

RESTROOM CLEANLINESS AND GENERATION Z'S OVERALL SATISFACTION IN FAST FOOD CHAINS IN SAN JOSE CITY

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Abstract.

Widely recognized modern-day establishments, such as fast-food chains, are patronized for the efficient, convenient services they offer. It is known for its palatable menu items, quick service, affordability, mass appeal, and convenience, all of which enhance customer retention. Nonetheless, beyond core offerings, factors such as restroom cleanliness significantly contribute to a business's ability to retain and satisfy customers. Fast-food establishments, despite their strong market presence and ability to satisfy customers through their core offerings, often struggle to meet customers' expectations and satisfaction across all aspects of their business operations. This challenge remains difficult, even for large, well-established leading brands. Furthermore, delivering exceptional service across all business operations not only contributes to the business's success but also fosters deeper customer connections and earns their loyalty. Consequently, every aspect of the business operation, no matter how minor, is carefully

considered, as each contributes to the business's efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly, this research investigated the substantial influence of restroom cleanliness on customers' overall satisfaction at fast-food chains, particularly regarding Generation Z's perceptions.

Keywords: Dining Experience, Generation Z, Hygiene Standards, Restroom Cleanliness, Service Quality

Introduction

Food businesses are successful, mainly when they operate efficiently and deliver outstanding customer service. Restaurant hygiene is incredibly significant for successful business operation. According to Kim & Bachman (2019), the key indicator of overall restaurant cleanliness, which reflects the sanitation of the food service operation, is restroom cleanliness. Sensitive consumers may judge a restaurant's overall cleanliness by its restroom facilities. Fast-food chains are known for their fast service and high-quality food products. Consumers tend to be more sensitive and expect high standards in restaurant restroom facilities, and they tend to lose their appetite at the sight of a single dirt or grease spot in food dining areas. People aged 12-27, or Generation Z, are known for shaping the food industry through their food preferences and dining habits, as they are actively engaged in food and beverage conversations. These digital natives also have significant social influence online, and their feedback and preferences are considered the trend and the online standard in the food and non-food industries. Furthermore, they are sensitive to businesses' health and sanitation, and are known for their aesthetic and cleanliness preferences.

Fast-food restaurants have standard restroom facilities, just like other restaurants; however, an often-overlooked aspect is the importance of maintaining clean restrooms, which can shape a positive dining experience for consumers and lead to satisfaction. According to Barlan-Espino (2017), restroom cleanliness is included in policies that support the efficiency and effectiveness of restaurant operations and customer satisfaction. Restaurants that fail to maintain the cleanliness and sanitation of their facilities, especially during operating hours, may operate less effectively, reducing consumer attraction. Restroom cleanliness has been identified as a primary factor that shapes consumers' overall perception of cleanliness, and society values it

highly, which directly impacts a positive attitude towards places like restaurants (Kim & Bachman, 2019). Generation Z is known as a digital native, whose opinions and experiences have a significant impact on a broader range of consumers. Maintaining consistent operations, such as keeping restroom facilities clean, indicates high-quality service, especially in the food industry, where food requires strict health and safety management. The restroom is an essential key area where customers meet and experience service in a business (Kim & Bachman, 2019). For a company to deliver quality service, it must ensure that, in every inch of its operations, customers find no single point of dissatisfaction, not just to save its image but also to maintain a positive dining environment for its customers. As stated by Parsa et al. (2017), various factors lead to consumers' decisions to eat out, including atmosphere, hygiene, and ambience. Hence, the sanitation and cleanliness of the restroom may influence customers' decisions about whether to stay at a fast-food chain restaurant or move to another restaurant.

