Impacts of the Health Protocols' Implementation to Service Quality among Selected Fast Food Restaurants in Dasmariñas City, Cavite in the New Normal

[1]Marlene G. Lopez, [2]Cyra L. De La Torre, [3]Mrs. Anna-Liza A. Tibayan

Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management

[3]Adviser

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY – DASMARINAS

College of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Hotel & Restaurant Management Department

Abstract: **Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, health and safety protocols were imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to the food service industry as they reopen their business to the public again under the New Normal. In line with these changes, this study aimed to assess the impacts of the implementation of these health protocols to service quality. Also, the study sought to find the relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols to service quality in the three selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite. The researchers used the descriptive-quantitative research method and applied simple random sampling to collect data through a survey questionnaire from 150 customers of the selected restaurants via online using the Google form. The data was treated and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools and the Chi-Square was employed to see if there was a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols to service quality. The findings of the study showed that upon the implementation of the health protocols in the restaurants, there is high impact to service quality in terms of reliability, tangibility, and responsiveness while there is moderate impact in terms of assurance and empathy. Furthermore, when the respondents are grouped in terms of age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, income level, and frequency of visit, the results showed that each of this variable has no significant relationship with their assessment of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was accepted. Lastly, the researchers made several recommendations to the selected restaurants for them to be able to improve service quality in adherence to the health protocols imposed by the IATF.**

Keywords: **Health Protocols, Service Quality, Fast Food Restaurants, New Normal, Service Dimensions, SERVQUAL.**

1. INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization defined Coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, as an infectious disease that it is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (WHO, 2019). The outbreak of this COVID-19 pandemic started at Wuhan, China and later on spread all over the world. Many people lost their lives and still counting at the present time and has

been infected with this disease. Aside from the continuous threats of COVID-19 to the people's life, it resulted to a huge impact on global economy which caused the loss of customers in almost all types of industries. The service industry is one of the most hit by the spread of coronavirus where the fast food restaurants belong. Center for Young Women's Health (CYWH) provide a definition of fast-food posted under health guides (October 21, 2019) "Fast food refers to food that can be prepared and served quickly. It can come from many places: sit-down restaurants, counter service, take-out, drive-thru, and delivery. Fast food is popular because the food is inexpensive, convenient, and tastes good."

In order to continue the production of goods and services and increase consumer's confidence in the economy, government immediately implement protocols that can contain the spread of COVID-19. People are encouraged to stay at home and work from home, lessen the unnecessary travels, and other safety measures. Many fast-food restaurants have adopted possible strategies for getting through the coronavirus pandemic, which has drastically shifted how the dining industry functions.

In the Philippines, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) is a task force established by the Philippine government's executive branch to address issues related to emerging infectious illnesses in the country. The IATF established a system to identify, screen, and assist Filipinos suspected or confirmed to be infected with emerging infectious diseases (EID). The IATF required the strict implementation of specific health protocols in public areas which includes the restaurants. Fast food restaurants re-opened because of protocols that has been implemented.

In her article published in the Philippine Star dated June 19, 2020, Ms. Rodette Adel stated: "When the national government allowed the reopening of food establishments, fast food chains in the Philippines intensified the implementation of safety measures in their operations amid the pandemic." Some of these protocols include the following: 1) dine-in services at 30% of the seating capacity; 2) observance of strict hygiene measures; 3) implementation of social distancing; 4) customers must go through 4-step check: accomplish the log-in info; stepping on disinfectant mats; strict wearing of face masks and face shields; and temperature check. On the part of the employees, they are required to wear full protective gear, observe physical distancing and practice regular handwashing and sanitation.

Since fast food restaurants should follow and strictly implement these safety and health protocols in their establishments, there are impacts to the service provided to the customers specifically to the service quality dimensions such as Reliability; Assurance; Tangibility; Empathy; and Responsiveness (RATER). Al-Ababneh (2017), described the service quality as the extent to which the service attains the needs or expectations of the customer or develop an overall impression of customers to know the weaknesses and excellence of the service. It defined as "what customer gets out and is willing to pay for" therefore, service quality can be regarded as the gap between the expected service and the actual perceived service.

Due to COVID-19, the food service industry has seen more change in the last six months than in the last ten years according to Tama Looney, Brand Analytics & Customer Engagement Executive with Xenial, who has been in the restaurant industry for a decade and in the consumer insights and analytic industry for over 20. After doing scores of surveys, scouring restaurant industry news, and visiting restaurants in person, Looney has seen the industry quickly respond to the coronavirus pandemic to create socially safe restaurants by offering contactless payment, requiring employees to wear masks, providing sanitation stations, providing kiosks and apps for contactless ordering, clearly communicating about any new precautions in place.

In line with these changes and new developments in the food service industry, the researchers decided to conduct this study to assess whether the health and safety protocols, as part of the service delivery, have significant impacts on the quality of service based on the actual experience of the customers in the selected fast food restaurants. Moreover, the researchers would like to assess if these impacts have positive or negative effects as to how the service is being provided to the customer. The study would also determine how the food service sector responds to a pandemic (COVID-19) by introducing health and safety regulations to improve the service quality of fast food restaurants as well as to limit the risk of the virus from spreading. Furthermore, when the food industry recovers from its financial losses, implementing health and safety measures, as well as maintaining a high level of service quality, will give the business firm an advantage in regaining revenues while dealing with the virus.

Background of the study

The coronavirus quickly turned business finances down due to the protocols imposed by most countries to control the spread of virus and the expansion of this pandemic. Almost all industries have been affected by this unexpected crisis, one of them is the food service industry. Restaurants were forced to close or to operate but with certain restrictions and to strictly implement new safety protocols.

