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## **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Analysis on Customer Satisfaction of the Bakeshops: A Case of First Class Municipalities in Cebu Philippines**

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### **Abstract**

Customer satisfaction has a significant impact on a business's profit. It leads to repurchasing customer loyalty for the trademark and sharing positive feedback. This study aimed to identify the criteria relevant to customer satisfaction and analyze customer satisfaction in the bakeshops in Argao and Dalaguete, which are first-class municipalities in Cebu, Philippines. A rating scale comparison matrix was provided to qualified respondents to gather the needed data. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) of Saaty (1980) that weighted every variable in the questionnaire to determine the relative importance of the critical variables. The study showed that respondents give the most importance/relevance to the freshness of the product and the competence in the service rendered by the bakeshops. On the other hand, respondents give the minor importance/relevance to the price of the product and the staff's appearance in terms of their service concerning customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** AHP; service-related indicators; product-related indicators; customer satisfaction; bakeshops.

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## **1. Introduction**

Bakeries in an unorganized segment are worst affected by the covid-19 pandemic. Due to lockdown, many bakeshop industries have shut operations due to a shortage of laborers [1]. Another factor that has impacted the bakeshop industry is the lack of raw material availability due to movement restrictions, which results in production limits [2]. According to the bakers in [3], they are acquiring an increase in average sales of about 30 percent since lockdown implementation. This situation is due to the rising demand for bread, means of support for those livelihoods that had ceased, resulting from the directive of staying indoors. However, bakeries had experience scarcity of raw material supply and unexpected unavailability of workers. Also, bakery sectors have a hard time transporting the raw materials for production due to the controlled passage done by police and military checkpoints. Bakeries mainly provide delivery to supermarkets and grocery stores, resulting in consumers' inaccessibility during the quarantine.

Customer satisfaction is a salient factor and a way to sustain a successful [4]. Satisfaction is likely to be measured using a Likert Scale for a food company, a scale where respondents rate by choosing a number. These numbers indicate how satisfied and dissatisfied they are with the given variables or attributes. However, this tool is limited only because some features may be less or more important to the customers than the others; therefore, further research using Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is suggested [5]. There are two indicators identified in this study: product-related indicators and service-related indicators. Product-related indicators include price, texture, taste, freshness, appearance, portion, aroma, and variety. Service-related indicators include staff's appearance, promptness, response, product information, competence, product supply, courtesy, complaint handling, and accurate charge. These variables are relevant factors that contribute to customer satisfaction.

This study highlights the strength and weaknesses that the bakeshop management need to maintain and improve in their products and services offered to provide a more accurate assessment of product and service quality for purposes of improvement. The study's findings provide a deeper understanding of management in the context of product and service enhancement leading to customer satisfaction optimization

Currently, the number of bakeshop facilities in our community has rapidly increased, leading to an intensive competition among them. Additionally, due to pandemic, product and service performance of the bakeshops were shaken by these inevitable circumstances affecting customer satisfaction. Bakeshops render different kinds of quality services to varied customers having diverse perceptions about product and service quality, and customer satisfaction. This study intends to identify and analyze the criteria or variables that are relevant to customer satisfaction within the bakeshops in Argao and Dalaguete in Cebu, Philippines. Also, researches about customer satisfaction analysis within bakeries are understudied and limited. Furthermore, this study aims at addressing and bridging gaps among customer satisfaction variables and optimization of customer satisfaction in the baking industry.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### ***2.1 Materials***

The researchers used an expert-rating scale survey form, a pairwise comparison matrix (AHP matrix) for the qualified respondents. The questionnaire is composed of two (2) parts: part A and B. Part A is composed of a comparison matrices table, namely: comparison matrix of product-related criteria and comparison matrix of service-related criteria. Part B is composed of comparison matrices of bakeshops concerning the criteria. The research involved bakeries located in Poblacion, Argao, and Poblacion, Dalaguete, Cebu, Philippines which is shown in Figure 1 below. The respondents were the customers of the bakeshop of these municipalities.



Figure 1: Research Locale.

## 2.2 Methods

In the study, researchers combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach was to explore the product and service quality indicators. The quantitative method quantifies the customer satisfaction variables directly from the customers. The researchers in this study used a non-probability sampling method wherein not all units in the population will be selected since the instrument is an expert rating scale [10]. The ratings were then used in weighting the criteria using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) tool.

