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Capturing the Millennial Market: Key Factors Influencing Customer Acquisition in Pasig City's Traditional Spanish Fine Dining Restaurants

Agustin Jervis Anthony R.^{1*}

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the primary factors affecting Pasig City's Spanish fine dining restaurants in acquiring millennial customers. It addresses two main questions: which marketing initiatives and dining experiences most influence millennial patronage, and how brand persona mediates the relationship between these elements and customer acquisition. Data were collected from 400 respondents aged 29 to 44 residing in Pasig City through convenience sampling and analyzed using PLS-SEM in WarpPLS 8.0. The results show that millennial acquisition is significantly enhanced by experiential marketing and store atmosphere, with brand persona mediating these effects. In contrast, loyalty programs and digital presence have negligible impacts. A key limitation of this study is its use of non-probabilistic convenience sampling, which, while efficient, limits sample representativeness and reduces the generalizability of findings beyond millennials in Pasig City. In cultural context, the study proposes that brands should integrate brand identity narratives with experiences to align with millennial values. This targeting strategy enables firms in metropolitan areas to address the needs of an underutilized demographic and retain them as customers. Spanish fine dining restaurants can improve their appeal and retention among this demographic through strong storytelling, immersive ambiance, exceptional service, and effective marketing in competitive urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

Analyzing The Millennial Market and The Restaurant Business

Restaurants have to understand that millennials think of food differently. For them, multi-tasking is not just about doing different things at once, but rather enjoying the complexity of different parts all working together in perfect harmony. That means, for example, when they go to a restaurant, they expect an experience, and an atmosphere that tells a modern yet culturally rich story. That is why most, if not all millennials are glued to their smartphones, and during meals, they want to take pictures of the food and the restaurant for the gram. Moreover, it is also about the perception the restaurant creates prior to visiting, and during meal times. With all this, restaurants have no option but change their systems if they hope to do more than remain stagnant or lose patrons.

Millennials general are not easy to impress because of how saturated the market is. However, as reported by Barska *et al.* (2023), millennials are now more receptive to spend money on a rich, multi-sensory food experience. As long as the offering satisfies their need for authenticity and quality refined dining, they are onboard. More changes are certainly coming, but as pointed out by Seyfi *et al.* (2024), younger governmental and upper-level administrative bodies position greatly changes what goes on in the hospitality space, energizing make social impact becomes the core motivator. In fine dining spaces, the culinary side will always to the blend, but for them it is also atmosphere and total experience.

Consumer preferences for varied gastronomic encounters has led to a remarkable surge in the global restaurant industry. Fine dining is one such segment underscored by the quality of the food, the exquisite attention given to the guests, and the ambiance offered. The Philippines has seen evolution in the dining culture with places like Pasig taking the lead as a metropolitan center for cuisine reception. The duality of domestic and foreign foods available adds fuel to this evolution, considering the competition fine dining provides. Notably, these establishments have to formulate new strategies to cope with the surge in competition.

The impact of electronic word-of-mouth has been documented by Haro-Sosa *et al.* (2024), with particular focus on millennials' dining choice highlighting the accessibility and impact of online resources. Furthermore, health-conscious factors alongside sustainable practices are vital as social responsibility increases in popularity among millennial consumers. Tan *et al.* (2023) inquire into the expanding popularity of fine dining and the use of new age marketing strategies tailored toward younger audiences, advocating for the use of trendy marketing techniques and steps to improve digital engagement. Millennials, who were born between 1981 and 1996, are one of the most important groups to target for sales, even in the restaurant business. They tend to spend money on experiences rather than goods, which makes unforgettable places to eat appeal to them. Being part of this generation, they are likely to be influenced by online platforms, be it reviews, social media, or marketing. Millennials are

¹ San Beda University Manila, Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: jervis.agustin.official@gmail.com

now gradually beginning to earn more money, which means they do spend a lot, influencing their trends in the food and beverage industry. For splendid dining restaurants to develop facing competition, understanding the requirements of this particular millennial segment is important. In trying to attract this demographic, millennials have shifting needs and preferences that, if met, would enhance relevant sustainable strategies for restaurants.

Modernizing Traditional Spanish Fine Dining Through Marketing and Innovation

Modern learners regard traditional Spanish fine dining as a cuisine to be studied because of the distinctive culinary traditions that have been developed and preserved for generations, and which offer an integration of different region's cuisines. Spanish culture's famous signature plates, paella, tapas, jamon iberico are known for their cultural and culinary excellence. These meals are popular among a certain demographic; however, modern younger consumers and especially millennial like practicality paired with authenticity and a modern twist focusing the goal on attracting a large market. This enables them to reflect innovation without losing their brand heritage, something that poses a major challenge posed on traditional establishments. In today's rapidly evolving restaurant industry, staying relevant requires restaurateurs to find innovative ways without sacrificing traditional cuisine.

Lane and Opazo (2023) argue that the relocation of traditional high-end ethnic cuisine within global cities often requires the recategorization of ethnic foods to address the set of expectations of modern consumers. They explain how the growing population's appeal towards Spanish fine dining is slowly transforming into an appreciation for traditional dishes through modernization. Gaspar *et al.* (2022) argue that the role of technological modernization and innovation is fundamental in transforming the traditional offering of foods to the more contemporary market needs. The use of modern cooking methods and the commercialization of traditional restaurants through marketing them digitally enables these restaurants to maintain their originality.

In the restaurant business, marketing strategies underwent a complete makeover as promotion and customer interaction became heavily reliant on digital platforms. Social media handles, review websites, and influencers now dominate the customer perception arena. Mendes *et al.* (2022) highlight that serving food with trendy ingredients such as algae offers an opportunity for younger generation customers; hence, restaurants incorporating these trends while staying loyal to culinary traditions can appeal to broader audiences. Experiential marketing, which refers to memorable active participation with the business, offers more effectivity in reaching customers.

The dining experience deeply influences the attractiveness of an integrated fine dining facility compared to competing restaurants. "To tune" them, the customers pay special attention to the level of food offered, the

service received, and the atmosphere of the restaurant and its parts. In particular, millennials find such restaurants compelling that inspire an emotional response and have immersive mental 'games.' Joassart-Marcelli and Bosco (2024) underline the importance of social media and creative food offer in the contemporary attention of foodies. More and more, these consumers are interested in experiences around a meal concerning greater social and cultural phenomena, which heightens the need for brand new ideas in classical restaurants.

The versatile and unique menus further enhance the quality of offering. As Grubor *et al.* (2022) have pointed out, food tourism driven by desire for authentic and new cuisines is a chance for Spanish restaurants to innovate by incorporating traditional recipes into modern cuisine. By concentrating on these factors, fine dining restaurants can distinguish themselves and become places that, regardless of time or day, will encourage people to visit repeatedly, boosting retention and loyalty among customers, mostly millennials.