In his interview by CNN News TV last June 2020, Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon Lopez explained about implementing the health protocols that restaurants are allowed to operate at 30% capacity for dine-in operations. He mentioned that they implemented these protocols in favor of workers so that they can go back to work. In the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), 50 % operating capacity has been allowed.

Last June 2, 2020, IATF, together with DTI, issued the guidelines and safety protocols for restaurants to be prepared for their time in operation and for all the health protocols that will be implemented. The health protocols at the restaurants are: the social distancing are about a 1 meter apart; there should be an acrylic glass or clear glass in between the customers; the usual sanitation requirement; the wearing of mask; the waiters should be at least one meter away from the customers as the get the orders or if it's self-service, the cashier will have the clear glass dividers; making sure that comfort rooms are always sanitized; and all the health protocol reminders in signages around the premises.

The covid-19 pandemic brought unprecedented and swift changes to our lives and in many industries including the food service industry. With the new protocols being imposed, the quality of service among restaurants has been affected in many ways. And having a high level of service quality is a big contribution to the business by providing its competitive advantage. That is why the researchers conducted this study to be able to assess the current state of service quality in restaurants specifically in fast food with the implementation of the health and safety protocols. The researchers aimed to determine the customers' assessment on the impacts, whether positive and negative, of these protocols to the service quality provided to them whenever they dine-in at these fast food restaurants in the New Normal.

Furthermore, this study will be beneficial to future student researchers, fast food restaurant owners, and the food service industry in general, as this study will increase their awareness and provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of its reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness. The outcome of this study can provide new knowledge to restaurant service providers about the effects of the safety protocols on specific service dimensions which can better guide them as to how they can improve the quality of customer service in spite of the many protocols being implemented.

Theoretical Framework

The primary basis of this study is the SERVQUAL Model by Parasuman, Zeithaml, and Berry which is an analytical method that can assist managers in finding the gaps between variables that have an impact on the quality of the services being provided. In marketing research and science, this model is the most commonly utilized, despite the fact that it is an exploratory study and does not provide a clear assessment method for assessing gaps at different levels. For measuring service quality perception, SERVQUAL recommends using the 'gap or difference' between the expected and actual levels of customer service with five dimensions: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurances, Empathy, and Tangibility (Ghotbabadi and Baharun, June 2012). The variables used by the researchers to assess the impacts of health and safety protocols to the quality of service were the five service dimensions from this SERVQUAL Model.

Conceptual Framework

The researchers used the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model. This is a functional graph which helps with better understanding of the study by showing the variables used and how the study will be conducted. The inputs included the respondents' demographic profile as well as their assessment of the impacts of the implementation of the health protocols to service quality. The process involved the data gathering tool which is a self-made survey questionnaire and the statistical treatment and analysis of all the data gathered. And for the output, the researchers made several recommendations and proposed a set of enhanced guidelines on service quality, with adherence to the health and safety protocols, which is also part of the recommendations.
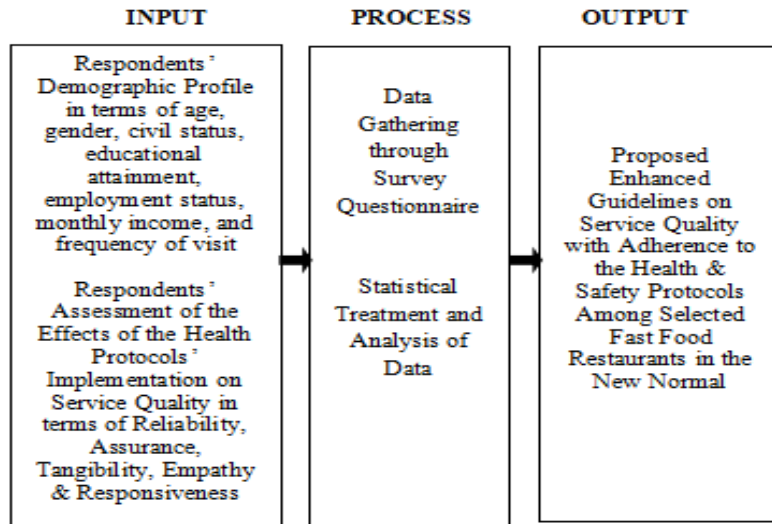
INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
Respondents' Demographic Profile in terms of age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, monthly income, and frequency of visit Respondents' Assessment of the Effects of the Health Protocols' Implementation on Service Quality in terms of Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy & Responsiveness	Data Gathering through Survey Questionnaire Statistical Treatment and Analysis of Data	Proposed Enhanced Guidelines on Service Quality with Adherence to the Health & Safety Protocols Among Selected Fast Food Restaurants in the New Normal

Figure 1: The Research Paradigm

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this study was to assess the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmariñas City, Cavite in the new normal.

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1.	What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1	Age;

1.2	Gender;

1.3	Civil Status

1.4	Educational attainment;

1.5	Employment status;

1.6	Monthly income; and

1.7	Frequency of visit since the pandemic?

2.	What are the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite in terms of:

2.1 Reliability;

2.2 Assurance;

2.3 Tangibility;

2.4 Empathy; and

2.5 Responsiveness?

3.	Is there a significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants?

4.	Based on the results, what enhanced guidelines on service quality, with adherence to the health and safety protocols, can be proposed to fast food restaurants in the new normal?

Statement of Hypothesis

In this study, the null hypothesis is stated as: There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite in the new normal.

The alternative hypothesis is stated as: There is a significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite in the new normal.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As soon as the coronavirus started to spread, the confidence of the customers to buy foods decreased. It affected not only the financial aspect of the business but also the quality of service provided by restaurants in the country. In May 2020, the Inter-Active Task Force implemented health protocols that can continue the fast food restaurant businesses as a dine-in with a limited capacity operation only.

