suggest a consistent delivery of service quality, with minimal variation in customer perceptions. This indicates that samgyupsal restaurants in the area can maintain uniform standards in both service processes and physical attributes. This finding is supported by recent restaurant-based studies which report that structured dining environments and standardized service procedures often lead to consistently high customer evaluations across multiple service quality dimensions. For instance, Ryu and Han (2021, p. 4) found that customers in restaurant settings tend to report similarly high perceptions across tangibility, reliability, and responsiveness when service encounters are consistently

managed. Similarly, Hanaysha (2022, p. 606) highlighted that customers in restaurant environments generally provide high and closely clustered ratings across different service quality dimensions when service delivery is well-executed and operational standards are maintained.

These findings indicate that samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte can deliver a consistently high level of service quality across different aspects of the dining experience, reflecting effective practices and standardized service delivery.

Level of Relationship Marketing Strategy Among Samgyupsal Customers in Davao del Norte

The results presented in Table 2 reflect the level of relationship marketing strategy among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte based on the indicators trust, customer focus, and communication. The overall mean score of 4.36 with a standard deviation of 0.501 is described as Very High, indicating that customers perceive the relationship marketing strategies of samgyupsal restaurants positively.

Table 2. Level of Relationship Marketing Strategy

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Communication	4.38	0.619	Very High
Trust	4.36	0.538	Very High
Customer Focus	4.35	0.722	Very High
Overall	**4.36**	**0.501**	**Very High**

Among the indicators, communication emerged as the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 0.619, indicating that customers perceive interactions between the restaurant and its patrons to be clear, timely, and effective, consistent with the findings of Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 8), who emphasized that effective communication strengthens customer engagement in restaurant settings. This suggests that samgyupsal restaurants can consistently convey information, respond to inquiries, and engage with customers in a manner that enhances the overall dining experience. This was followed by trust, which recorded a mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.538, reflecting customers' confidence in the consistency, honesty, and reliability of the restaurant's service delivery. This aligns with Hwang and Lee (2022, p. 10), who found that trust plays a critical role in strengthening customer relationships and perceptions of service reliability. Meanwhile, customer focus emerged as the lowest indicator, with a mean of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.722, indicating that customers observe that restaurants are attentive to their preferences, needs, and overall satisfaction during service encounters. This supports the findings of Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 9), who noted that customer-oriented practices enhance relationship quality and customer satisfaction. Overall, the results indicate that the level of relationship marketing strategies among samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte is very high, demonstrating that customer-oriented practices are consistently applied across different aspects of the dining experience.

The relatively close mean scores across all indicators further suggest that relationship marketing practices are implemented in a balanced and consistent manner, with no single dimension significantly lagging behind. This uniformity implies that restaurants are not only focused on one aspect of relationship building but are able to integrate communication, trust, and customer-focused practices into their daily operations. In restaurant settings, such consistency often reflects well-established service routines and customer engagement strategies that are embedded in operational practices. This finding is supported by recent studies in the restaurant context. For instance, Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 7) observed that trust and customer-oriented practices in restaurant environments tend to receive uniformly high evaluations when service encounters are delivered in a reliable and personalized manner. Similarly, a study by Hwang and Lee (2022, p. 9) reported that restaurant customers generally perceive relationship marketing dimensions such as communication, trust,

and customer focus at similarly high levels when establishments maintain structured service systems and consistent customer engagement.

These findings suggest that samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte can maintain a consistently high level of relationship marketing practices, reflecting effective implementation of customer-oriented strategies within their service operations.

Level of Customer Loyalty Among Samgyupsal Customers in Davao del Norte

The results presented in Table 3 reflect the level of customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte based on cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty indicators. The overall mean score of 4.42 with a standard deviation of 0.559 is described as Very High, indicating that customers demonstrate strong loyalty toward samgyupsal restaurants.

Table 3. Level of Customer Loyalty

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Conative Loyalty	4.72	0.677	Very High
Action Loyalty	4.39	0.969	Very High
Affective Loyalty	4.29	0.600	Very High
Cognitive Loyalty	4.28	0.602	Very High
Overall	**4.42**	**0.559**	**Very High**