### 2.2.1 Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

Thomas L. Saaty developed this concept of the Analytic Hierarchy Process in the 1970s and has been refined since then [6]. It is a method for organizing and analyzing complex decisions, where the goal, the criteria are to be judged, and the alternatives that will be evaluated and quantified concerning the criteria. Through this process, the decision-maker carries out simple pairwise comparison judgment [7]. A pairwise comparison will be applied to the variables identified in this study. These variables are subject to being rated according to the Saaty Rating Scale [8]. Table 1 shows Saaty’s rating scale.

**Table 1:** Saaty Ratio Scale.

Intensity of Importance	Definition	Explanation
1	Equal importance	Two factors contribute equally to the objective
3	Somewhat more important	Experience and judgment slight favor one over the other
5	Very much more important	Experience and judgment strongly favor one over the other
7	Very much more important	Experience and judgment strongly favor one over the other. Its importance is demonstrated in practice
9	Absolutely more important	The evidence favoring one over the other is of the highest possible validity
2,4,6,8	Intermediate values	When compromise is needed

Using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), researchers can rank the variables subjected to a comparison that contribute to customer satisfaction. This quantifying capability distinguishes the AHP from other decision-making techniques. AHP helps the decision-makers in modeling the problem in a hierarchical structure [9]. AHP is the measurement through pairwise comparisons and relies on the judgments of experts to derive priority scales [10]. The next stage of AHP calculation is to calculate the Consistency Ratio (CR) of the ratings. The consistency ratio measures how consistent the respondents' judgments, considered experts, have been relative to each other. To say that decisions are trustworthy and reliable, it needs to have a value of less than or equal to 0.10 [11]. When the CR is perfectly consistent, it is safe to proceed to the following process, the most crucial part of AHP, determining the relative weights to rank the decision alternatives [12]. Figure 2 shows the AHP scheme of the study.

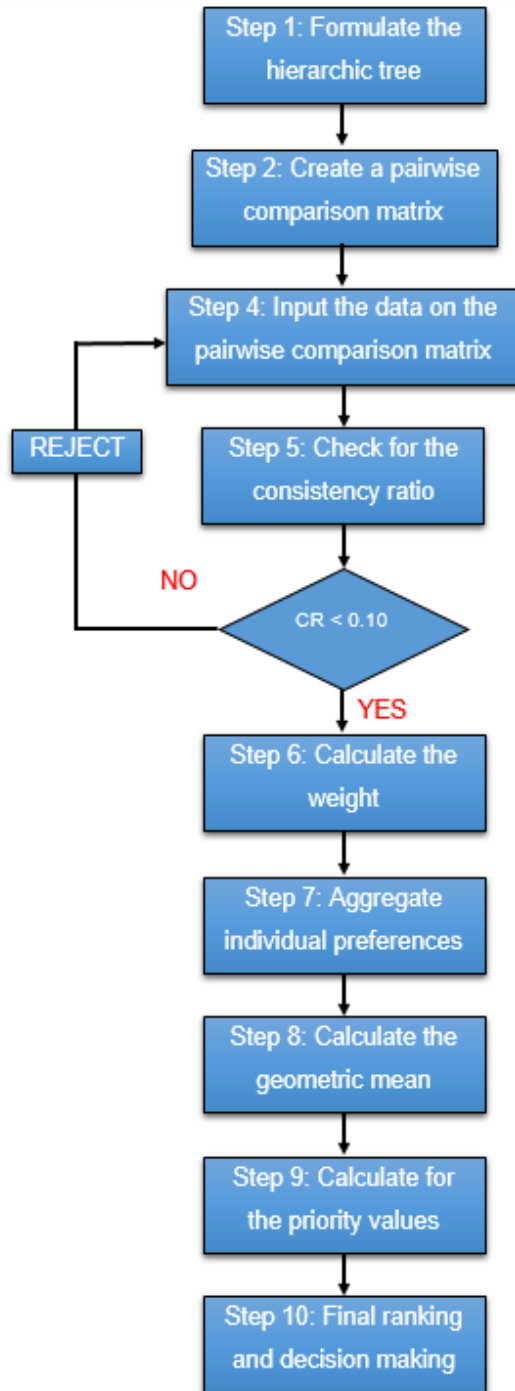


Figure 2: AHP Scheme.