Bauer (2020), stated on her article that the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the restaurants and foods service business which were some first economic activities. The overnight cities virtually stopped the dining in restaurants as soon as the social distancing guidelines took effect. People were afraid to buy foods due to the virus spread.

During the pandemic, many fast food restaurants have adopted possible strategies which has radically shifted how the dining industry functions. In the dining in restaurants, the common protocols are sanitizing tables, frequent employee handwashing, and asking customers to wear masks inside (McDowell, 2021).

A documentary video of Esquire Philippines explained the innovative ways and safety protocols of businesses restaurants in the Philippines. According to them, "Restaurants were getting bigger, concepts were becoming more and more ambitious, international chains were setting up shop in the Philippines. Local entrepreneurs were unstoppable." Which shows the improving and growing of fast food restaurants in the Philippines that causes the increase in the economy of the country. Not until the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 in the country happened which causes the short-term closed of fast food restaurants in places which severely hit by the said virus. The health protocols that were implemented by the government helps the business to open again. This does not stop the fast food restaurants to have an innovative food that can gain the customer's confidence. Some big restaurants comply to the health protocols. They made an area at the restaurant where families and friends that want to bond that still shows a social distancing at the chairs and tables and can experience an isolated space.

In the site article of Department of Trade and Industry dated June 2, 2020, the health protocols provided by the Inter-Agency Task Force to be implemented in different fast-food restaurants stated, "properly sanitized tables and chairs (after each customer's use); distancing of tables and chairs to at least one (1) meter apart on all sides; face-to-face seating allowed only with proper dividers; visible floor markings for guidance of clients in queueing, preferably color-coded; proper ventilation in the establishment; visibility and accessibility of sanitizing equipment and tools; provision of food menus per table; contactless order-taking; covering pieces of furniture made of porous materials with plastic for ease of sanitation; clean trash bins for used papers and used tissue; clean washrooms and toilets with sufficient soap, water, tissue, and toilet paper; and disinfection of high-risk areas, such as order and bar counters every 30 minutes."

In line with the implementation of the health protocols in the new normal, fast food restaurants are still very much concerned with maintaining the high quality in their products and service. Providing service quality is still a priority in the food service industry amidst the pandemic. Sahal et. al (2017), explained that managers in the service sectors wants to make their service as the customer-centric and focuses on improving their performance. The customer expectations are properly understood and measured and from customer's perspective becomes more essential with constraints of finances and resources under which service organizations operates in any service quality identified. This study also shows the importance of customer's perspective in service quality to gain the customer's interest in their fast food restaurants.

 "Service quality ensures that customers are satisfied during every single visit, consequently benefitting the firms in its long-term profitability and customer loyalty." Its concept is defined as the general difference between the customer's supposition and the perceptions of the service experience. The product and service defined as customer's expectation from the service provider after they have made the purchase. Customers will be the one to decide they are not satisfied or satisfied whether they will repeat the purchase again or it exceeds customer's expectations (Sahal, et. al., 2017).

Service quality has been measured many times by using the SERVQUAL Model. In the study of Pakurár et. al (2019), the five dimensions of Service Quality by Parasuraman et al. were used. These five dimensions are reliability, assurance, responsiveness, tangibles, and empathy. The first dimension is Reliability which means that the organization provides a service for the first time correctly. Furthermore, it demonstrates that businesses attempt to keep their commitments and pay attention to the outcomes.

Secondly, the employees' civility and knowledge, as well as their ability to impart confidence and trust to consumers, have been termed as Assurance. They also stated that employee attitudes and behavior, as well as the staff's capacity to provide friendly, confidential, courteous, and competent services, are all indicators of assurance.

The third dimension that was emphasized was the willingness of employees to serve. This is Responsiveness includes telling consumers when things will be done, providing them full attention, marketing services, and replying to their demands.

The fourth dimension stated was physical facilities which should be identified as Tangibles (equipment, personnel, and communications materials). Customers will judge quality based on the physical appearance of the service. The actual buildings, instruments, and machines needed to supply the service, as well as furniture, fixtures, equipment, tools, and utensils are all considered tangibles.

Lastly, Empathy as a service dimension, is defined as the ability to transmit the feeling that the consumer is unique and special. Caring, paying personal attention, and delivering services to consumers are all examples of empathy. Customers must believe that the entity delivering services prioritizes them.

Since the pandemic, a lot of new policies, guidelines, health, and safety protocols, specifically in the food service industry have been formulated. Last June 2020, IATF and DTI issued the guidelines that should be strictly followed and implemented in dine-in restaurants and fast food establishments. These new guidelines and protocols have affected the way service are provided to customers.

Based on the study of Kim, J. (2020), people have strong motivation to engage in social and physical interaction. Bust since the COVID-19 pandemic, customers now prefer private dining or private tables or rooms in restaurants. They are now observing physical distance from others in social interactions. Furthermore, customers have more desire for safety, thus, when they do dine in, they demand for options that involve less risk.

In her article, Erin McDowell (February 2021), explained how fast food chains have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. For some customers, aside from food delivery, drive-thru is also considered as one of the most convenient and safest option. But for those who dine-in, most of them prefer restaurants that have strict compliance and implementation of the health and safety protocols.

Furthermore, in the study of Yang (2020), it was stated that since the pandemic, dine-in consumers perceive less risk if there is limited physical contact in fast food service. On the other hand, if the restaurant does not strictly observe the health protocols, the consumers' risk perception and their reluctance to patronize these restaurants increase.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, setting of the study, subject of the study, data gathering procedures, and sources of data.