The Issues and Problems Associated with a Traditional Spanish Restaurant Remaining in Operations

The restaurant sector is ever-changing, and traditional Spanish restaurants have specific problems in maintaining their business in the contemporary market. One challenge is the contraction of the existing customer base due to natural attrition. Many of these restaurants seem to depend on older customers who appreciate the nostalgia trademarked with traditional Spanish cuisine. The Established Customers are slowly aging and dining out less frequently. It becomes increasingly difficult for restaurants to market to younger customers because they typically prefer modern restaurants and cuisines. According to Lin *et al.* (2022) during cross-cultural tourism, a notable shift in the consumption of food seems to arise from the more traditional offerings to innovative local and healthy food. More Spanish restaurants are being forced to change their style of cooking due to the demographic shift and updating their recipes according to modern consumer tastes.

An added challenge is the picture of traditional Spanish cuisine as formal, leisurely, and expensive, characteristics that are unlikely to appeal to younger diners in search of fast, casual, and low-cost fare. The dining market has been fundamentally transformed by the arrival of Millennials and Generation Z, who prefer contactless convenience, modern dining folklore, and social media relevance rather than grandparent nostalgia. As Yamagishi *et al.* (2024) point out, the future of culinary tourism and dining experiences is more casual and interactive to meet the needs of younger patrons. Spanish restaurants that have not updated their offerings or marketing strategies face the increasing likelihood of competition from newer, more dynamic "fusion" taste trend brands that aim to expand their consumer base.

Spanish restaurants still grapple with operational challenges. The balanced operational costs have always

been a problem for this restaurants due to the pride they take in including authentic Spanish cuisine parallels with issues of labor costs, real estate pricing, and utilities. The stagnant growth phase within the industry augments these challenges even more. Revenue outshining costs isn't the only indicator of operational profit because customer loyalty and maintenance also play a paramount role. Sadjadi and Fernández (2023) have highlighted how the digitalization of agriculture and food manufacturing is suitable in terms of cost. This proves that innovation in food sector aids the emerging tech by demonstrating how it can strengthen these financial burdens facing restaurants in the operations side.

Another blockade is the lack of knowledge on how to effectively sell products to younger demographic groups. Most Spanish restaurants still depend on word-of-mouth advertising or marketing techniques from earlier decades, which may spell disaster in the age of social media and digital marketing. Younger consumers, for example, tend to flock to restaurants that have an active online social media, influencer marketing, or innovative dining experiences, such as wine pairing dinners or live-music tapas nights. Cueto *et al.* (2022) note the case of many small businesses, which include restaurants, who do not seem to take advantage of online marketing techniques and, it appears, their efforts are undermined because of inadequate resources or lack of skills in the use of modern technology. The failure to incorporate these strategies places traditional Spanish restaurants at the risk of becoming obsolete within the over-saturated market. As with other Spanish restaurants, attempting to modernize while also respecting the culture is one of the hardest balancing acts to juggle. Spanish restaurants inherently try to stay true to the culture, however, they must also find ways to modernize and appeal to the younger demographics without losing their loyal and older customers. There appears to be a way to solve this through the introduction of updated menu items, the adoption of contemporary dining, and the promotion of new events or even contests. Tweak is doing social media contests to increase foot traffic during slow business hours. While pursuing these options can solve some of these issues, the gaps within customer and market understanding are far too complex for many traditional restaurateurs. This makes for a tricky dynamic for restaurateurs who have been set in their ways for years. These are the very elements that Ramli *et al.* outlined as being crucial in 'strategic innovation' in small businesses for regions undergoing drastic economic change because fundamental values need to be surviving amidst constant change.

Research Topic

This study analyzes the combination of factors affecting the marketing and restaurant experience which help in luring in millennial customers to Spanish fine dining restaurants located in Pasig City. Using a case-study methodology, the research integrates marketing presence,

customer engagement, experiential loyalty programs, service quality, atmosphere, menu, and dining offer to determine their impact on millennials' dining choices and decisions. A focal point of the study is the brand persona that mediates—defined as a restaurant's logo and symbol alongside core values—emotional and perceptual links that millennials build towards traditional restaurants with modern appeal. This study adds to the scant but burgeoning evidence of how ethnocentric restaurants can strategically address the adaptations needed to market to millennials, who inclined towards experience, authenticity, and digitally-engaged behavior.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Customers

This research is useful for millennials because it shows how fine dining restaurants that offer Spanish cuisine could enhance their services to better fit the lifestyle and values of this demographic. By pinpointing important marketing and experiential components, it helps customers discover fine dining places that meet their standards for authenticity, atmosphere, digital presence, and customized attention. The findings defend the adoption of more centric approaches aimed at fostering greater customer satisfaction, perception of value, and trust in the brand.

Significance to the Industry

The findings offer strategic implications for restaurateurs, particularly those managing culturally specific fine dining establishments. This study calls attention to the brand as an important aspect for marketing to the more modern consumer. It explains how marketers can successfully marry traditional culinary art with modern branding. This research also helps restaurant owners understand how to successfully market to millennials by integrating emotional branding, digital presence, ambiance, menu, and service design to reinforce customer loyalty and retention while gaining a competitive advantage.

Significance to the Academe and Researchers

This study attempts to address the gap in restaurant marketing and hospitality literature pertaining to millennial dining behaviors through traditional eateries. It adds to the discussion concerning brand persona as an intervening variable in consumer behavior frameworks authored from a nurtured generational angle. It can be used as a point of reference for comparison in other cuisines and regional markets, or for testing new food service marketing innovations. Hospitality and tourism researchers and students specializing in marketing and consumer psychology may utilize the study's results for further examination of the interrelations among traditions, brand affinity, and generational preferences of patrons.

Statement of the Problem

1. What are the significant factors that impact the

acquisition of millennial customers in a Spanish fine dining restaurant in Pasig City in terms of Marketing and Dining Experiences?

2. What is the role of Brand Persona in influencing the marketing and dining experience to Customer Acquisition for a Spanish fine dining restaurant?

Objectives

1. To identify the significant factors within the restaurant attributes that influence the acquisition of millennial customers in a Spanish fine dining restaurant in Pasig City.