In both the food and non-food industries, customer satisfaction is crucial and a key goal for businesses. Restrooms in fast-food restaurants reflect the overall cleanliness of the restaurant operation, and factors such as perceived hygiene, odor control, and maintenance schedule are primary drivers of the visible cleanliness of restroom facilities, which may influence Generation Z's overall satisfaction with their dining experience. Businesses must also meet and exceed their customers' standards and expectations, such as delivering a positive dining experience, meeting consumers' perceived quality, and making them feel satisfied, which would lead to their willingness to return. Several studies report that restroom cleanliness significantly influences customer satisfaction in restaurants. However, there are also limitations, as there are only a few studies that have explored some restroom factors that have a significant relation to the overall satisfaction of Generation Z. Furthermore, the researchers have included several variables to identify the possible relationship between restroom cleanliness of fast-food chains and the overall satisfaction of Generation Z in their dining experience in San Jose City.

Literature Review

Understanding Generation Z as Consumers

Generation Z, ages 12 to 27, represents a significant share of today's consumer market due to their strong purchasing power and

distinct behavioral patterns. They are known to be highly educated, tech-savvy, and value-driven, which makes them influential in shaping modern business practices. Bencsik et al. (2016) emphasized that Generation Z behaves differently from prior generations, presenting unique challenges and opportunities for businesses. Their preferences, including their expectations for cleanliness and convenience, must be thoroughly understood—especially in service-based industries such as fast food.

Demographic Influences on Consumer Perception

Age is a critical determinant in shaping consumer attitudes toward service quality, particularly in food establishments. Eze & Mena (2024) concluded that age significantly influences consumer decisions, behaviors, and expectations, suggesting that fast food chains must align their services with the perceptual tendencies of different age groups. Similarly, sex-based differences affect how cleanliness and privacy are perceived in restrooms. Burt et al. (2016) found that individuals, especially those with certain health conditions, place a premium on restroom cleanliness and privacy, emphasizing the importance of gender-sensitive sanitation facilities in public venues.

Civil status, while not a dominant influence, can shape an individual's perception of hygiene and comfort, influenced by maturity and life experiences. Zhong & Moon (2020) found differences in how married and single customers evaluated service quality in fast-food restaurants, suggesting that consumer diversity should be considered when evaluating satisfaction levels.

Economic Factors and Visit Frequency

Spending habits and visit frequency also provide insight into Generation Z's dining choices. Ja et al. (2022) reported that although Gen Z spends less annually than Millennials, they frequent fast-food chains more often due to their preference for convenience. Their repeated visits require businesses to maintain consistent service quality, especially in hygiene-sensitive areas like restrooms.

Educational attainment, particularly among college students and young professionals, is linked to a preference for efficient, fast, and reliable food options. Garza et al. (2016) noted a correlation between higher education and increased fast-food consumption among women,

suggesting that busy schedules may lead to greater reliance on fast-food restaurants.

Significance of Restroom Cleanliness in Consumer Satisfaction

Cleanliness in restroom facilities is a critical yet often underestimated factor in customer satisfaction within the food service industry. A hygienic restroom contributes not only to the establishment's perceived cleanliness but also to consumers' overall impression and trust. Kim & Bachman (2019) highlighted that restaurant staff's hygiene practices directly reflect overall cleanliness, including in restrooms, influencing customer confidence. Poor sanitation can spread pathogens, as outlined by Liu et al. (2025), compromising customer safety and negatively affecting brand perception.

Restroom conditions—such as odor, trash overflow, and ventilation—play a key role in consumer comfort. Guyot et al. (2018) emphasized that odor control through proper ventilation systems can significantly improve customer experience while contributing to energy efficiency. Errajaa et al. (2021) further showed that scent marketing positively impacts consumer satisfaction and sales, reinforcing the importance of sensory factors in hygiene.

Additionally, clean restrooms reflect a brand's attention to detail and respect for customer well-being. Ibrahim et al. (2024) warned about microbial contamination risks in public restrooms, reinforcing the need for regular maintenance and handwashing protocols. As hygiene technologies evolve, Wilson (2018) stressed that businesses remain responsible for ensuring cleanliness, especially in high-traffic areas such as fast-food restrooms.