Research Design

The researchers used the Descriptive-Quantitative method to assess the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmariñas City, Cavite in the new normal. Quantitative method highlights the objectives and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys (Creswell, J.W., and Creswell, J.D., 2017). Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. In this study, a survey questionnaire was used as the instrument to gather data and to uncover, understand, and describe the customers' assessment. Moreover, descriptive-quantitative method is suitable for the study since the researchers interpreted the data results of the demographic profile of the respondents as well as described the impacts of health protocols to service quality.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in three selected fast food restaurants located within Dasmarinas City, Cavite. The said locale was selected because there is a large number of restaurants which have been operating within the city for 5 years or even longer. The three selected fast food restaurants which are are all located inside Waltermart-Dasmarinas City were given specific codes: Restaurant A for Jollibbee, Restaurant B for McDonald's, and Restaurant C for Kentucky Fried Chicken

(KFC). These restaurants were carefully chosen based on their similarities such as the location, type of restaurant, and their seating capacity.

Participants of the Study

The researchers used the probability sampling technique that aims to identify a representative sample from which to collect data. The simple random sampling method was applied to select the sample from the large population due to its ease of use and for the accurate representation of the larger group since in this method, every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. For the sample size, the researchers included 50 customers per restaurant to give equal representation for each store. Since there were 3 selected restaurants, there was a total of 150 respondents who participated in the study and answered the survey.

Data Gathering Procedures

In order for the researchers to gather important data needed for the completion of the research, the researchers developed a survey questionnaire as primary data gathering instrument. Upon approval of the thesis adviser, panel members, and statistician, the survey questionnaire was posted online and answered by the respondents via google form. This was due to the pandemic situation which does not allow a physical or face-to-face encounter with the respondents.

Data Treatment and Analysis

To be able to come up with a definite conclusion regarding this study, the researchers applied the following statistical tools:

The average weighted mean was utilized in order to determine the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to the service quality among the selected fast food restaurants in Dasmariñas City, Cavite as perceived by the customers/respondents.

The 4-point Likert Scale was used to interpret the obtained weighted mean:

Scale   Descriptive Equivalent

4   High Impact

3   Moderate Impact

2   Low Impact

1   No Impact

To determine the significant relationship between the profile and the variables of the respondents and their assessment on the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, the Chi-square was applied. The Chi-square statistic is commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables. The null hypothesis of the Chi-Square test is that no relationship exists on the categorical variables in the population; they are independent. Finally, the findings and recommendations of the study was shared with the management of the selected fast food restaurants so that they will be able to determine their customers' assessment of the service quality that they provide to them during this new normal which can be a valuable source of information for the improvement of the quality of service.

4.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Demographic Profile of the respondents in terms of:

Table 1.1: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Rank
18 years old and below	18	12	3
19-29 years old	90	60	1
30-40 years old	22	14.67	2
41-51 years old	15	10	4
52-62 years old	5	3.33	5
Total	**150**	**100**	

As per Table 1.1, majority of the respondents, with a total of 90 and with a percentage of 60%, is between 19-29 years old. There are 22 respondents between 30-40 years old which is 14.67% and 18 respondents aged 18 years old and below accounting to 12%. There are also 15 respondents between ages 41-51 years old which comprised 10% of the total respondents. Lastly, there are 5 respondents who are between 52-62 years old representing 3.33% of the 150 respondents.

Age does have a significant impact on one's satisfaction with service quality. Because of their age, most adults prefer a neat and especially safe environment where they can really implement health protocols. Alkraiji, A. and Ameen, N. (2021), claimed that service quality plays a crucial role in developing customer loyalty among young people, with the majority of young adults presently having high expectations of what they are experiencing.

Table 1.2: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Female	80	53.33	1
Male	70	46.67	2
Total	**150**	**100**	

Table 1.2 shows that majority of the respondents are female with a total of 80, and comprising 53.33 % of the 150 respondents, while 70 respondents are male which accounted to 46.67 %.

According to the study of See Ying Kwok, Ahmad Jusoh, Zainab Khalifah (2016), service quality is positively related to satisfaction where the relationship is moderated by gender. Moreover, their data revealed that women's perceptions of service quality had a bigger impact on satisfaction levels than men's. Most women are cautious and careful, which is why they have high expectations, whereas men tend to settle for the average.

Table 1.3: Civil Status

Civil Status	Freq.	Percent	Rank
Married	43	28.67	2
Separated	4	2.67	3
Single	103	68.67	1
Total	**150**	**100**	

Table 1.3 shows that a total of 103 respondents, or 68.67 % are single and 43 are married respondents, accounting to 28.67 %. Lastly, there are 4 respondents (2.67 %) who are separated in terms of status.

As stated by Jagdish Sheth (2020), as your lifestyle changes, so does your perspective in life, which means that whether you're married, single, or separated, one's perspective on the new normal health and safety protocols, will have an impact on their outlook in life.

Table 1.4: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Freq.	Percent	Rank
Associate Degree/Technical Course	45	30	2
Bachelor's Degree Graduate	60	40	1
Doctorate Degree Graduate	4	2.67	4
High School Graduate	38	25.33	3
Master's Degree Graduate	3	2	5
Total	**150**	**100**	

Table 1.4 reveals that majority of the respondents are Bachelor's Degree graduates with a total of 60 and accounting to 40% of the 150 respondents. It is followed by 45 respondents with Associate Degree/Technical course which is equivalent to 30%. There are also 38 respondents who are High School graduates with a percentage of 25.33. Lastly, there are 4 Doctorate Degree graduates (2.67%) and 3 Master's Degree graduates (2.0%) who were among the respondents.

According to Garg and Kumar (n.d.), the dining experience has influenced both student and staff happiness and loyalty. Moreover, customer satisfaction is entirely dependent on the quality of service, variety, and options of the food and beverages served, as well as hygiene and cleanliness, pricing, and value justice.