### 3. Review of Related Literature

Measuring customer satisfaction plays a significant part in the behavior of customer purchases and on a business' long-term performance and sustainability [13]. It helps improve customer-focused products and services. The customers' voice is an avenue for mapping areas that need to be prioritized and valuable for management. To achieve high customer satisfaction, a company needs to create products that run into the customers' expectations [5]. Recently, bakeries or franchises of bakeries have rapidly increased in number both

in rural and urban areas. According to the author in [14], bakeries have noticeable competition rooted in service quality, customer experience, product quality, and price. It has recognized the quality of service and customer satisfaction to appeal and draw interest the most out of customers. From this, bakeries are crafting contentious techniques by examining the quality of service they give in. These have led bakeries in rendering service quality which has become one of the most valuable tools for assessing customer satisfaction. In relation, there are several studies where AHP tool is used. One study that used the AHP model is the research to determine the relative importance of critical factors in delivering service quality of hotels in India [15]. Moreover, AHP is employed to decide the weight of every variable in the questionnaire. With the survey data, a series of practical methods are utilized in the data analysis to measure the service quality based on customer satisfaction (CS). With the computation of Customer Satisfaction Degree (CSD), hotel service quality is measured. In line with previous studies, gender plays a significant effect in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction [16]. It was also found that female customers show higher satisfaction level than male customers [17]. Female customers generally provide higher performance ratings and they are more sensitive to relational aspects of a service encounter [16]. Hence, they paid greater attention to employees' services than male customers [17]. On the other hand, in the study of factors affecting customer satisfaction in fast food sector, the author in [18] found out that there is no significant difference between the means of age groups for the importance of service quality. Customer satisfaction also becomes the most important focus area for worldwide companies. If customers are satisfied with the product, they will repeat purchasing, showing loyalty, and telling good things to other people. Otherwise, they will move to another brand or may complain and express their dislikes to the company and others. Customers are valuable asset for the company, therefore, their opinion is crucial and should be explored persistently. The company should focus on voice of customer to retain the customers longer [5]. To know the customers' desires, the company can build direct interaction with them. By conducting market research, company can investigate customer satisfaction level. Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the company's profit. Customer satisfaction is the foundation of every successful work, since customer satisfaction leads to repurchasing customer loyalty for the trademark, and sharing positive feedback with other people to buy the product. Services presented for the customer has a positive impact thus, the organization gets the customer trust there is a close relation between service quality and the rate at which customers return to the company. Quality represents an important scale for organization's success, survival and continuity. By upgrading the level of service presented to the customer which allows to create a competitive trait between organizations and their survival of the institution. Focusing on the decisions that target activity mainly and not only focusing on the results since companies that aim for high performance has to make sure on determining the means that enable it to reach results that it thrives for efficiently and effectively.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

### ***4.1 Product-related Indicators***

Presented in table 2 are the product-related indicators/variables that are relevant to customer satisfaction. As shown, the sum of all the geometric mean or the sum of all 34 the total rows is 10.1899. It shows that the product-related variable that is the most relevant to customer satisfaction and ranks first (1st) is Freshness with a geometric mean of 2.2657 and with a priority value of 0.2223 (22.23%). Second (2nd) is the Taste with a

geometric mean of 2.2200 and a priority value of 0.2179 (21.79%). Third (3rd) in rank is texture with a geometric mean of 1.8737 and has a priority value of 0.1839 (18.39%). Fourth (4th) in rank is Aroma with geometric mean of 1.5997 and has a priority value of 0.1570 (15.70%). Fifth (5th) in rank is Appearance with a geometric mean of 0.7729 and has a priority value of 0.0759 (7.79%). Sixth (6th) in rank is Portion with a geometric mean of 0.6675 and has a priority value of 0.0655 (6.55%). Seventh (7th) is Variety with a geometric mean of 0.5614 and has a priority value of 0.0551 (5.52%). And the lowest in rank and the least relevant to customer satisfaction is the Price with the geometric mean of 0.2290 and has a priority value of 0.0225 (2.25%).

**Table 2:** Relevance of Product-related Variables to Customer Satisfaction.

	Geometric Mean	Sum all the total rows	Priority Values	%	Rank
Price	0.2290	10.1899	0.0225	2.2477	8
Texture	1.8737	10.1899	0.1839	18.3877	3
Taste	2.2200	10.1899	0.2179	21.7865	2
Freshness	2.2657	10.1899	0.2223	22.2349	1
Appearance	0.7729	10.1899	0.0759	7.5852	5
Portion	0.6675	10.1899	0.0655	6.5502	6
Aroma	1.5997	10.1899	0.1570	15.6987	4
Variety	0.5614	10.1899	0.0551	5.5091	7

Based on the administered data, it denoted that respondents have considered **Freshness** the most important/relevant variable in customer satisfaction in product-related indicators. On the other hand, the least essential/appropriate variable that respondents do not give high regard to customer satisfaction is the **Price**. This complements with the study that every consumer loved excellent fresh bread [19]. It is also added that the quality of bakery products is strongly dependent on Freshness: the newer the bread, the crispier the crust, and the softer the interior. From a research case in a bakery, the taste indicator of product quality should also be a priority [5]. Bakeries should prioritize more attention to this indicator to increase customer satisfaction. The use of quality ingredients is a good factor in producing delicious and tasty bread and other products. Moreover, **Price** is one aspect that influences customer satisfaction; however, it does not significantly affect customer satisfaction [14]. Customers said that price was not a crucial consideration for satisfaction. Though the price are not very appealing, customers still like the products from the bakeries.

