
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Flavor Of The Past, Taste Of Tomorrow: Business Resilience And Sustainability Of Laguna's Heritage Food Establishments

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| **ABSTRACT**

Laguna's heritage food establishments are more than businesses; they are the living memory of a province served on a plate. Yet, the individuals who preserve these recipes operate family-owned establishments in an environment that is increasingly Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible (BANI), where authenticity must compete with disruption on a daily basis. This study examined how five long-standing heritage food establishments—Pancit Maciang and Universal Bakery in San Pedro City; Mang Tony's Original Pospas and Nila's Puto in Biñan City; and Aling Taleng's in Pagsanjan—demonstrate resilience, sustainability, and cultural continuity within this operating context. Anchored in SERVQUAL Theory, Resilience and Sustainability Theory, and the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the research adopted Creswell's convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 150 customers using a SERVQUAL-based satisfaction survey, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth phenomenological interviews with five owner-managers. Findings indicate that customers are highly satisfied across all dimensions, with food quality (M = 3.49) and reliability (M = 3.54) emerging as the strongest indicators, while tangibles and cleanliness (M = 3.32) were identified as the most visible vulnerabilities. The study also found no significant differences in satisfaction across establishments suggesting that legacy, authenticity, and personal accountability function as shared, culture-driven quality standards. Owner narratives confirmed that resilience is present but volatile, sustained primarily by family legacy rather than formalized systems. Drawing from the integrated findings, the study proposes the Heritage Food Resilience and Sustainability Framework (HFRSF), built on four pillars: Authenticity Custodianship and Heritage Mapping, Relational Service Culture, Physical Heritage Stewardship, and Capacity and Succession Systems, with the NCCA, NHCP, DOT, LGU Laguna, and TESDA serving as institutional anchors. The HFRSF offers a practical, culturally grounded pathway for safeguarding Laguna's culinary heritage while preparing it for future sustainability.

| **KEYWORDS**

Heritage Food Establishments, Business Resilience, Sustainability, BANI Environment, SERVQUAL, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Mixed-Methods, Laguna, HFRSF

| **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

ACCEPTED: 23 April 2026

PUBLISHED: 07 May 2026

DOI: 10.32996/jbms.2026.8.6.7

1. Introduction

Food strongly shapes both individual and collective identity for Filipinos, connecting families to family ties and cultural continuity. Many families have passed down recipes over generations carrying not only ingredients but also memories and emotions. Cooking is marked by a rich array of foods, reflecting tradition and shared experience. These traditions show how culture is learned through daily interactions where food remains a large part of everyday life, especially in an age of dynamic social change. Heritage food refers to traditional dishes, ingredients and preparation techniques passed down through generations and rooted in a community's cultural identity, embodying flavors, values, histories, and social meanings (Garcia & Torres, 2021). These foods become living symbols of identity, preserving cultural memory through cooking, sharing meals, and rituals. In this context, sustainability is the capacity of food systems to meet current needs without compromising future traditions, while resiliency is the ability of heritage food businesses and communities to withstand, adapt, and recover from disruptions, emphasizing that preserving culinary heritage requires both continuity and adaptive strength.

Traditional food systems are becoming more difficult to maintain due to environmental, economic, and consumer changes. The International Food Policy Research Institute (2024) states that the climate crisis disrupts food production and access to culturally important foods, while the rise of ultra-processed foods threatens health and traditional practices. Globalization has accelerated food commercialization, pushing artisans and businesses to balance authenticity with modern demands (Smith et al., 2022). These trends highlight the need to preserve culinary heritage alongside economic sustainability through adaptive strategies, as resilience becomes central to survival. Without adaptation, many traditional foods risk fading amid industrialization and environmental threats.

Small and heritage-based food businesses also face the need for innovation in marketing to stay competitive in fast-changing global markets. Tourism growth and shifting consumer preferences often commercialize traditional practices, altering their cultural meaning (Smith et al., 2022). At the same time, the loss of native knowledge reflects a decline in intangible cultural heritage, especially in areas affected by global economic integration, as noted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (2024). These realities emphasize securing culinary traditions through sustainability and resilience-oriented approaches, ensuring cultural practices remain intact as markets evolve.

Understanding heritage food sustainability in Laguna requires facing a new reality. The world has moved beyond the VUCA lens into the BANI framework introduced by Jamal Cascio (2020), where conditions are Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible. Systems can break suddenly, decision-makers carry emotional strain, small triggers create large effects, and crises are harder to understand. For Laguna's heritage food establishments, this is a daily experience. As Grabowska-Powaga and Powaga (2024) note, resilience requires adaptive leadership, emotional grounding, and purpose. Heritage food establishments are thus enterprises actively adapting within a BANI reality, where resilience and sustainability must be intentionally developed.