Table 1.5: Employment Status

Employment Status	Freq.	Percent	Rank
Church worker	1	0.67	4.5
Employed	103	68.67	1
Self-employed/ Business Owner	9	6	3
Student	1	0.67	4.5
Studying	1	0.67	4.5
Unemployed	34	22.67	2
Not yet employed	1	0.67	4.5
Total	**150**	**100**	

As per Table 1.5, majority of the respondents are employed with a total of 103, accounting to 68.67%, followed by 34 unemployed respondents equivalent to 22.67%. There are 9 respondents, comprising 6.0%, who are self-employed/business owners. Lastly, there is 1 Church worker, 1 student, 1 who still studying and not yet employed, each accounted to 0.67%.

According to MSG (2022), the occupation of an individual plays a significant role in influencing his/her buying decision. An individual's nature of job has a direct influence on the products and brands he picks for himself/herself. Moreover, employed individuals are more likely to dine in restaurants as employment creates time constraints from both the time spent working and the time spent commuting (Rahkovsky et al., 2018).

Table 1.6: Monthly Income

Income	Freq.	Percent	Rank
Above ₱ 65,000	1	0.67	5
Below ₱ 20,000	86	57.33	1
₱ 20,000 - ₱ 34,999	41	27.33	2
₱ 35,000 - ₱49,999	15	10	3
₱ 50,000 - ₱64,999	7	4.67	4
Total	**150**	**100**	

As shown in Table 1.6, majority of the respondents with a total of 86 and comprising 57.33%, have a monthly income below P20,000. This is followed by 41 respondents, which is equivalent to 27.33%, with P20,000-34,999, monthly income. Fifteen (15) respondents equivalent to 10%, have a monthly income of P35,000-49,999. Lastly, there are 7 respondents (4.67%) with P50,000-64999 monthly income and 1 respondent (0.67%) with P65,000 and above.

According to Restro Gyann (2020), consumers like spending their money on products that they need or want. Some consumers with high salaries prefer a high-quality service that meets or exceeds their expectations. Some people of average salaries are satisfied with the services provided by fast food franchises, but it makes no difference whether you make a lot of money or not. What matters most is that they always provide excellent customer service to all their customers.

Table 1.7: Frequency of Visit Since Pandemic

Frequency of visit	Freq.	Percent	Rank
2-3 times a week	29	19.33	3
4-5 times a week	14	9.33	4
6-7 times a week	12	8	5
Once a month	55	36.67	1
Once a week	40	26.67	2
Total	**150**	**100**	

Table 1.7 shows that majority of the respondents visit fast food restaurant once a month, with 55 respondents equivalent to 36.67%. This is followed by 40 respondents (26.67%) who visit once a week. There are 29 respondents (19.33%) who visit fast food restaurant 2-3 times a week while 14 of the respondents (9.33%) visit 4-5 times a week. Lastly, there are 12 respondents (8.0%) who visit fast food restaurant 6-7 times a week.

Only a few people are allowed to go outside under the new normal. Furthermore, fast food restaurants can only accommodate a limited number of dine-in customers. As a result of the virus outbreak, many people are limiting their visits. The use of health protocols helps people stay safe, elderly persons who are vulnerable to viruses. (Shumaila Zeb, Syed Shahwar Hussain & Asma Javed, 2021).

2. The impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality among selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite in terms of:

Table 2.1: Reliability

2.1 RELIABILITY	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2.1.1. The tables, chairs, and other fixtures are consistently cleaned, sanitized, and ready for use.	3.50	0.702	Strongly Agree	4.5
2.1.2. The comfort room inside the restaurant is cleaned & sanitized after each customer's use.	3.51	0.712	Strongly Agree	3
2.1.3. The management strictly implements health & safety protocols inside the restaurant.	3.59	0.615	Strongly Agree	1
2.1.4. The restaurant staff consistently abides by the health & safety protocols while providing service to customers.	3.57	0.649	Strongly Agree	2
2.1.5. A fast & friendly service as well as a safe environment are provided to customers.	3.50	0.693	Strongly Agree	4.5
Composite Mean	**3.53**	**0.570**	**High Impact**	

Table 2.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of Reliability. Statement 2.1.3 got the highest mean and a verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree which puts it in rank 1. This means that the strict implementation of health and safety protocols inside the restaurant has the highest impact on service quality based on the assessment of the respondents/customers. Although Statements 2.1.1 and 2.1.5 with a mean of 3.50, are in the last rank, they still got a Strongly Agree interpretation. This proves that the respondents still agree that consistent cleaning and sanitizing of tables, chairs, and other fixtures as well as providing a fast, friendly service, and a safe environment have significant impacts on service quality. Overall, the implementation of health protocols has a high impact on service quality in terms of Reliability, with a composite mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 0.570.

As stated by Muhammad Raza (2020), reliability is the ability to meet a certain level of quality in the services provided in accordance with market standards. Reliability is strongly linked to service quality which can lead to customer loyalty. When you meet a certain service quality standard, customers will feel satisfied with the service provided by the restaurant that consistently implements on the site, which can result in customer satisfaction.

Table 2.2: Assurance

2.2 ASSURANCE	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2.2.1. The temperature check at the entrance of the restaurant being done by the staff	3.47	0.662	Agree	4
2.2.2 Filling up the health declaration form or a logbook before entering builds customer's trust	3.34	0.810	Agree	5
2.2.3. The "one-meter distance" between tables and chairs to ensure minimal close contact among customers.	3.47	0.682	Agree	3

2.2.4. Dine-in services at 30% of the restaurant seating capacity to convey that the customer's best interest is being considered.	3.56	0.618	Strongly Agree	1.5
2.2.5. The staff's strict observance of the safety & health protocols inside the restaurant provides a safe dining experience.	3.56	0.607	Strongly Agree	1.5
Composite Mean	**3.48**	**0.565**	**Moderate Impact**	

Table 2.2 shows the descriptive statistics of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of Assurance. Statements 2.2.4 and 2.2.5, both in rank 1, has a mean of 3.56 and a Strongly Agree interpretation. This shows that customers strongly agree that the implementation of the 30% seating capacity to ensure the customers' safety and the restaurant staff's strict observance of the safety & health protocols to provide a safe customer dining experience has the highest impact on service quality. Statement 2.2.2 in the lowest rank, has mean of 3.34 and a verbal interpretation of Agree. This shows that filling up a health declaration form/logbook before entering the restaurant to build customer's trust has the lowest impact on service quality. One possible reason for this is that filling up a health declaration form may not be strictly and consistently implemented in some restaurants. Overall, Assurance has a composite mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.565, showing that it has a moderate impact on service quality.