Among the indicators, conative loyalty emerged as the highest indicator, with a mean of 4.72 and a standard deviation of 0.677, indicating a very strong intention among customers to continue patronizing samgyupsal restaurants in the future, consistent with the findings of Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 6), who emphasized that strong behavioral intention reflects a deeper level of customer commitment in restaurant settings. This suggests that customers have already formed a firm behavioral intention to revisit, reflecting a high level of commitment beyond mere preference. This was followed by action loyalty, which recorded a mean of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 0.969, indicating that such intentions are supported by actual repeat patronage behaviors. This aligns with Liu and Lee (2022, p. 7), who found that repeat purchase behavior is a key manifestation of loyalty in dining contexts, although the relatively higher standard deviation suggests some variability in how consistently these behaviors are expressed among customers. The next highest indicator was affective loyalty, with a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.600, indicating that customers develop positive emotional attachment toward the restaurant. Meanwhile, cognitive loyalty emerged as the lowest indicator, with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.602, reflecting customers' favorable beliefs and rational preference for the restaurant over others. These findings support Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 8), who emphasized that emotional and cognitive evaluations play a vital role in strengthening overall customer loyalty.

The relatively close mean scores further indicate that these dimensions are consistently experienced by customers, pointing to a stable and well-established level of loyalty across the customer base. These findings are consistent with recent studies in the restaurant context which highlight that customer loyalty is often expressed across multiple dimensions at similarly high levels when dining experiences are consistently positive. Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 5) observed that in restaurant environments, customers commonly exhibit strong behavioral intentions alongside actual repeat patronage, reflecting the coexistence of conative and action loyalty. Moreover, Liu and Lee (2022, p. 6) reported that restaurant customers often demonstrate uniformly high evaluations across different loyalty dimensions when their overall dining experiences meet expectations consistently.

These results indicate that customer loyalty among samgyupsal restaurant customers in Davao del Norte is consistently high across cognitive, affective, conative, and action dimensions, reflecting a well-developed and stable pattern of customer loyalty within the dining context.

Significant Relationship between Service Quality, Relationship Marketing Strategy, and Customer Loyalty

The correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the independent variables - service quality and relationship marketing strategy - and the dependent variable, customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte.

Table 4. Correlations between Service Quality, Relationship Marketing Strategy, and Customer Loyalty

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	r-value	r-squared	p-value	Decision
Service Quality	Customer Loyalty	0.762	0.580	<0.001	Reject Ho
Relationship Marketing Strategy	Customer Loyalty	0.618	0.382	<0.001	Reject Ho
***p < 0.05**					

Based on the table above, the p-value for service quality is <0.001. It falls below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. This indicates that service quality has a strong positive relationship with customer loyalty. This also implies that as the level of service quality increases, customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers also tends to increase. The strength of the correlation suggests a substantial association, indicating that improvements in various domains of service quality are likely reflected in corresponding increases in customers' loyalty-related behaviors and intentions. The coefficient of determination of 0.580 further suggests that 58 percent of the variation in customer loyalty can be associated with service quality, highlighting its considerable explanatory power in shaping customer responses within the dining context.

This result also implies that service quality plays a central role in influencing customers' overall evaluation of their dining experience, as reflected in their loyalty tendencies. The relatively high r-value indicates that service-related factors such as responsiveness, reliability, and assurance are consistently recognized and internalized by customers, thereby contributing to their continued patronage and positive behavioral intentions. Moreover, the remaining 42 percent of unexplained variance suggests that while service quality is a major contributing factor, other variables may also influence customer loyalty, reflecting the multifaceted nature of customer behavior in restaurant settings.

This finding is consistent with the previous study of Yum and Yoo (2023, p. 5), which emphasized that service quality has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty, indicating that improvements in service delivery can enhance customer retention and engagement. In addition, Hanaysha (2022, p. 608) found that service quality dimensions in restaurant environments exhibit a strong and significant relationship with customer loyalty, particularly when service encounters are consistently delivered and aligned with customer expectations.

Similarly, the p-value for relationship marketing strategy is <0.001. It also falls below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. This indicates that stronger relationship marketing practices such as trust, communication, and customer focus contribute to increasing customer loyalty. While the relationship is not as strong as that of service quality, the coefficient still reflects a

meaningful and statistically significant association, suggesting that customers' perceptions of how restaurants engage and interact with them play a vital role in shaping their loyalty-related responses. The coefficient of determination of 0.382 further suggests that 38.2 percent of the variation in customer loyalty can be explained by relationship marketing strategy, indicating a substantial, though comparatively lower, explanatory power relative to service quality.

This finding also implies that relationship marketing strategies contribute to customer loyalty by reinforcing ongoing interactions and engagement between the restaurant and its customers. Practices such as clear communication, consistent service interaction, and customer-oriented approaches appear to strengthen customers' overall evaluation of their dining experience, which is reflected in their loyalty tendencies. However, the remaining 61.8 percent of unexplained variance suggests that other factors beyond relationship marketing strategies may also influence customer loyalty, highlighting the multidimensional nature of customer behavior in restaurant settings.