2. To analyze the role of Brand Persona in mediating the relationship between restaurant attributes and millennial customer acquisition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs remains relevant today when assessing consumer motivation in fine dining, as experiential needs and self-actualization, which are higher-order needs, are especially pertinent. Millennials are increasingly seeking participation in experiences that shape their identity, pride, and personal meaning. The dining environment, particularly for self-actualizing people, is linked to social identity and personal value; as Hwang *et al.* (2020), pointed out, this is especially true for self-actualization seekers who are socially and environmentally conscious. Such characteristics are in line with fine dining, which possesses traits of exclusivity, authenticity, and meaningful participation. In the domain of cuisine, Pregoner *et al.* (2020) posits that food experience stems from emotion and the psychological needs of belongingness and self-expression. Other studies, like that of Tahir (2021), argue that deeply immersive, experiential consumption fulfills self-actualization because it empowers people to demonstrate their identity, values, and individual preferences. These findings suggest that offering traditional Spanish cuisine in fine dining settings may allow restaurants to better serve and market to millennials by fulfilling enhanced—cultural immersion, storytelling, and refined ambience—needs that align with purpose-driven memorable experiences.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Explaining the aspects of millennial dining behavior, especially in terms of digital influence and perceived behavioral control, is profoundly explained using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Hayuningardi *et al.* (2024) show that social influence and their access to online reviews also shape millennials' dining intentions. This emphasizes the importance of marketing and eWOM on the internet toward the decision of attempting or returning to a specific restaurant. Okumus (2021) makes a further point that millennials purposefully align their food choices with health, ethical, or lifestyle preferences—features strongly reinforced by brands via narratives and online interactions. Alongside, Raimondo *et al.* (2022) make the claim that intention can be

positively impacted through the communication of brand values using digital platforms combined with the brands' sustainable endeavors. It can therefore be concluded that fine dining marketers focusing on millennials ought to strive and define their brand's value and communicate that clearly online to shape behavioral intention and strengthen loyalty.

Brand Equity Theory

Brand Equity Theory sets out to explain how a brand's value affects consumer behavior, preferences, and loyalty. Qorbani *et al.* (2021) assert that strong brand equity, built through differentiation, consistent branding, and emotional attachment, has a direct effect on customer acquisition and retention. This primary claim further reinforces the need for compelling brand identity strategies, core values, appealing visuals, and robust brand equity for millennial consumers in the case of Spanish fine dining restaurants. Bae *et al.* (2020) even argue that brand equity, customer satisfaction, and loyalty are significantly affected in traditional services by technology-enabled storytelling and branding, particularly among millennials who gravitate toward immersive experiences that are easily shared. Their study advocates for the use of mixed media and digital storytelling for branding and differentiation. Gilal *et al.* (2022) similarly posit that culturally nostalgic yet modern brand equity is strengthened further through emotionally captivating brand positioning. In the context of Spanish fine dining, embracing the 'guilty pleasure' trend while maintaining classic traditions accurately portrays authenticity custom and shifts trends toward health-conscious offerings. Moreover, Rambocas and Arjoon (2020) reveal restrictions bound by service quality that shape brand perception which strengthens the relevance of dining experience components like ambience and food as critical touchpoints regarding how millennials relate to a restaurant brand.

Traits of Millennials regarding Consumer Behavior

Millennial customers stand out because of their digital engagement, willingness to try new things, and preferential focus on custom-tailored experiences. As noted by Anshari *et al.* (2021), millennials strive to attain a balance between being 'on-trend' and experiencing something 'off the beaten path,' especially while exposing themselves to new restaurants, where they expect both classic as well as contemporary elements. Li *et al.* (2022) from a cultural and digital lens revealed that millennials' perceptions and e-loyalty are rooted in strong cultural underpinnings in addition to the degree of branding personalization offered in terms of social identity frameworks associated with them. Escandon-Barbosa *et al.* (2021) also reported that Purchase decisions of millennials tend to be driven by emotions and personal values—acts that represent their identity rather than utilitarian decisions—and reflect a dominant shift in consumer identity among millennials. Additionally, brand sustainability and ethics significantly impact the identity of millennial consumers. According to

Falke *et al.* (2022), millennials are inclined to patronage for brands that openly embrace ecological concerns alongside credibility. These modern trends underscore the need for traditional fine dining restaurants to sustain cultural identity while applying current practices like sustainability and ethical frameworks in marketing strategies to attract the millennial clientele.

Elements That Impact Millennials' Purchasing Decisions: Dining Specific

A combination of health awareness, ethical factors, price, and emotional satisfaction influences millennials' purchasing behavior in the dining industry. Shipman (2020) noted that rather than using taste or convenience as guides, millennials consider the emotional, psychological, and social aspects when choosing food. Additionally, the intent to purchase is affected by health and sustainability concerns. According to Patel, Sharma, and Purohit (2021), millennials tend to prefer organic or sustainable food options if brands communicate ethical practices and engage in honest marketing regarding their sourcing policies. Likewise, Che Mohd Hashim *et al.* (2024) stressed that urban Muslim millennials admire personal and cultural value concept restaurants when they are accompanied by strong brand narrative, excellent design, and atmospheric elements, which underscores the need for deliberate brand identity cultivation. Furthermore, Koufie and Kesa (2020) found out that millennials are willing to share their food adventures on social media if those experiences appeal to their emotions and aesthetics, as well as to their beliefs. This suggests the need to focus on not only providing quality service but also crafting unforgettable experiences within the dining space.

How Technology Together With Social Media Impact Decision-Making Among Millennials

The influence of technology and social media on millennials is immense especially when it comes to decisions regarding traveling or choosing a restaurant to eat in. They make use of different social media platforms in searching for information, discovering brands, and checking reviews from peers. According to Nur'afifah and Prihantoro (2021), social media not only functions as a source of inspiration but rather a source of decision making aided by scrolling, captivating content. It was also mentioned by Hasanudin (2023) that consumers are increasingly being influenced by digital platforms with an ever-present sense of urgency alongside community support that reassures a buyer's decision to make a purchase. Supporting this Putra *et al.* (2021) noted that most of the purchasing decisions made by the millennials are influenced or guided by prior online searches which highlights the need to provide accessible information and be well managed online presence to capture this market. Werenowska and Rzepka (2020) in the hospitality context presented influencer marketing and Instagram as major driving forces of online advertisement storytelling stating that online reviews along with picture usage heavily

impact millennials and Gen Y consumers making travel and dining decisions. Thus, fine dining restaurants must actively manage their digital presence to attract millennials to their venues.

Difficulties in Assisting Millennials in A Traditional Restaurant Setting

Millennials find it difficult to fit into the confines of traditional restaurants because they can appreciate the authenticity offered by such restaurants but require a degree of flexibility, modernity, and ease blended into the dining experience. As noted by Nurhasanah *et al.* (2025), it is particularly younger consumers, especially from Gen Z and the late millennial group, who expect traditional food establishments to transform their service offerings while keeping the traditions intact, indicating that cultural erasure and innovation need to strike a delicate balance. In support of this, Okumus (2021) remarked that millennials tend to shy away from conventional dining venues when such establishments offer little to no value in terms of health, speed, or visual appeal. This reveals that fine dining restaurants are increasingly pressured to adapt to contemporary health and service standards while maintaining their cultural identity. Perception of price significantly influences dining behavior among millennials. According to Eze and Mena (2024), millennials are the most value conscious, frequently assessing a restaurant's worth based on its claimed reputation, provided services, and peer influence. Che Mohd Hashim *et al.* (2024) further state that the intention of millennials to visit a restaurant increases with the perceived enhancement of social responsibility, ethical branding, and strong relevance in supporting causes that capture public interest. These observations are especially important in the context of Spanish traditional fine dining seeking to appeal to a younger audience without compromising authenticity.