According to Alnaser et al. (2018), customers will feel secure in the restaurant when policies are strictly implemented and gain loyalty when employees are well trained and mannered, which includes being observant and having patience, especially in this time of pandemic, when many customers are cautious of what to touch or eat in a public place such as a restaurant.

Table 2.3: Tangibility

2.3 TANGIBILITY	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Verbal Interpretation**	**Rank**
2.3.1. There are available disinfecting mats in the entrance for customer's sanitation.	3.50	0.712	Strongly Agree	5
2.3.2. The restaurant provides alcohol/sanitizer to customers for their protection.	3.62	0.609	Strongly Agree	1
2.3.3. Wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (face mask, face shield, hand gloves, etc.) among staff & customers means strict compliance to the new service standards.	3.61	0.611	Strongly Agree	2
2.3.4. Availability of signages and "visual reminders" on health & safety protocols to project a safe environment to the customers.	3.57	0.669	Strongly Agree	3.5
2.3.5. There are visible table barriers/dividers, arrow guides, & floor marks to ensure social distancing.	3.57	0.649	Strongly Agree	3.5
Composite Mean	**3.58**	**0.553**	**High Impact**	

Table 2.3 shows the descriptive statistics of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of Tangibility. Statement 2.3.2, in rank 1, has a mean of 3.62 and a Strongly Agree interpretation. This shows that respondents strongly agree that providing alcohol/sanitizer to customers for their protection has the highest impact on service quality. Statement 2.3.1, in the lowest rank, has mean of 3.50 and a verbal interpretation of Strongly Agree. This shows that having disinfecting mats in the restaurant entrance for customer's sanitation has a lowest impact on service quality. This may indicate that not all restaurants have an available disinfecting mat in the entrance at all times. Overall, Tangibility has a composite mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 0.553, showing that it has high impact on service quality.

Anwar & Balcioglu (2016), stated that visible materials and equipment present in the restaurant, such as signages and visual reminders, provide a factor to satisfy a customer because they are for the safety of the customers inside the restaurant. Particularly in the new normal where it is required that every restaurant should maintain the safety and cleanliness of the restaurant by using safe and protective equipment and providing customers with safety-related information and amenities.

Table 2.4: Empathy

2.4 EMPATHY	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2.4.1. The staff show genuine concern on the safety of the customers.	3.44	0.680	Agree	5
2.4.2. The staff are friendly, attentive, and understanding.	3.53	0.642	Strongly Agree	1.5
2.4.3. The staff speak politely and courteously to all the customers.	3.51	0.621	Strongly Agree	3
2.4.4. The staff gives 100% attention to each customer.	3.53	0.642	Strongly Agree	1.5
2.4.5. The staff consistently remind the customers of the health & safety protocols as an expression of customer care.	3.49	0.663	Agree	4
Composite Mean	**3.50**	**0.589**	**Moderate Impact**	

Table 2.4 shows the descriptive statistics of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of Empathy. Statements 2.4.2 and 2.4.4, both in rank 1, has a mean of 3.53 and a Strongly Agree interpretation. This confirms that having friendly, attentive, and understanding restaurant staff as well as providing 100% attention to each customer both have the highest impact on service quality and lead to customer satisfaction. as strongly agreed by the respondents. Statement 2.4.1, in the lowest rank, has mean of 3.44 and a verbal interpretation of Agree. This may indicate that giving genuine concern on the safety of the customers by the staff is not consistently seen. Overall, Empathy has a composite mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.589, showing that it has a moderate impact on service quality.

In the service industry, in order to communicate with your customer better, you should have empathy. Empathy is putting yourself in their situation so you can get their attention and understand the customers' concerns or problems better. By consistently reminding them of the health protocols, this gives an expression of genuine customer care and make them feel safe (Leninkumar, 2016).

Table 2.5: Responsiveness

2.5 RESPONSIVENESS	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
2.5.1. Prompt and fast service are provided by the staff.	3.47	0.652	Agree	5
2.5.2. Customer's request is promptly attended and handled.	3.53	0.652	Strongly Agree	3
2.5.3. Customer's inquiry/question is immediately addressed.	3.49	0.673	Agree	4
2.5.4. The staff are ready and able to serve the customers.	3.59	0.603	Strongly Agree	1
2.5.5. The staff provides prompt assistance to customer who is in need.	3.55	0.641	Strongly Agree	2
Composite Mean	**3.52**	**0.581**	**High Impact**	

Table 2.5 shows the descriptive statistics of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality in terms of Responsiveness. Statement 2.5.4, in rank 1, has a mean of 3.59 and a Strongly Agree interpretation. This confirms that when the restaurant staff provides prompt assistance to customer who is in need results to a high impact on service quality. Statement 2.4.1, in the lowest rank, has mean of 3.47 and a verbal interpretation of Agree. This may indicate that the restaurant staff may not be consistently providing a prompt and fast service to customer which led to a low impact on service quality. Furthermore, the respondents strongly agreed that customer concerns/inquiries should immediately be addressed and that restaurant staff should always be ready to serve and give prompt assistance to customers to be able improve service quality. Overall, responsiveness has a high impact to customers with a composite mean of 3.52 and standard deviation of 0.581.