Visual cleanliness also significantly affects perceptions. Kim & Bachman (2019) found that customers use visual cues such as restroom appearance to judge overall restaurant hygiene. Kim & Bachman (2019) also confirmed that restaurant cleanliness is directly related to customer satisfaction, suggesting that even secondary areas, such as restrooms, can influence the dining experience.

Generation Z's Perception of Service and Dining Experience

Generation Z places a high value on experience, ambience, and service efficiency. According to Singgalen (2024), unclean or greasy

restrooms can lower the perceived service quality of a business. As this generation often sets trends and influences broader consumer behavior, understanding their drivers of satisfaction is essential for business success.

Vos et al. (2019) defined satisfaction as an assessment of the overall service environment, including physical cleanliness. Nurhasanah et al. (2025) noted that Generation Z's expectations are reshaping norms of restaurant service. Their feedback helps restaurants adapt and refine services in ways that go beyond just food quality—such as restroom hygiene.

Tuncer et al. (2021) emphasized that service quality and atmosphere significantly shape perceived value and meal experiences. Hence, exceeding rather than merely meeting expectations—through spotless facilities and seamless service—can elevate consumer satisfaction. Kim & Bachman (2019) also affirmed that hygiene impacts consumers' willingness to purchase, making restroom cleanliness a strategic element in fostering loyalty.

Finally, customer retention is more valuable than mere attraction. Okoro et al. (2021) stated that restroom hygiene directly affects the likelihood of customers revisiting. Maintaining restrooms in fast-food chains is therefore not only a matter of public health but also a crucial determinant of customer trust and business sustainability.

Methods

This study used a quantitative-correlational design and a survey to explore the relationship between restroom cleanliness and overall satisfaction among Generation Z consumers in San Jose City fast-food chains. It aimed to examine how restroom hygiene influences satisfaction, providing data-supported insights into fast-food service quality.

The research was conducted in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, known for its active fast-food industry and high population of Generation Z consumers. Researchers targeted popular chains such as Jollibee and McDonald's, with second-year marketing students from Core Gateway College, Inc. serving as respondents, given their relevance and frequent visits to these establishments. The study used Slovin's formula with a 0.061 margin of error to determine a sample size of 92 from 140 second-year marketing students. These students were selected through purposive sampling as they best fit the profile of

Generation Z consumers. First-year students were excluded due to undeclared majors, and upper-year students were less available due to academic commitments.

A structured survey using a 4-point Likert scale gathered data on three areas: demographic profile, restroom cleanliness, and overall satisfaction. The scale ranged from "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*." The instrument was pre-tested, validated, and used to collect responses confidentially. A reliability test was conducted, and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency.

Researchers coordinated with the BSBA Department for access to respondents, presenting formal letters and consent forms. Surveys were distributed in person, with respondents briefed on the study's purpose. Each survey took about 10–15 minutes. Participation was voluntary, and data were handled with confidentiality. Respondents were thanked and informed that findings would be shared with them.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were used to analyze demographic data, perceptions of cleanliness, and satisfaction. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's *r* correlation, were used to measure the relationship between restroom cleanliness and customer satisfaction. This mixed approach provided both general patterns and relational insights.

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed. Informed consent was obtained, and all data were kept confidential and used solely for research. Participants were treated with respect to ensure comfort and safety. Results were presented without disclosing identities, and findings were shared with both respondents and the academic community to acknowledge their valuable contributions.

Results and Discussion

1. Socio–Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

Age. Descriptive statistics for this table indicate that the majority of Generation Z consumers at Core Gateway College, Inc., comprising second-year Marketing Management students, were 20 years old or younger, accounting for 82.61% of the total respondents. This indicates that respondents are at the peak of their age, with well-

formed, structured preferences regarding food and dining establishments, such as fast-food chains. A relatively high percentage also outlines their age group's credibility as the most influential segment affecting the brand and dining choices of other valued customers.