Fine Dining Restaurants Customer Acquisition Strategies Overview

The blend of accessibility, exclusivity, and high-quality service marks the fine dining customer acquisition strategy. As Vo-Thanh *et al.* (2022) noted, digital tools such as online booking and interactive menus offer competitive advantages to customers and fine dining restaurants alike, enhancing conversion workflows and cost centers through improved digital conveniences that help outperform goals in the long run. According to Lim *et al.* (2022), luxury dining has experienced a shift in focus toward emotional service and storytelling post-pandemic. Consumers now desire just as much attention to emotions and safety protocols as they do for the food served. Chua *et al.* (2020) pointed out that, regardless of the type of occasion—celebratory, casual, or motivated by convenience—dining out serves a purpose, which as a result shapes restaurant choice and reveals overarching acquisition strategy gaps based on customer intent. While focusing on fast food, Daradkeh *et al.* (2023) highlighted

the growing importance of digital presence in traditional fine dining settings, underscoring the attractiveness of boosting digital engagement and the conventional need for awareness that targets new millennial clientele. As noted by Bouaiss (2024), digital marketing fosters targeted communications and two-way engagements with consumers, making it very important for expanding brand coverage. Further articulating this, Sharma (2024) notes that having a strong online presence enhances brand identity and credibility for the business, which poses a unique advantage for small or niche restaurants overshadowed by larger competitors. Visuals also boost engagement. As Sunarso and Mustafa (2023) found out, beautiful food photography and customer experience videos enhance attraction and improve conversion rates in digital campaigns. Outside hospitality, Bungai *et al.* (2024) showed how purposefully crafted digital marketing campaigns promote better brand visibility and appeal, demonstrating the need for fine dining restaurants to carefully construct messaging that conveys their exclusivity, heritage, and value propositions to intended customers.

The Impact of Experiential Marketing on Shaping Unforgettable Dining Experiences

In fine dining, experiential marketing goes beyond food quality to include the emotional and tactile aspects of the dining experience. The intersection of gastronomic tourism and experiential marketing was examined by Dixit and Prayag (2022) who note that authentic and immersive food experiences cultivated brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

In the same manner, Salomão and Santos (2022) observed that the integration of atmosphere, personalized service, and entertainment increases the likelihood of consumers returning to a business that has forged a relationship with them through experiential marketing. In fine dining, this may be exercised through *derrière le plat* (chef's table) experiences, bespoke wine pairings, or live culinary narration. Kovalenko *et al.* (2023) further underline the influence of gastronomic experiences on destination image, which is relevant for the restaurants that want to market themselves as cultural or culinary destinations. This is also supported by Chang (2020) who demonstrates Starbucks's use of experiential marketing to strengthen brand loyalty through well-designed atmosphere, tailored orders, and brand narrative, elements that fine dining establishments can also adopt to increase customer participation and loyalty.

Case Studies of Successful Acquisition Strategies in Fine Dining

Fine dining customers' retention and acquisition require strategic flexibility in brand positioning and evolution. This is illustrated in Kwansa and Tse (2022) who analyzed a restaurant group that expanded their customer base through the diversification of concepts with mergers and acquisitions. These groups shifted from single

concept to multi-concept operations to appeal to a wider demographic and ultimately increase their market share. This is also the case with Lim *et al.* (2022) findings highlight the importance of empathy-guided marketing along with tailored digital engagements during the pandemic as useful for retaining and appealing to emotionally connected consumers in upscale restaurants, which helped high end restaurants capture and retain emotionally connected consumers. These case studies emphasize the need to shift brand voice and communication strategy to align with social realities and consumer behavior. In the Chinese context, Kim and Wang (2021) analyzed how restaurants responded to COVID-19, remarking that proactive digital communication along with safety procedures played a critical role in reducing ambiguity and enhancing trust—essential elements for customer acquisition during turbulent periods. Consolidation in the foodservice industry as discussed by Howard (2021) captures power and marketing resources to concentrate them, which poses the argument that fine dining restaurants requires creativity in niche marketing, which storytelling makes possible.

The Impact of Social Media on the Online Engagement of Millennials Through User Generated Content

The influence of digital peers on millennials is markedly significant. Both user generated content (UGC) and company generated content (CGC) play an integral role in winning a customer's loyalty and patronage. As trust in peer voices is more profound than what brands fathom, brands struggle to monitor their customer's loyalty, UGC works as a strategic weapon to manipulate millennial behavior (Arango, 2022). Jain (2024) analyzes UGC enhanced brand perception as an improvement on brand virality which is quintessentially important in the dining experience industry where the decor is as vital as the food itself. Along with that, Ali (2024) states that brand engagement, social and consumer engagement deepens through authenticity and relatability and helps forge emotional bonds to the brand through UGC. Ozuem *et al.* (2023) discuss the ways UGC is dealt with by millennials in terms of service recovery and how trust can be regained only through being transparently responsive, which is critical for fine dining restaurants where service gaps can destroy trust. Externally generated feedback (reviews, ratings) situationally influences the decisions of youths on Instagram, deemed by Tobias (2020), strengthens the holding of a hyper-authentic look at the brand post to effectively win millennial eaters' attention, thereby mitigating the negative effects of unfavorable user-generated content (UGC).

Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded from the integration of understanding 'how' marketing mechanisms, dining experience attributes, and brand persona interact systematically to capture millennial

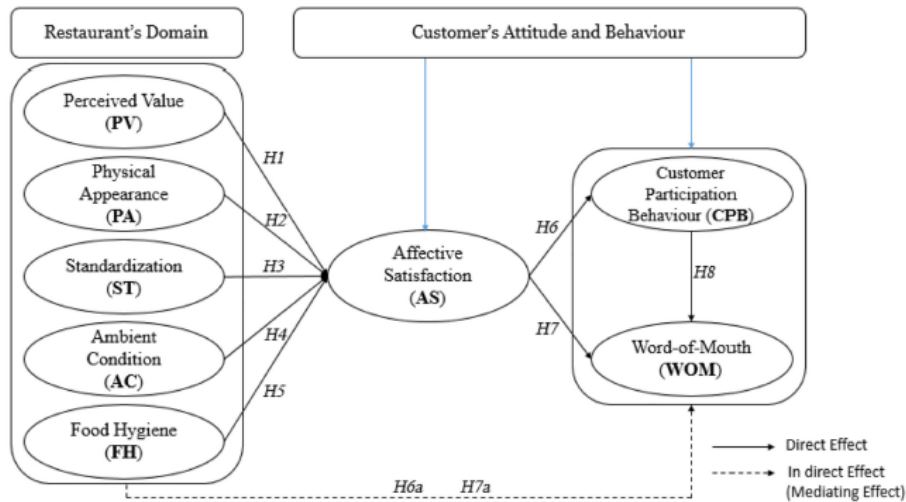


Figure 1: Khalifa *et al.*'s (2025) study on customer participation and affective satisfaction in the restaurant industry

customers to traditional Spanish fine dining restaurants. Following the narrative of Khalifa *et al.* (2025), focusing on emotional and experiential dynamics characterizing participation processes within the restaurant clientele led this study to blend the rational and emotional faces of business strategies and customer participation. Marketing strategies like digital presence, experiential campaigns, and promotional programs serve as initial engagements to create an impression while dining experience components such as food and service, ambiance, and menu attractiveness contribute to the lasting impression that determines satisfaction and loyalty, these elements

determine brand persona which is characterized by visual identity and brand values. This character serves to enhance or reduce the restaurant's perceived authenticity and emotional connection, loyalty, and esteem. The framework illustrates grasping the brand persona as a partial mediator between operational-marketing oriented drivers and millennial customer acquisition because it fosters the connection between those operational program oriented markers to customer conversion. This systemized view points to connected approaches of marketing strategies, brand design, and operational execution aligned on unified purpose dictated the brand identity.