As stated by Ismail and Yunan (2016), the ability to assist customers' needs and provide prompt service is referred to as responsiveness. Customers gain trust and feel secure when they can respond to their needs quickly and politely. A prompt response to customer needs is critical because failure to do so may result in complaints.

3. Significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation to service quality

Table 3: Significant Relationship of the Respondents' Demographic Profile & their Assessment of the Impacts of the Health Protocols to Service Quality

Demographic Profile	Chi-square value	df	p-value	Interpretation/Implication
Age	10.72	12	0.553	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on age.
Gender	3.8554	3	0.278	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on gender.
Civil Status	2.2253	6	0.898	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on civil status.
Educational Attainment	8.2083	12	0.769	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on educational attainment.
Employment Status	13.9303	18	0.734	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on employment status.
Income	8.2149	12	0.768	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on income.
Frequency of Visit	16.9546	12	0.151	No significant relationship/The assessment does not depend on income.

Table 3 highlights the correlation between the demographic profile of the respondents and their assessment of the impact of the health protocols' implementation on service quality. The null hypothesis was accepted because all of the p-values are greater than the significance level of 0.05, as shown in Table 3. This presents that there is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of respondents and their assessment of the impacts of the health protocols' implementation on service quality in the selected fast food restaurants.

According to Min & Khoon (2013), consumers perceive service quality differently depending on their demographic background, though there were some findings that did not support the importance of demographic factors. Most studies considered the demographic aspect of service quality, and conclusions were drawn in relation to the demographic factors. Demographic factors, in general, can moderate levels of expectation and perception of service quality. Different demographic groups of consumers, such as age, gender, and employment status, can assess service quality in various ways. And based on the results, the demographic profile (in terms of age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, income level, and frequency of visit) of the customers has no significant relationship as to how they assessed or evaluated the impacts of the health protocols on the quality of service provided to them.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings above, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The results of the frequency distribution in terms of age show that majority belong to the age range of 19-29 years old with a total percentage of 60% out of 150 respondents. The researchers concluded that respondents in this age range are mostly the customers who usually go to fast food restaurants to buy or eat their meal rather than eat at home. In terms of gender, majority of the respondents are female with a total of 80, equivalent to 53.33%. which shows that the frequent customers in fast food restaurants are mostly female. In terms of civil status, most of the respondents are single with a total of 103 or 68.67% which implies that single people would choose to eat out with friends or other companions as compared to married people. Furthermore, most of the respondents are college degree graduates, totaling to 60 or 40%, and are employed (103 respondents or 68.67%), and earning a monthly income of P20,000 and below (86 respondents or 57.33%). This indicate that these are the type of customers who have the time, resources, and capability of eating out in fast food restaurants. However, since the pandemic started and strict protocols were imposed, most of the respondents (55 or 36.67%) visit fast food restaurants once a month only.

2. Impacts of the Health Protocols' Implementation to Service Quality Among Selected Fast Food Restaurants

The results of the study showed that there are impacts on service quality when the health protocols were imposed and implemented in the selected fast-food restaurants. In terms of reliability, the respondents strongly agree that the management should strictly implement the health and safety protocols inside the restaurant to be true to their promise of providing the customers with a clean and safe environment. More importantly, the respondents strongly agree that staff should consistently clean and sanitize the tables, chairs, fixtures after customer' use and that they should provide the customers a fast and friendly service at all times.

In terms of assurance, the respondents strongly agree that the management should always follow the 30% seating capacity and that the staff should also observe the health protocols in the service delivery process as these 2 have high impact on service quality which gives the customers an assurance of having a safe and satisfying dining experience. On the other hand, the respondents agree that the staff should strictly require all customers to fill up the health declaration form/logbook before entering the premises, aside from the temperature check and observance of social distancing so as to build and strengthen customer's trust.

In terms of tangibility, the respondents strongly agree that by making alcohol/sanitizer available to customers for their protection provides them a stronger feeling of safety. Aside from the PPEs worn by the staff, visible table dividers and floor marks for social distancing, and the visual reminders of the health and safety protocols that everyone should follow, the restaurant should ensure that there are available disinfecting mats at the entrance for customers' use to further give them the feeling that their safety is being prioritized and this would help improve service quality.

In terms of empathy, the respondents strongly agree that there is high impact on service quality when restaurant staff are friendly, attentive, understanding and give 100% attention to each customer. By being polite and courteous to all customers and constantly reminding them of the protocols gives an expression of customer care and genuine concern on their safety. In doing so, quality of service can be further enhanced.

In terms of responsiveness, the respondents strongly agree that when the restaurant staff are ready and able to serve the customers, the impact on the quality of service is high. However, improvement should be done on the promptness and speed in giving assistance to customers, handling customer inquiries/questions and requests, and most importantly in delivering quick service to all customers at all times.

As a summary, upon the implementation of the health protocols in the selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, the respondents strongly agree that there is high impact to service quality in terms of reliability (with a composite mean of 3.53), tangibility (with a composite mean of 3.58) and responsiveness (with a composite mean of 3.52). On the other hand, there is moderate impact to service quality in terms of assurance (with a composite mean of 3.48) and empathy (with a composite mean of 3.50). This proves that when the health protocols were imposed, the impacts on service quality were seen and experienced by the customers in the fast food restaurants based on the results of their assessment.

3. Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and Their Assessment of the Impacts of the Health Protocols' Implementation to Service Quality

Based on the findings of the study, all of the p-values of the service dimension variables are greater than the significance level of 0.05. This means that when the respondents are grouped in terms of age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, income level, and frequency of visit, the results show that each of this variable has no significant relationship with their assessment of the impacts of health protocols' implementation to service quality. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was accepted.