**4.2 Service-related Indicators**

Presented in table 3 are the service-related indicators/variables that are relevant to customer satisfaction. As shown, the sum of all the geometric mean or the sum of all the total rows is 10.9485. It shows that the service–

related variable that is the most relevant to customer satisfaction and ranks first (1st) is Competence with a geometric mean of 2.2212 and with a priority value of 0.2029 (20.29%). Second (2nd) is the Complaint handling with a geometric mean of 1.8845 and a priority value of 0.1721 (17.21%). Third (3rd) in rank is Courtesy with a geometric mean of 1.8221 and has a priority value of 0.1664 (16.64%). Fourth (4th) in rank is Promptness with a geometric mean of 1.3471 and has a priority value of 0.1230 (12.3%). Fifth (5th) in rank is Response with a geometric mean of 1.2253 and has a priority value of 0.1119 (11.19%). Sixth (6th) in rank is Accurate charge with a geometric mean of 1.1618 and has a priority value of 0.1061 (10.61%). Seventh (7th) is Product supply with a geometric mean of 0.5638 and has a priority value of 0.0515 (5.15%). Eight (8th) in rank is the Product information with a geometric mean of 0.4579 and has a priority value of 0.0418 (4.18%). And the ninth (9th) in rank and the least relevant to customer satisfaction among the given service-related indicators is the Staff's appearance with a geometric mean of 0.2648 and has a priority value of 0.0242 (2.42%).

**Table 3:** Relevance of Service-related Variables to Customer Satisfaction.

	Geometric Mean	Sum all the total rows	Priority Values	%	Rank
Staff's appearance	0.2648	10.9485	0.0242	2.4189	9
Promptness	1.3471	10.9485	0.1230	12.3041	4
Response	1.2253	10.9485	0.1119	11.1917	5
Product Information	0.4579	10.9485	0.0418	4.1823	8
Competence	2.2212	10.9485	0.2029	20.2874	1
Product Supply	0.5638	10.9485	0.0515	5.1496	7
Courtesy	1.8221	10.9485	0.1664	16.6422	3
Complaint Handling	1.8845	10.9485	0.1721	17.2126	2
Accurate Charge	1.1618	10.9485	0.1061	10.6113	6

Regarding the service-related indicators relevant to customer satisfaction, respondents have considered **Competence** as the most important/relevant variable in customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the least essential/relevant variable that customers do not give high regard to customer satisfaction is the **Staff's appearance**. Consumers have distinguished competency as the variable that shows the most prominent role in enhancing customer satisfaction [20]. Consumers have characterized competency as the variable that offers the most significant role in a good customer experience. To be competent, an employee should have reliable information on the business and its items, just as to fix the customer's issues. The more information they have, the more capable they become [21]. On the other hand, establishments like bakeshops give importance to staff's appearance. The appearance of the staffs reflects the bakeshops, and the staffs are their great presentation [22]. However, customers said that they do not give much attention to the appearance of the staffs. When they buy the products, the appearance slightly matters to them but it does not influence their satisfaction as customers to that bakeshop.



### 4.3 Comparison and Analysis of Common Bakeshop in terms of Customer Satisfaction concerning Product-related and Service-related Variables

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of Bakeshops with respect to Product-related indicators

In comparing and analyzing customer satisfaction among common bakeshops in Argao and Dalaguete concerning the product-related variables **texture, taste, freshness, and aroma**, Julie's bakeshop has the highest customer satisfaction percentage followed by Patty's bakeshop as shown in Table 4. Ferna's bakeshop got the lowest customer satisfaction percentage. Regarding **appearance, portion, price, and variety**, Patty has earned the highest customer satisfaction percentage. It shows that the bakeries Julies and Patty's offer well-delighted products that caught the consumers' attention, which made them satisfied with their products.