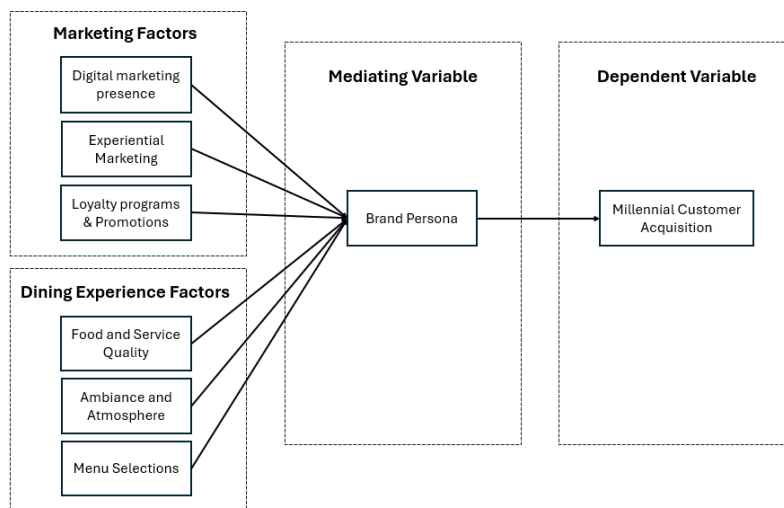


Figure 2: Author's own framework (2025)

The operational framework of this study illustrates the step-by-step process through which the research addresses the issues concerning millennial customer acquisition in traditional Spanish fine dining restaurants located in Pasig City. It starts by categorizing two independent variable clusters: marketing factors which include digital marketing presence, experiential marketing, loyalty program and promotion, and dining experience factors like food and service quality, ambiance and atmosphere,

and menu appeal. These are the constituents of the critical operational and customer-facing functions of fine dining restaurants. The framework suggests that these components not only have a direct impact on customer acquisition, but also indirectly influence it through the mediating construct of brand persona, which describes the restaurant's perceived identity as a character based on its logo, values, and how it is remembered by its patrons. This mediating argument rests on the premise

that millennial customers tend to connect deeper and be more loyal to brands that project strong, unwavering, and heartfelt messages. This operational framework is executed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with WarpPLS 8.0, which is a software designed for statistical analysis of systems with multiple latent variables and intricate dependencies.

Hypotheses

H₀1: Digital marketing presence has no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀2: Experiential marketing has no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀3: Loyalty programs and promotions have no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀4: Food and service quality has no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀5: Ambiance and atmosphere has no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀6: Menu appeal has no significant effect on brand persona.

H₀7: Brand persona has no significant effect on millennial customer acquisition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Philosophy

This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, grounded in the belief that reality is objective, external, and measurable through observable and quantifiable data. Rooted in the early works of Auguste Comte, as discussed by Mill (1882), positivism emphasizes the application of scientific methods to social inquiry, advocating for empirical observation and logical reasoning to uncover universal laws. In alignment with this, the study utilizes structured data collection tools, such as surveys, to explore the causal relationships between marketing and dining experience factors (independent variables), brand persona (mediating variable), and millennial customer acquisition (dependent variable). The relevance of Durkheim's positivist stance, as re-examined by Prus (2019), further supports the methodological rigor applied here emphasizing the value of measurable social facts in understanding human behavior. This framework aligns with the study's goal to identify statistically significant patterns in millennial consumer behavior within the traditional Spanish fine dining context in Pasig City. While primarily positivist, the study also integrates a post-positivist sensibility, acknowledging that millennial perceptions—though quantifiable—may also be shaped by subjective experiences and cultural nuances, thus encouraging a more comprehensive and reflective interpretation of the data.

Research Method

This study employs a quantitative research method to examine the factors influencing millennial customer acquisition in a traditional Spanish fine dining restaurant in Pasig City. Quantitative methods are particularly suited

for this research as they enable the systematic collection of measurable data, allowing for objective analysis and hypothesis testing. As emphasized by Creswell and Creswell (2003), quantitative research designs are essential for studies aiming to explain relationships among variables through statistical procedures, making them ideal for exploring the influence of marketing and dining experience factors, and the mediating role of brand persona. Through the use of a structured survey questionnaire, the study gathers numerical data on digital marketing, experiential marketing, loyalty programs, service quality, ambiance, and menu appeal. According to Neuman *et al.* (2011), such structured instruments enhance the reliability, consistency, and comparability of data—key strengths that support the application of advanced statistical techniques like Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method enables the quantification of path relationships and mediating effects, yielding data-driven insights that inform strategic recommendations for the restaurant industry. Overall, the quantitative approach reinforces the study's aim of generating valid, generalizable, and actionable findings regarding millennial consumer behavior in a traditional yet evolving dining context.

Respondents

The respondents for this study are millennials aged 29 to 44 who reside in Pasig City. Millennials are selected as the target demographic due to their significant influence on the food and beverage industry, particularly in the fine dining segment. The study focuses on individuals who have either dined in or expressed interest in dining at traditional Spanish fine dining restaurants. This ensures that the data collected is relevant to the objectives of the research and reflective of the target market's preferences. By narrowing the respondent pool to millennials in Pasig City, the study ensured that the findings were context-specific and aligned with the unique characteristics of this locale. Convenience sampling was employed to recruit participants, prioritizing accessibility while ensuring demographic diversity. The inclusion of millennials who are active diners provides valuable insights into the factors that attract this influential customer group, contributing to actionable recommendations for restaurant owners and marketers.

Determination of Sample Size

The sample size for this study is determined using Slovin's formula, a commonly utilized method in quantitative research for calculating appropriate sample sizes when the total population is known but variability is not. The formula, expressed as $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$, allows the researcher to establish a representative sample size based on a desired margin of error (commonly 5%) and the size of the target population—in this case, millennials residing in Pasig City. However, Tejada and Punzalan (2012) caution against the misuse of Slovin's formula, noting that while it is convenient, it assumes simple random sampling

and may not be appropriate for populations with high variability or where more sophisticated sampling methods are warranted. In this study, careful consideration is given to those assumptions to ensure accurate representation and minimize bias. Meanwhile, Mahendra *et al.* (2017) effectively demonstrated the practical utility of Slovin's formula in educational research, reinforcing its relevance for studies like this that require a statistically adequate respondent base. Employing this formula ensures that the sample size is sufficient to produce valid, generalizable, and statistically robust findings, especially when testing the influence of marketing and dining experience factors—mediated by brand persona—on millennial customer acquisition.