Alternatively, with only one respondent, who accounts for 1.09% of the total respondents and is the sole individual whose age exceeds 25 years, this respondent may have shown a different preference compared to younger respondents. It is still included in the specific age segment needed for the study, and a slight difference among the majority of respondents may significantly affect preferences and perceived standards in fast-food chains.

In support of these data, a study by Peng et al. (2016) demonstrated that age influences consumers' decisions and choices across different enterprises. Given that most respondents are already at the age when they have well-formed and firm preferences and perceptions about food businesses, often influenced by convenience and quality of service, this targeted age group may lead to better outcomes and conclusions needed to attain the objectives of this study.

Sex. The table illustrates that females constitute a relatively higher percentage, accounting for 64.13% of the study's total sample. This could imply that female preferences and valued choices are dominant among males, since many of the respondents are female. Their differences in choices and expectations across dining establishments, such as fast-food chains, would allow the study to include some variation in respondents' gender.

By comparison, the 33 male respondents, accounting for 35.87% of the sample, indicate a diminished representation of the said gender. The result of the analysis would make use of the opportunity to carefully examine the differences between males and females, with fewer male respondents representing a minority in the group.

In support of these findings, Garcia-Garzon et al. (2020) found that cleanliness and privacy are valued more by people who rely on the bathroom than by those who do not. The said statement may support the idea that women and men are hygiene-sensitive, especially in dining establishments like fast-food chains, where food is served, which must reflect the overall hygiene practices of the entire business operation. Furthermore, the study's results may depend on gender proportions, with females having the larger proportion, which may inform the evaluation of hygiene perceptions and expectations across both genders.

Civil Status. Most respondents are single, accounting for 98.91% of the sample and dominating it. A larger portion of respondents taking most of the segment allows researchers to significantly differentiate the preferences and standards of Generation Z consumers who are single and have a higher tendency to dine out with peers and fellow college students or spend most of their time alone, benefiting from quick delivery, food processing, and efficient service of food establishments such as fast-food chains.

On the contrary, only one married respondent accounts for 1.09% of the total sample. With only a small segment, as the only married respondent, this may limit the findings when analyzing the potential disparity between marriage and singlehood in terms of hygiene preferences and service quality standards; the response from this segment may still significantly contribute to the evidence needed to attain the objectives of the study.

The impact of civil status on consumer preferences regarding service quality in fast-food chains has been sparsely studied. One of the few studies to explore this association is that of Slack et al. (2014), which indicates that single and married consumers view and assess service quality differently in fast-food restaurants. The study's findings, which indicate that most single respondents have only one married Generation Z consumer, can help examine how these individuals may differ in their perceptions and assessments of the service quality offered by a fast-food chain.

Average Monthly Spent on Fast Food. The majority of respondents spent less than Php 500, accounting for 45.65% of the respondent pool. This reveals that the majority of the second-year Marketing Management students at Core Gateway College, Inc. were more practical and spent just the right amount of money on a particular college student dining out at a fast-food restaurant for lunch, and for other possible reasons. It may also be influenced by their quick-dining or delivered orders, for the convenience and easier access to food offered by fast-food chains.

Conversely, 21 respondents spent Php 1000 or more at a fast-food chain, accounting for 22.83% of the sample. This portion of the respondents reflects on Generation Z consumers, who tend to spend much more than usual. Moreover, this may imply to consumers who rarely dine out with their family and friends, or the general amount of money they spend every 30 days.

In support of these findings, according to a study conducted by Dimitrieska et al. (2023), Generation Z consumers spend significantly less on average annually compared to Millennials; however, the study suggests they engage in eating out more frequently than Millennials, signifying their preference for more convenient and efficient food options such as fast-food chains. Generation Z consumers may spend less than other age groups; however, they are more frequent diners, reflecting their influence and substantial experience with fast-food chains.

Average Monthly Visits to Fast. The table above shows that 37 respondents visited fast-food chains only once each month, accounting for 40.22% of the total sample. It indicates that most Generation Z consumers in Marketing Management at Core Gateway College, Inc. tend to visit fast-food chains less than other college students; however, their experiences and preferences at these dining establishments remain crucial in determining the association between their hygiene practices and consumers' satisfaction.