**Table 4:** Analysis of Bakeshops with respect to Product-related Indicators.

	Price	Texture	Taste	Freshness	Appearance	Portion	Aroma	Variety
Julies	0.2532	11.2108	11.5558	14.1452	2.2465	2.5900	9.3446	2.0016
Pattys	1.0688	4.7402	7.7847	5.9503	4.4188	2.9022	4.5584	2.9267
Ferna	0.9277	2.4367	2.4460	2.1393	0.9199	1.0580	1.7957	0.5808

Consumer preference is a consumer's subjective tastes as measured by their pleasure with things that are purchased. Also, it is an indicator of consumer demand. Moreover, product quality is how well the product specifications meet customers' expectations [23]. For the bakeshop that gained the lowest rank, they require improving the quality of their products. To achieve high customer satisfaction, creating products is crucial for the bakeshop to meet the requirements of its customers. Also, they said that quality products made them to always buy at the same bakeshop most of the time. When purchasing products from the bakeshops, most of the customers pay much more attention to the quality of their products than any other factors or variables.

#### 4.3.2 Analysis of Bakeshops with respect to Service-related indicators

Service-related variables, with regards to **staff's appearance, promptness, response, competence, product supply, courtesy, complaint handling, and accurate charge**, Julie's bakeshop has the highest customer satisfaction percentage. Still, they got the lowest rate in terms of staff's appearance. Table 5 shows the findings. Regarding the variable **product information**, Julie's and Patty's bakeshop got the same and highest customer satisfaction percentage, and Ferna's bakeshop got the lowest. In Patty's bakeshop, product **portion** and **variety** have the lowest rank among all the product-related variables. Among all the service-related variables, their **staff's appearance** has the most down position. In Ferna's bakeshop, **the variety** of their products gained the lowest rank among all the product-related variables; and their **staff's appearance** and product **information** got the lowest rank among the service-related variables. This means that Julies' bakeshop obtained the highest customer satisfaction among all the services-related variables.

**Table 5:** Analysis of Bakeshops with respect to Service-related Indicators.

	Staff's appearance	Promptness	Response	Product Information	Competence	Product supply	Courtesy	Complaint handling	Accurate charge
Julies	1.2864	7.6366	7.0099	1.9010	12.0429	2.7754	11.4176	11.1746	4.9942
Pattys	0.7632	3.2765	3.0482	1.9010	6.2705	1.5308	3.5988	4.2307	3.2122
Ferna	0.3693	1.3909	1.1336	0.3802	1.9741	0.8434	1.6257	1.807	2.4046

From the statement of the customers, they highly consider service as a significant factor in customer satisfaction leading to their loyalty to the bakeshop. Aside from the products that the bakeshop is offering, they also look into the aspect of satisfactory service. Being rendered with quality service is a good indicator for them to purchase goods from that bakeshop. Thus, consumers are satisfied with the quality of service rendered by the bakeshop. Consumer satisfaction has become an aspect of service quality [24] in which it is the difference between the customer's service expectations and the perception of the service received [25].

### 5. Conclusion

From the studies' outcome, bakeries have a varied quality of product and service rendered. This study recognized the linkages between product-related indicators and service-related indicators towards customer satisfaction in the bakeries studied. Concerning these variables, customers give most relevance/ to the freshness of their product and the competence of their service. Moreover, it is not only with the freshness of the product and the competence of the service a bakery can attain the highest customer satisfaction percentage. All product-related and service-related variables are relevant factors that impact customer satisfaction [26].

Based on the conclusion, bakeshops should maintain the quality performance of both product-related and service-related variables to achieve high customer satisfaction percentage. On the other hand, low customer satisfaction bakeshops should improve quality performance with regards to product-related and service-related variables to enhance and optimize customer satisfaction. The bakeshop should also research other product and services quality practices from other related studies that would able the bakeshop to capture higher satisfaction from customers' importance level.

### 6. Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study was within Argao and Dalaguete only. Also, the study focused only in bakeries; hence, the findings cannot be generalized to companies or other industries. The total number of bakeries identified in this study were 17 bakeries, where our various respondents came from. However, only the three (3) common bakeries between Argao and Dalaguete were included in the analysis of customer satisfaction among bakeries because of the tool used. Therefore, other bakeries mentioned that are exclusively present in Argao and exclusively present in Dalaguete were not included in customer satisfaction analysis. In addition, the study only focused on the AHP tool which do not identify the level of satisfaction but rather make decisions, thus, the study did not include discussion on the correlation between profiles and level of customer satisfaction, nor

relationship between product quality and customer satisfaction, nor relationship between service and customer satisfaction, however, researchers provides related studies in the review of related literature that discusses relationship between the variables.

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