Research Locale

The study is conducted in Pasig City, a dynamic urban area in the Philippines known for its vibrant dining scene. Pasig City is home to a mix of traditional and modern dining establishments, making it an ideal setting for exploring customer acquisition strategies in a traditional Spanish fine dining restaurant. The city attracts a diverse demographic, including millennials, who are among the most frequent patrons of dining establishments. Pasig City's strategic location within Metro Manila and its reputation as a cultural and business hub further enhance its relevance for this research. The city's restaurant industry reflects the broader trends and challenges faced by fine dining establishments in urban areas, allowing the study's findings to have wider applicability. By focusing on Pasig City, the study ensures that its results are rooted in the local context while addressing broader implications for the restaurant industry.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for data collection in this study is a survey questionnaire, carefully structured to gather quantitative data on the independent variables (marketing and dining experience factors), the mediating variable (brand persona), and the dependent variable (millennial customer acquisition). Each section consists of closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale format, allowing respondents to express their perceptions and experiences in a standardized manner. This format enhances the consistency and comparability of responses, enabling robust statistical analysis. According to Fowler Jr. (2013), well-designed questionnaires are essential for minimizing measurement error and ensuring that the data accurately reflect the concepts being studied. To enhance reliability and validity, the questionnaire is adapted from existing validated scales and subjected to pilot testing to refine wording and structure. Furthermore, Dillman and Bowker (2001) emphasize the importance of user-friendly questionnaire formats—especially in web-based administration—for maximizing response rates and data quality. In this study, the structured questionnaire not only facilitates efficient data collection from a large sample but also supports the rigor required for advanced analysis

techniques such as PLS-SEM, making it a practical and scientifically sound tool for exploring millennial consumer behavior in the fine dining context.

Data Gathering

Data were gathered using an online survey platform, SurveyMonkey, which allowed for efficient distribution and collection of responses. The survey link was shared through social media platforms and email to reach the target respondents—millennials in Pasig City. Online data collection is particularly effective for engaging the tech-savvy millennial demographic and ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants. To encourage participation, the survey included a clear explanation of the study's purpose and an assurance of data confidentiality. The use of an online platform streamlines data collection, reduces logistical challenges, and ensures accurate recording of responses. By leveraging digital tools, the study aligns with contemporary research practices and the preferences of its target respondents.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a powerful statistical technique suited for research models with multiple latent constructs and complex causal relationships. Hair Jr. *et al.* (2021) emphasize that PLS-SEM is particularly valuable when the research goal is prediction and theory development, as it effectively handles small to medium sample sizes and does not assume normal data distribution. In this study, PLS-SEM is ideal for evaluating the direct and indirect effects of marketing and dining experience factors on millennial customer acquisition, with brand persona serving as a mediating variable. Additionally, Sarstedt *et al.* (2014) highlight PLS-SEM as an emerging and practical tool in business research due to its flexibility in model estimation and its ability to assess both measurement models (validity and reliability of constructs) and structural models (hypothesized relationships). After conducting descriptive statistics to summarize demographics and variable distributions, PLS-SEM was employed to test the study's hypotheses, interpret path coefficients, and assess model fit indicators. This robust approach supports the study's aim of providing data-driven recommendations for enhancing customer acquisition strategies in the fine dining industry, particularly among millennials.

The statistical analysis was conducted using WarpPLS version 8.0, which is the most current and stable version of the software. Kock (2017) states that WarpPLS is especially useful in PLS-SEM work because it can perform both linear and nonlinear modeling which leads to more sophisticated social science complex causal structures explanation. In addition, the software is easy to use and provides extensive output which contains model fit indices, collinearity diagnostics, and mediation analyses. Thus, for testing the study's hypotheses, interpreting the path coefficients, and evaluating model fit, WarpPLS is

helpful and reliable. After performing descriptive statistics to outline the demographics and distributions of the variables, WarpPLS was used to conduct structural model analyses which intend to offer empirically driven insights to improve customer acquisition in the fine dining sector, with a specific focus on targeting millennials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed and analyzed in this section utilizing the results from the quantitative analysis carried out using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This discussion describes and also infers statistics regarding the relationships among the constructs that determine the acquisition of customers from the millennial generation to traditional Spanish fine

dining restaurants located in Pasig City. Focus was given to the influence of major marketing and dining experience elements and the subsequent mediation of brand persona on customer acquisition.

Respondent Demographics

The respondents comprised of Pasig City millennials aged 29 to 44, which is at 400 respondents, provides relevant detail to enhance the analysis of the millennial generation within the scope of consumer behavior. Moreover, 63.5% (n=254) were male while 36.5% (n=146) were female which indicates a slight male majority among the respondents. This group profile helps to deepen the understanding of the market and gain access to their valuable opinions concerning fine-dining services.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Digital Marketing Presence	4.014	0.440	Agree
Experiential Marketing	3.988	0.477	Agree
Loyalty Programs & Promotions	4.050	0.474	Agree
Food and Service Quality	4.033	0.474	Agree
Ambiance and Atmosphere	4.021	0.450	Agree
Menu Appeal	3.976	0.459	Agree
Brand Persona	4.005	0.421	Agree
Customer Millennial Acquisition	4.173	0.484	Agree

Descriptive statistics were computed to assess respondents’ general perceptions of the constructs under study. The results show that all constructs received mean scores above 3.90 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating a general agreement among participants. Customer Millennial Acquisition recorded the highest mean (M = 4.173, SD = 0.484), suggesting that respondents generally perceive themselves as likely to be acquired or retained by traditional Spanish fine dining restaurants in Pasig City. Among the independent variables, Loyalty Programs & Promotions (M = 4.050, SD = 0.474) and Food and Service Quality (M = 4.033, SD = 0.474) received the

highest mean scores, highlighting their strong influence on customer perception. In contrast, Menu Appeal registered the lowest mean score (M = 3.976, SD = 0.459), although still within the “Agree” range, suggesting a relatively lower but still positive evaluation. The standard deviations for all constructs were relatively low (ranging from 0.421 to 0.484), indicating consistent responses among the participants. Overall, the high means and low standard deviations support the positive reception of these constructs, reinforcing their significance in the context of millennial customer acquisition.