Conversely, only 7 respondents visit fast-food chains more than once a month, comprising 7.61% of the respondent pool. These few respondents visit a fast-food chain eight or more times, highlighting the significance of their frequent experiences for service quality, particularly in maintaining restroom facilities.

Educational Attainment. The data, as shown in the table, indicate that the survey has reached 100% of second-year Marketing Management students, all of whom are evidently high school graduates. This portion of respondents reflects a strong representation of Generation Z consumers who are more likely to have refined preferences and service standards in dining at fast-food chains. Higher educational attainment may imply the individual's higher perceptions and expectations of a particular business's hygiene practices.

A small number of studies have included educational attainment as a factor that may influence one's view and assessment of service quality in business operations. According to Hidaka et al. (2018), the association between education and fast-food consumption may not be entirely clear, as among women, a higher educational level was associated with greater fast-food intake. In contrast, among men, the opposite pattern was observed. These findings could support this statement, as the majority of the total sample is composed of females who dine out most of the time and experience the service quality of fast-food chains in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents.

PROFILE VARIABLES	FREQUENCY (N=92)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Age		
20 years and below	76	82.61%
21-25 years old	15	16.30%
More than 25 years old	1	1.09%
Sex		
Male	33	35.87%
Female	59	64.13%
Civil Status		
Single	91	98.91%
Married	1	1.09%
Average Monthly Spent on Fast-Food		
Less than PHP 500	42	45.65%
PHP 501-1000	29	31.52%
PHP 1001 or more	21	22.83%
Average Monthly Visit to Fast-Food		
Once	37	40.22%
Twice	34	36.96%
Three to seven times	14	15.22%
Eight times or more	7	7.61%
Educational Attainment		
Second year college	92	100.00%

1. Perceived Restroom Cleanliness of Generation Z Customers in Fast-food Chains

The observed statement *"I feel comfortable in fast-food chains if the restrooms are clean"* yields a mean rating of 3.57 with a standard deviation of 0.67, which falls within the verbal description of *Strongly Agree*. This interpretation suggests that Generation Z customers highly value the cleanliness and sanitation across the entire fast-food chain, which positively influences their dining experience. Moreover, the relatively low standard deviation also indicates that respondents' responses are clustered, with a narrow spread, demonstrating unified agreement within the sample.

In contrast, the observed statement *"During my visits, I never see visible dirt, stains, or trash in the restrooms"* has received the lowest mean rating of 2.76 with a standard deviation of 0.83. Nonetheless, when verbally described as *Agree*, a higher deviation indicates greater disparities among consumers' responses. It may signify inconsistencies in maintaining sanitation and cleanliness across the entire fast-food chain, leading respondents to hold such perceptions and assessments of their experiences at these dining establishments.

The aggregated computed mean of the respondents' Perceptions of the Restroom Cleanliness of Fast-food Chains within San Jose City has a score of 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.73, which corresponds to the *Strongly Agree* as verbal description, indicating that Generation Z customers in Core Gateway College, Inc. have a positive perspective on the overall sanitation of fast-food chain facilities. However, a relatively high standard deviation may have indicated some inconsistencies in the maintenance of fast-food chain facilities, which require further improvement and monitoring during business operations.

Various research studies have shown that maintaining the cleanliness of all food establishments, such as fast-food chains, is crucial for business. According to Barlan-Espino (2017), restroom cleanliness is always included in policies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of business operations and to enhance customer satisfaction in restaurants. Therefore, businesses such as fast-food chains must not overlook the need to consistently maintain their facilities to meet the perceived expectations and anticipated service standards of their prospective customers.

Table 2. Cleanliness of Restrooms in San Jose City Fast-food Chains as Perceived by Generation Z Customers.

STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. I always find the restrooms clean and well-maintained.	2.77	0.90	Agree
2. During my visits, I never see visible dirt, stains, or trash in the restrooms.	2.76	0.83	Agree
3. I find the restrooms hygienic enough to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria.	3.08	0.70	Agree
4. The availability of soap, hand sanitizer, and tissue/hand dryers enhances my perception of restroom hygiene.	3.36	0.70	Strongly Agree
5. The cleanliness of the restroom influences my overall judgment of a fast-food chain.	3.43	0.68	Strongly Agree
6. I feel comfortable in fast-food chains if the restrooms are clean.	3.57	0.67	Strongly Agree
7. I find restrooms clean when they have reasonable odor control, which enhances my overall experience.	3.45	0.75	Strongly Agree
8. A welcoming, fresh-smelling restroom improves my dining experience.	3.53	0.70	Strongly Agree
9. I expect the cleanliness of a restroom to meet my standards in fast-food chains.	3.52	0.69	Strongly Agree
10. I expect the restroom to be clean whenever I visit a fast-food chain.	3.47	0.67	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	3.29	0.73	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.25-4.00-Strongly Agree 2.50-3.24-Agree

1.75-2.49-Disagree 1.00-1.74-Strongly Disagree

Overall Satisfaction of Generation Z Customers in Fast-Food Chains

Table three indicates that the observed statement *"I stay loyal to fast-food chains that provide a better experience than their rivals"* yields a mean score of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 0.35, corresponding to the Strongly Agree category. This suggests that respondents' satisfaction and retention depend heavily on the service a fast-food chain can offer, such as providing a better experience than its competitors. Additionally, a relatively low standard deviation rating indicates that responses from the sample were closely aligned, illustrating favorable consistency in respondents' satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the evaluated factor *"I feel more comfortable eating in a fast-food chain"* has the lowest mean rating of 3.17, with a standard deviation of 0.74, which falls under the Agree category in the verbal description. On the contrary, although still regarded as *Agree*, given that it has the lowest mean rating and a higher standard deviation, this suggests respondents' unsettling experience of greater inconsistency among responses in the sample.

The overall mean rating for Overall Satisfaction of Generation Z Customers in Fast-food Chains is 3.40, with a standard deviation of 0.35, which aligns with the interpretation of Strongly Agree. This indicates that respondents are predominantly satisfied and most likely to remain customers if the fast-food chain successfully meets their expectations and maintains a particular standard of service quality; only then can it fulfill the demands of its intended customers.

As indicated by Kim & Bachman (2019), they have interpreted that a restaurant's hygiene quality, such as restroom cleanliness, plays a paramount role in determining the customers' intention to revisit the restaurant. On top of that, the strong representation of specific age groups who consistently patronize big businesses, such as fast-food, must also be acknowledged, as their critiques and assessments can substantially influence brand choices and satisfaction levels for a large portion of customers.

Hence, taking into account the factors that strongly influence consumers' intentions and decisions, Generation Z is very significant in ensuring that the demands of these prospective customers are met and that business operations are aligned with the business's objective to soar.

Table 3. Overall Satisfaction of Generation Z customers with fast-food chains in San Jose City.

STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1. I feel more comfortable eating in a fast-food chain.	3.17	0.74	Agree
2. I find my dining experiences in fast-food chains enjoyable.	3.30	0.55	Strongly Agree
3. My expectations of food quality are met when dining in fast-food chains.	3.25	0.60	Agree
4. I am willing to revisit a fast-food chain that provides a pleasant dining experience.	3.39	0.55	Strongly Agree
5. I share my positive experiences in fast-food chains with friends and family.	3.45	0.65	Strongly Agree
6. My impression of a fast-food chain influences my decision to dine there.	3.39	0.61	Strongly Agree
7. I choose fast-food chains that provide a better overall experience than others.	3.47	0.60	Strongly Agree
8. Fast-food chains maintain a certain level of quality to attract customers.	3.45	0.54	Strongly Agree
9. My perception of a fast-food chain affects my willingness to visit again.	3.54	0.64	Strongly Agree
10. I stay loyal to fast-food chains that provide a better experience than their rivals.	3.61	0.55	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	3.40	0.35	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.25-4.00-Strongly Agree 2.50-3.24-Agree