This finding is consistent with the previous study of Orellana-Treviños et al. (2023, p. 702), which emphasized that relationship marketing strategies must be utilized to achieve customer loyalty, particularly through sustained customer engagement and interaction in competitive service environments.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the service quality and relationship marketing strategy predict customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte.

Table 5. Regression Analysis on the Influence of the Domains of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty

Independent Variables (Service Quality)	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
	B	SE	β			
(Constant)	1.120	0.162		6.930	<.001	
Tangibility	0.154	0.049	0.174	3.162	0.002	Reject Ho
Reliability	0.189	0.048	0.227	3.954	<.001	Reject Ho
Responsiveness	-0.093	0.047	-0.108	-1.963	0.050	Reject Ho
Assurance	0.460	0.047	0.520	9.696	<.001	Reject Ho
Empathy	0.043	0.054	0.052	0.801	0.424	Do not Reject Ho
Product	-0.011	0.046	-0.013	-0.241	0.809	Do not Reject Ho
Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty						
R value = 0.762		F-value = 78.93				
R^2 = 0.580		p-value = <0.001				

The results of the regression analysis in Table 5 show that the domains of service quality, as a whole, significantly predict customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant. Further, the model yielded an R value of 0.762 and an R^2 value of 0.580, indicating that 58 percent of the variation in customer loyalty can be explained by the service quality indicators included in the model. The F-value of 78.93 further supports the strength and overall fit of the model.

Among the predictors, assurance emerged as the strongest predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.520 further indicates that assurance has the strongest positive influence among all service quality domains, suggesting that improvements in staff competence,

courtesy, and professionalism lead to a substantial increase in customer loyalty. Similarly, reliability was found to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.227 further indicates that reliability has a positive influence on customer loyalty, suggesting that consistent and dependable service performance contributes to increased customer loyalty. Tangibility also emerged as a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of 0.002 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.174 further indicates that tangibility has a positive influence on customer loyalty, suggesting that improvements in the physical environment, cleanliness, and overall appearance of the restaurant contribute to increased customer loyalty. Meanwhile, responsiveness showed marginal significance as a predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of 0.050 is at the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the relationship is not statistically significant at the specified level. The standardized coefficient beta of negative 0.108 further indicates a weak and inverse influence, suggesting that prompt service has a limited and less consistent effect on customer loyalty when considered alongside other service quality dimensions.

On the other hand, empathy was not found to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of 0.424 indicates that it exceeds the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is not statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.052 further indicates a minimal positive influence, suggesting that personalized attention does not substantially drive customer loyalty when other factors are considered. Similarly, product was also not found to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of 0.809 indicates that it exceeds the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is not statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of negative 0.013 further indicates a negligible influence, suggesting that food quality, although highly perceived, may be considered a basic expectation rather than a key driver of customer loyalty.

Overall, these results support the findings of Yum and Yoo (2023, p. 10), who emphasized that high service quality significantly influences customer loyalty in the food service industry.

Table 6. Regression Analysis on the Influence of the Domains of Relationship Marketing Strategy on Customer Loyalty

Independent Variables (Relationship Marketing Strategy)	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
	B	SE				
Constant	1.469	0.195		7.522	<.001	
Trust	0.364	0.055	0.372	6.594	<.001	Reject Ho
Customer Focus	0.098	0.035	0.135	2.771	0.006	Reject Ho
Communication	0.187	0.048	0.220	3.895	<.001	Reject Ho
Dependent Variable: Customer Loyalty						
R value = 0.618		F-value = 71.50				
R^2 = 0.382		p-value = <0.001				

The regression results show that relationship marketing strategy significantly predicts customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the regression model is statistically significant. The model produced an R value of 0.618 and an R^2 value of 0.382, indicating that 38.2 percent of the variation in customer loyalty can be explained by the relationship marketing strategy indicators. The F-value of 71.50 further supports the

strength and overall fit of the model, confirming that the combined dimensions of relationship marketing strategy provide meaningful explanatory power in predicting customer loyalty.