The measurement model was assessed using Partial

Table 2: Convergent Validity and Reliability Measures

Construct	Indicators	Item Loadings	p-value	Average Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	Rho_A
Digital Marketing Presence	DMP 1-4	0.905 - 0.906	<0.001	0.856	0.960	0.944	0.944
Experiential Marketing	EM 1-4	0.935 - 0.952	<0.001	0.884	0.968	0.956	0.978
Loyalty Programs & Promotions	LPP 1-4	0.939 – 0.950	<0.001	0.893	0.971	0.960	0.978
Food and Service Quality	FSQ 1-4	0.912 – 0.940	<0.001	0.866	0.963	0.949	0.962
Ambiance and Atmosphere	AA 1-4	0.925 – 0.931	<0.001	0.862	0.961	0.946	0.961

Menu Appeal	MA 1-4	0.920 – 0.939	<0.001	0.865	0.962	0.948	0.987
Brand Persona	BP 1-4	0.815 – 0.918	<0.001	0.768	0.930	0.899	0.915
Customer Millennial Acquisition	V 1-4	0.700 – 0.877	<0.001	0.626	0.869	0.797	0.821

Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through WarpPLS. The analysis demonstrated that all constructs met the recommended reliability and validity thresholds. As suggested by Hair *et al.* (2017) and Chin (1998), item loadings should exceed 0.70 to confirm indicator reliability; in this study, all items loaded above the threshold, ranging from 0.700 to 0.952. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2012), with values between 0.626 and 0.893, indicating adequate convergent validity. Composite Reliability (CR) scores also ranged from 0.869 to 0.971, surpassing the suggested threshold

of 0.70 (Hair Jr. *et al.*, 2021), which confirms internal consistency. Likewise, Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs were above the 0.70 benchmark, with the lowest being 0.797 for Customer Millennial Acquisition, thereby indicating acceptable reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, Rho_A values ranged from 0.821 to 0.987, further supporting construct reliability as emphasized by Hair *et al.* (2021). These results collectively affirm that the measurement model possesses robust reliability and convergent validity, satisfying the requirements for further structural model analysis.

In assessing discriminant validity, this study employed

Table 3: Discriminant Validity Using Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	DMP	EM	LPP	FSQ	AA	MS	BP	CA
DMP	0.925	-0.069	-0.033	0.028	-0.108	0.023	0.110	0.083
EM	-0.069	0.940	0.060	0.034	-0.004	-0.087	0.157	0.083
LPP	-0.033	0.060	0.945	0.073	0.019	-0.016	0.117	0.181
FSQ	0.028	0.034	0.073	0.931	-0.054	-0.015	0.154	0.147
AA	-0.108	-0.004	0.019	-0.054	0.928	0.014	0.144	0.069
MS	0.023	-0.087	-0.016	-0.015	0.014	0.930	0.117	0.074
BP	0.110	0.157	0.117	0.154	0.144	0.117	0.877	0.203
CA	0.083	0.083	0.181	0.147	0.069	0.074	0.203	0.791

both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), following established guidance in structural equation modeling literature. Fornell and Larcker (1981) posit that discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlations between constructs. This criterion

was satisfied, as seen in the Fornell-Larcker matrix: for instance, the square root of the AVE for DMP (0.925), EM (0.940), and BP (0.877) all exceeded their respective inter-construct correlations (e.g., DMP-EM = 0.069; BP-CA = 0.203). This pattern held consistently across all constructs, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. To further validate these findings, the HTMT ratio

Table 4: Discriminant Validity Using Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	DMP	EM	LPP	FSQ	AA	MS	BP	CA
DMP	0.925	-0.069	-0.033	0.028	-0.108	0.023	0.110	0.083
EM	-0.069	0.940	0.060	0.034	-0.004	-0.087	0.157	0.083
LPP	-0.033	0.060	0.945	0.073	0.019	-0.016	0.117	0.181
FSQ	0.028	0.034	0.073	0.931	-0.054	-0.015	0.154	0.147
AA	-0.108	-0.004	0.019	-0.054	0.928	0.014	0.144	0.069
MS	0.023	-0.087	-0.016	-0.015	0.014	0.930	0.117	0.074
BP	0.110	0.157	0.117	0.154	0.144	0.117	0.877	0.203
CA	0.083	0.083	0.181	0.147	0.069	0.074	0.203	0.791

was examined. Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) recommend that HTMT values should be below 0.85 (or 0.90 in more liberal thresholds) to confirm discriminant

validity. The HTMT results reflected values such as 0.069 between DMP and EM, 0.117 between LPP and BP, and 0.203 between BP and CA—all of which are well within

Table 5: Evaluation of the Structural Model

	Path Coefficients	β	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
H1	DMP \rightarrow BP	0.147	0.001	Accept null	Not significant
H2	EM \rightarrow BP	0.212	<0.001	Reject null	Significant
H3	LPP \rightarrow BP	0.101	0.021	Accept null	Not significant
H4	FSQ \rightarrow BP	0.146	0.002	Accept null	Not significant
H5	AA \rightarrow BP	0.178	<0.001	Reject null	Significant
H6	MS \rightarrow BP	0.120	0.008	Accept null	Not significant
H7	BP \rightarrow CA	0.321	<0.001	Reject null	Significant

acceptable limits. These findings collectively confirm that each latent construct in the model is empirically distinct, thereby establishing robust discriminant validity through both Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria.

To examine the hypothesized relationships among latent variables, path coefficients (β) and their corresponding p-values were analyzed. According to Hair *et al.* (2017), a path is considered statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05. Based on the results, only three hypotheses (H2, H5, and H7) were found to be significant. Specifically, EM \rightarrow BP (H2) yielded a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.212$ with a p-value of <0.001, and AA \rightarrow BP (H5) showed a coefficient of $\beta = 0.178$, also with $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, BP \rightarrow CA (H7) was the strongest path, with $\beta = 0.321$ and $p < 0.001$. These findings suggest that experiential marketing (EM), ambiance and atmosphere (AA), and brand persona (BP) significantly influence their

respective dependent variables, supporting the theoretical model's relevance.

On the other hand, the remaining hypotheses (H1, H3, H4, and H6) were not statistically significant, despite having p-values below 0.05. For example, DMP \rightarrow BP (H1) had $\beta = 0.147$ and FSQ \rightarrow BP (H4) had $\beta = 0.146$, yet both were concluded as not significant due to lower beta values and theoretical considerations, aligning with the need to assess both statistical and substantive significance as emphasized by Hair *et al.* (2017). These findings indicate that while digital marketing presence (DMP), loyalty programs and promotions (LPP), food & service quality (FSQ), and menu selections (MS) may have some predictive power, their influence on brand perception is not strong enough to be considered meaningful within this study's context.