This conclude that how the respondents assessed or evaluated the various impacts of health protocols on the quality of service (in terms of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness) provided to them does not depend on the age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, income level, and frequency of visit in the selected fast food restaurants in the New Normal.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study are very helpful, especially to the restaurant owners in terms of meeting the customer demands and proving them with a clean, safe, and healthy environment as well as giving them a satisfying dining experience. In the New Normal, most of the customers would want a secure and clean place to eat and to be able to provide this, restaurants must always strictly implement the new health and safety protocols. Furthermore, giving quality service to customers is a

major competitive advantage that is why restaurants should be more creative, innovative, and consistent in delivering quality service to their customers. Thus, the following recommendations are presented to help the selected fast food restaurants consistently provide quality service alongside with the implementation of these health protocols.

1. In terms of demographics, although the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was accepted, the researchers still recommend that restaurant staff should consistently provide more assistance for customers who are PWDs and are aged 50 & above. Services such as priority seating, extra cushions, and facilities that would give them extra comfort. For a big group of customers who dine-in with their friends, the restaurant staff should guide and assist them to a more spacious area with a bigger dining table to allow them to observe social distancing while eating. For customers with small children, the staff should automatically provide them with clean and sanitized highchair/kid's chair and assign them to a bigger space in the dining area.

2. In terms of reliability, the restaurant staff should always check and ensure that all tables, chairs, and fixture are in good condition, properly working, and are consistently cleaned and sanitized during operations. A checklist can be developed for these tasks and should be posted in a visible area for the staff to see and be reminded of. This can ensure the safety of the customers when they dine in the restaurant. Aside from this, the restaurant management should provide regular staff training on how to consistently provide the highest standards of cleanliness, and quality service through a fast, friendly service, and safe environment.

3. In terms of assurance, the restaurant should ensure that the health declaration form/logbook is visible and readily available at the entrance of the restaurant with writing pens that customer can use to fill up the form. Beside the form, there should also be alcohol/sanitizer for customer's use and a staff assigned in the entrance to welcome the customers and require them to fill up of the form. These can help build customer's trust and confidence and assure their customers of a safe dining environment.

4. In terms of tangibility, the restaurant should have a disinfecting mat at the entrance. A visible reminder for the customers to make use of the mat before entering the dining area should also be placed near the mat. Aside from this, the staff should always properly wear their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as facemask, face shield, and gloves in order to protect themselves and the people they are serving and in preparing the customer's food.

5. In terms of empathy, the restaurant staff should consistently provide genuine concern on the safety of the customers by always reminding them of the health & safety protocols as an expression of customer care. In doing this, the staff should speak politely and courteously remind all customers. These can be achieved through regular training and constantly monitoring and reminding the staff.

6. In terms of responsiveness, the management can develop incentive programs for the dining staff to encourage and motivate them to consistently provide prompt service and immediate response/assistance to all customers. Another strategy is to put visible reminders/posters of the standard service procedures within the staff/employee area that would constantly remind them. This can help improve overall service quality.

7. Lastly, as part of the recommendations, the researchers proposed a set of enhanced quality service guidelines that should be implemented consistently by the selected fast food restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite. These guidelines are still in adherence to the health protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF).

Enhanced Service Quality Guidelines for the Selected Fast Food Restaurants in Dasmarinas City, Cavite

Based on Memorandum Circular No. 20-37 (Department of Trade & Industry), restaurants must follow the "Guidelines on Minimum Health Protocol for Dine-In Restaurants and Fast Food Establishments". These specific health standards have positive impacts on providing quality service especially in the New Normal. Thus, the following are proposed guidelines on how these health protocols can be strictly and consistently implemented in the selected fast food restaurants.

For Letter A: Posting of Information Materials at the Entrance and Other Prominent/Conspicuous Areas

1. Since not all customers coming by the restaurant can see information materials easily, fast food establishments should assign a specific dining staff who will assist customers in reminding them about the information materials.

2. Place information materials on every table in fast-food restaurants so that customers are constantly reminded of what they should and should not do.

3. Make use of Pay Maya or GCash (with QR codes) as alternative methods of payment and make sure that these are visible to customers.

For Letter B. Requiring the Placing of Health and Safety Equipment & Tools at the Entrance:

1. Assign a specific staff to welcome the customers at the entrance and at the same time, check their temperature, and require them to fill up the health checklist and to use the floor mat/bath.

2. Always replace the floor mat/bath when visible dirt appears, sanitize the thermal scanner temperature after previous customer use, and disinfect the pen used to fill out the health checklist.

3. Create a drop box for the health checklist responses provided by customers to avoid contact from other persons if the logbook is not present.

For Letter C. Installing Equipment and System at the Workplace:

1. Provide the appropriate facilities, tools, and equipment to the restaurant staff to ensure proper personal hygiene and achieve food safety standards.

2. The Manager on duty should regularly inspect if specific areas (i.e., washroom and toilet), facilities, and equipment are consistently cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected.

3. A checklist should be developed for consistent monitoring of the cleaning and disinfecting schedule of the facilities and equipment.

For Letter D. Taking Dine-In Orders:

1. Identify and place signages in the counter area for Dine-In and Take-Out Orders. Also, a separate counter for Pick-Up of Orders should be identified.

2. Aside from the menu board, make menu folders available at the entrance or counter area for customers' use.

3. Make alcohol/hand sanitizer available at the counter area – one for the staff's use and another one for customers' use.

For Letter E: Kitchen Protocols & Letter F: Ensuring Proper Health and Safety of All Personnel at All Times:

1. Require all staff who will render duty to fill up a health declaration form and check their temperature before entering the restaurant.

2. Maintain consistent cleaning and disinfection of employees' PPE, particularly those who come into contact with customers.

3. Provide staff with the required PPEs, alcohol or hand sanitizer.

4. Develop a staff schedule that is compliant with the health protocols. Example: Divide the staff into Teams/Groups so that specific staff can render duty based on their Team Schedule.

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