Among the predictors, trust emerged as the strongest predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.372 further indicates that trust has the strongest positive influence among all relationship marketing strategy domains, suggesting that customers are more likely to remain loyal when they perceive consistency, honesty, and reliability in service delivery. In the context of samgyupsal restaurants, where customer interaction and service experience are continuous throughout the dining process, trust serves as a foundational element that reinforces customers' willingness to return. Similarly, communication was found to be a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that it falls below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.220 further indicates that communication has a positive influence on customer loyalty, suggesting that clear, timely, and effective interaction between restaurant staff and customers enhances customers' overall evaluation of the dining experience. Meanwhile, customer focus also emerged as a significant predictor of customer loyalty. The p-value of 0.006 indicates that it exceeds the 0.05 threshold but remains within the commonly accepted 0.05 level of significance, suggesting that the relationship is statistically significant at a less stringent level. The standardized coefficient beta of 0.135 further indicates that customer focus has a positive influence on customer loyalty, suggesting that restaurants that demonstrate attentiveness to customer needs and preferences are more likely to foster stronger customer connections.

These findings support the study of Orellana-Treviños et al (2023, p. 702), who highlighted that good relationship marketing between customers and employees significantly influences customer loyalty in the food service business. Similarly, Rather and Hollebeek (2021, p. 6) found that trust and customer engagement practices in restaurant environments significantly shape customers' behavioral responses, particularly when interactions are perceived as consistent and meaningful. In addition, Hwang and Lee (2022, p. 10) reported that communication and customer-oriented service approaches in restaurant settings contribute significantly to customers' overall evaluation of the service experience, reinforcing their tendency to remain loyal when these relational practices are effectively implemented.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study reveals that samgyupsal customers in Davao del Norte perceive the level of service quality to be very high, particularly product and empathy, indicating that customers highly appreciate quality food offerings and attentive service. Also, relationship marketing strategy was perceived at a very high level, particularly in terms of communication and trust, indicating positive interactions and customer confidence in their overall dining experience. Customer loyalty among samgyupsal customers was likewise rated very high, particularly in terms of conative loyalty, indicating a strong intention among customers to continue patronizing these restaurants.

Additionally, the results show a significant relationship between service quality and customer loyalty, indicating that improvements in service delivery can enhance customer retention. This finding is supported by the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988, as cited in Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010), which emphasizes that high-quality service across key dimensions leads to positive customer outcomes, including increased loyalty. Notably, among the domains of service quality, assurance, reliability, and tangibility are the significant predictors of customer loyalty, while product and empathy are less influential when combined with other factors. This indicates that customers' loyalty is more strongly influenced by staff competence,

professionalism, and the ability to provide dependable and consistent service rather than solely by food quality or personalized attention, consistent with Yum and Yoo (2020, p. 16).

Moreover, there is also a significant relationship between relationship marketing strategy and customer loyalty, indicating that reinforcing ongoing interactions and engagement contributes to customer loyalty. This is aligned with the Relationship Marketing Theory by Berry (1983, as cited in Gaurav, 2008, p. 8), which highlights the importance of building long-term relationships through trust, communication, and continuous customer engagement to sustain loyalty. Among the domains of relationship marketing strategy, trust is the strongest predictor. This suggests that customers' confidence in the restaurant's reliability and integrity plays a crucial role in sustaining their loyalty, while communication and customer-focused practices serve as supporting factors in strengthening customer relationships, in line with Orellano (2021, p. 20).

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to further enhance service quality, strengthen relationship marketing strategies, and sustain customer loyalty among samgyupsal restaurants in Davao del Norte.

Samgyupsal restaurant managers are encouraged to prioritize staff development programs that enhance assurance-related competencies, such as product knowledge, professionalism, and customer handling skills. Since assurance emerged as the strongest predictor of customer loyalty, training programs may focus on improving employees' ability to deliver confident, accurate, and courteous service. In addition, maintaining consistent service performance through standardized procedures can further strengthen reliability, while continuous improvement of the restaurant's physical environment, cleanliness, and overall ambiance can enhance tangibility.

Restaurant owners and managers may also strengthen relationship marketing strategies by focusing on building and maintaining customer trust. This can be achieved through consistent service delivery, transparency in transactions, and honoring commitments to customers. Furthermore, communication strategies may be enhanced by actively engaging with customers through feedback mechanisms, social media platforms, and direct interaction during service encounters. Customer-focused initiatives, such as personalized services and loyalty programs, may also be implemented to reinforce long-term relationships.

Although product quality and empathy were highly rated, these factors were not found to be significant predictors in the regression analysis. Therefore, while these aspects may be maintained at a high standard, greater emphasis should be placed on the dimensions that have stronger influence on customer loyalty, particularly assurance and trust.

For future researchers, it is recommended to include additional variables such as customer satisfaction, perceived value, brand image, or dining experience to further explain customer loyalty in the restaurant industry. Future studies may also consider examining different types of restaurants or expanding the geographical scope to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of mixed methods or longitudinal approaches may provide deeper insights into customer behavior over time.

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