1.75-2.49-Disagree 1.00-1.74-Strongly Disagree

Relationship Between Restroom Cleanliness and the Overall Satisfaction of Generation Z Customers in Fast-food Chains

Table 4 shows the relationship between restroom cleanliness and overall satisfaction among Generation Z customers at fast-food chains in San Jose City. The evidence gathered from Pearson's r correlation analysis is shown in the table above. As revealed by the data, there is a significant positive correlation between Restroom Cleanliness and Overall Satisfaction among Generation Z Customers in San Jose City Fast-food Chains ($r=0.2494$; $p=0.017$). This underscores a strong associative pattern: restroom cleanliness indeed influences customer satisfaction, specifically among Generation Z, when dining at fast-food chains. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that the satisfaction a customer may experience at a fast-food chain is primarily driven by how well the business meets prospective customers' perceptions and preferences.

A moderate number of research studies indicating the influence of restroom cleanliness on customer satisfaction have already been conducted internationally; however, studies focusing on which customer groups and specific settings, such as fast-food chains, are limited, and there has been minimal exploration of such studies in the Philippine setting. Hence, the correlation analysis provides strong evidence of an association between the study variables, with a substantial contribution to the positive development and continued progress of food businesses, particularly fast-food chains. According to Park et al. (2016), cleanliness and sanitation are highly esteemed by the public, which has a direct shaping effect on positive attitudes and perceptions toward public places such as restaurants. Significant places, such as restroom facilities, can significantly shape customers' perceptions of hygiene and sanitary conditions in food-serving businesses.

Table 4. Relationship between restroom cleanliness and overall satisfaction of Generation Z customers at fast-food chains in San Jose City.

PARTICULAR	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	P-VALUE
	r	p
Overall Satisfaction	0.2494	0.017

Note: r represents the Pearson R correlation value, and p represents

the significance value in all analyses.

Conclusions

The following conclusions summarize the key findings of the study on how restroom cleanliness influences the overall satisfaction of Generation Z consumers in fast-food chains in San Jose City:

The majority of the respondents were young, unmarried females who frequently visited fast-food chains, making them a key consumer segment. Understanding their demographic traits is essential for crafting services and cleanliness standards that meet their expectations. In addition, respondents perceived the restrooms as clean, hygienic, and adequately supplied with soap, tissue, and sanitizers. This high level of cleanliness significantly shaped their positive views of the fast-food establishments. Moreover, Generation Z consumers reported high satisfaction levels, primarily influenced by the cleanliness and overall ambiance of the fast-food chains. Clean restrooms enhance brand trust and contribute to a more enjoyable dining experience. Finally, there is a significant positive relationship between restroom cleanliness and overall customer satisfaction among Generation Z consumers. This implies that cleaner facilities can drive greater loyalty and positive brand perception in fast-food environments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance Generation Z's overall satisfaction in fast-food chains through improved restroom cleanliness:

Fast-food chain managers should prioritize regular restroom maintenance and cleanliness checks to ensure hygiene standards are consistently met, as this greatly influences Generation Z's overall satisfaction. Additionally, marketing teams should highlight restroom cleanliness as part of their customer experience branding to build trust and appeal to hygiene-conscious consumers. Meanwhile, staff training programs must include sanitation protocols and customer service practices to improve not just the dining area but also restroom upkeep. In addition, customer feedback systems should be implemented to monitor and assess perceptions of cleanliness, enabling a quick response to hygiene-related concerns. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore other factors influencing Generation Z's satisfaction in food

establishments, such as service speed, ambiance, and digital ordering systems, to provide a more holistic view. Comparative studies may be conducted in other cities or age groups to determine if the influence of restroom cleanliness on satisfaction holds across different demographics or locations.

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