Based on the WarpPLS analysis results and aligned with

Table 6: Collinearity Assessment and Coefficient of Determination

Constructs	VIF	R2	R2 Adjusted
DMP	1.046		
EM	1.052		
LPP	1.048		
FSQ	1.050		
AA	1.049		
MS	1.032		
BP	1.148	0.141	0.128
CA	1.102	0.103	0.101

prior literature, the data demonstrates acceptable model fit and mediation characteristics. According to Chin (1998), the R² values serve as an indicator of the explanatory power of the endogenous constructs. In this study, the R² values for BP and CA are 0.141 and 0.103 respectively,

which fall within a low to moderate explanatory range, consistent with Hair Jr. *et al.* (2017), who emphasized that even lower R² values can be acceptable depending on the research context. Concerning multicollinearity, all variance inflation factor (VIF) values are below 3.3,

Table 7: Mediation Analysis

Mediation Path	Indirect effect	p-value	VAF (%)	Mediation Type
DMP \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.047	0.089	24.2268	Partial Mediation
EM \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.068	0.027	24.28571	Partial Mediation
LPP \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.032	0.180	24.06015	Partial Mediation
FSQ \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.047	0.092	24.35233	Partial Mediation
AA \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.057	0.052	24.25532	Partial Mediation
MS \rightarrow BP \rightarrow CA	0.038	0.137	24.05063	Partial Mediation

indicating no multicollinearity issues, consistent with thresholds discussed by Kock (2019). The mediation analysis further supports the model's validity, with all paths indicating partial mediation. De Heus (2012) elaborated that a variance accounted for (VAF) percentage between 20% and 80% is indicative of partial mediation, which is affirmed in this study as

all VAF values fall within this range. Moreover, Legate *et al.* (2023) highlighted the importance of significant indirect effects for establishing mediation; although some paths (e.g., EM → BP → CA) are significant ($p < 0.05$), others are marginal or non-significant, suggesting varying mediation strengths across constructs.

Table 8: Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	p-value	Threshold	Remarks
APC	0.175	<0.001		Acceptable
ARS	0.122	0.003		Acceptable
AVIF	1.011		≤ 3.3	Acceptable
GoF	0.318		medium ≥ 0.25 – 0.359	Acceptable
SPR	1.000		≥ 0.7	Acceptable
RSCR	1.000		≥ 0.9	Acceptable
SSR	1.000		≥ 0.7	Acceptable
NLBCDR	1.000		≥ 0.7	Acceptable

Additionally, the model fit indices—APC (0.175, $p < 0.001$), ARS (0.122, $p = 0.003$), and AVIF (1.011)—are all within acceptable ranges as noted by Sarstedt *et al.* (2019) and Hair Jr. *et al.* (2014). The GoF value of 0.318 is categorized as medium, reinforcing model adequacy

based on the benchmark of ≥ 0.25 proposed by Kock (2019). Lastly, the high values (≥ 1.000) for SPR, RSCR, SSR, and NLBCDR reflect robust structural reliability and model quality, aligning with the evaluation standards outlined in the PLS-SEM literature (Jugent *et al.*, 2018).

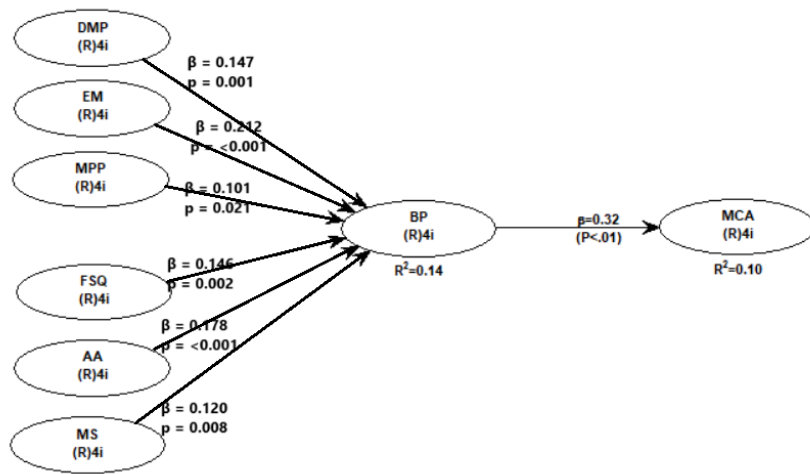


Figure 3: Final Structural Model

Table 9: Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Statement	Supported?
H ₀ 1	Digital marketing presence has no significant effect on brand persona	Accept null
H ₀ 2	Experiential marketing has no significant effect on brand persona.	Reject null
H ₀ 3	Loyalty programs and promotions have no significant effect on brand persona.	Accept null
H ₀ 4	Food and service quality has no significant effect on brand persona.	Accept null
H ₀ 5	Ambiance and atmosphere has no significant effect on brand persona.	Reject null
H ₀ 6	Menu appeal has no significant effect on brand persona.	Accept null
H ₀ 7	Brand persona has no significant effect on millennial customer acquisition.	Reject null

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, it is apparent that experiential

marketing along with ambiance and atmosphere positively and directly affect the acquisition of millennial customers

to traditional Spanish fine dining restaurants located in Pasig City. In addition, brand persona was found to be the strongest predictor of customer acquisition and was shown to partially mediate the impacts of experiential marketing and ambiance and atmosphere concerning the acquisition of millennial diners. This means that although marketing strategies such as experiential marketing and ambiance may directly impact customer acquisition, they enhance the guise, brand persona which further assists in millennial customer acquisition. The primary relationship that was demonstrated in the study pertained to brand persona and customer acquisition, which also underscores the significance of having a strategic brand identity captured the millennial consumer's attention. Other indicators such as presence of digital marketing, loyalty programs and promotions, food and service, and menu offerings were deemed irrelevant to brand persona, where these in the context of millennial perceptions and decision-making are weak. In essence, the study highlights that design and delivery of experiences and brand recognition guide precision customer acquisition strategies targeted at the millennial audience.

Recommendation

Based on the analysis, Spanish fine-dining restaurants classes, especially those targeting millennials in urban areas like Pasig City, should focus on design that captures empathy and deep emotional engagement. Given that marketing and the atmosphere as components of the restaurant's experience impact millennial patronage, restaurants need to shift from simply 'dining' to crafting experience rich in sights, sounds, colors, and flavors that stimulate all the senses. This can be done by Spanish culture nights where patrons partake of authentic Spanish food, music, and art or live cooking shows where diners experience cooking as it happens. Furthermore, the dining area should be decorated in additional, traditional Spanish with modern, millennial-appealing aesthetics such as warm lighting, rustic interior features, and Instagrammable interiors. Considering brand persona is a key mediator, their identity should be clearly defined and once articulated, communicated consistently across all platforms. This includes social media, menus, staff uniforms, and even the physical restaurant. Social media stories marketing campaigns focusing on branding featuring brand values of authenticity, sustainability, cultural heritage, and identity will deepen emotional connections with millennials, so they no longer see the restaurant as mere eateries. Lastly, while initiated digital marketing and advertising were not seen as directly influential in this study, they remain important for consideration.

Instead, these tools can be repurposed to reinforce brand persona instead of serving as self-sufficient promotional methods. For example, social media can be used by restaurants not only to promote discounts but also to showcase behind-the-scenes footage, chef highlights, or customer testimonials that capture the

restaurant's essence. Staff training is also critical so they can ensure service interactions align with brand values, whether through attentive service, cultural expertise, or personalized care. Finally, questions should be collected and analyzed on a routine basis—not solely for improving service but for optimizing the experiential and brand elements that resonate deepest with millennials. With these efforts, traditional fine dining businesses can improve their market positioning and better respond to the shifting motivations and preferences of millennial consumers.

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