At the national level, the Philippines continues to face issues in food system sustainability, culture protection, and supply chain resilience. Assessments of the Sustainable Nutrition Security framework show gaps in safe, nutritious, balanced, and eco-friendly food supply chains (Goloso-Gubat, 2024), while unequal wealth distribution limits the growth of small heritage-based food businesses. Although the World Food Programme (2024) has initiatives addressing food security and poverty, rural and informal enterprises remain vulnerable to environmental and economic disruptions. This highlights the need to support culturally rooted food businesses, as sustainability in the Philippine context is not only ecological but also cultural and economic.

National studies also show that Filipino food heritage contributes to tourism, livelihood growth, and regional identity, yet unequal access to financial, technological, and infrastructural support continues to hinder development (World Food Programme, 2024). Without well-designed policies, traditional food businesses struggle to adapt while maintaining authenticity (Goloso-Gubat, 2024). There is a clear need for protective mechanisms that allow cultural food enterprises to grow while balancing innovation and tradition. In Laguna, food history reflects strong cultural identity but also faces socio-economic challenges within the CALABARZON region. Despite a dynamic provincial economy, the heritage food sector struggles with shifting demand, urbanization, and climate change. The researcher notes that Laguna's small business sector is only moderately prepared in disaster management, innovation, and resource connectivity (Olalia, 2025), showing the need for continuous adaptation. In places like Santa Rosa, sustainability initiatives such as climate risk reduction and the use of local ingredients have been introduced (Madin, 2021), yet many practices remain environmentally unsustainable. According to United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (2025), collaboration among government, businesses, and communities is essential, pointing to the need for integrated support systems.

Given these global, national, and local challenges, this study examines the relationship between culinary heritage, sustainability, and the food industry in Laguna's heritage food businesses, focusing on how cultural identity is maintained while adapting to change. It highlights practices that support long-term resilience and cultural preservation, contributing to policy-making, community initiatives, and academic discussions.

This study is anchored on Servqual Theory and Resilience and Sustainability Theory, guided by the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). Servqual Theory measures service quality through customer perceptions such as food quality, cleanliness, and service, while Resilience and Sustainability Theory explains how businesses adapt and remain viable amid disruptions. Together, these frameworks connect customer satisfaction with adaptive capacity, ensuring both cultural preservation and business continuity.

The conceptual framework shows the study's structure, linking theories, the heritage food ecosystem, and a framework for resilience and sustainability. It follows a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time and integrated during interpretation. The study is guided by research questions on Food Quality, Service Quality (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy), and Cleanliness. It also determines if there is a significant difference in customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments in Laguna. In addition, it explores the lived experiences of owners or managers in relation to resilience and sustainability in a BANI environment, including how they respond to operational, market, and environmental challenges. Based on the findings, the study proposes a framework or program to enhance resilience and sustainability. The hypothesis states that Ho1: There is no significant difference in customer satisfaction among food establishments in Laguna. It assumes no significant difference when grouped by demographic profile, and that establishments operate under varying BANI conditions that influence their resilience strategies and sustainability practices.

This study aims to understand how Laguna's heritage food establishments build resilience and sustainability in a BANI environment. It is limited to establishments operating for at least 20 years, ensuring a strong cultural and historical identity. It focuses on family-owned businesses managed by first, second, or third generations, highlighting intergenerational transfer of culinary traditions. The study includes establishments known for traditional Laguna food and recognized for preserving recipes, preparation methods, and flavors. Its scope is confined to selected areas in Laguna with strong culinary reputations, featuring iconic products like Maciang's Pancit with Ketchup, Universal Bakery Ensaymada, Nila's Puto Biñan, Mang Tony's Original Pospas, and Aling Taleng's Halo-Halo. These limits keep the study focused on businesses that reflect true culinary heritage and long-term continuity. For Academic Year 2025-2026, the study uses mixed methods, with customers for quantitative data and owners for qualitative insights, centered on resilience, sustainability, and cultural preservation.

The study is significant to several groups. For academics and researchers, it adds to knowledge on food heritage, business resilience, and sustainability. For consumers, it enhances cultural and food experiences by promoting authentic heritage dishes. For cultural advocates, it supports the preservation of traditions while encouraging community participation and tourism. For food business owners, it offers insights into adaptive strategies and service improvement to sustain operations while preserving identity. Lastly, for Local Government Units (LGUs), it provides guidance on supporting heritage food enterprises in ways that promote economic growth, cultural preservation, and community development.

2. Methodology

This study uses a convergent parallel mixed-methods design following John W. Creswell's framework, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time, analyzed separately, and then integrated (Babor, 2026; Kim et al., 2024). This method allows a more complete understanding by comparing and combining findings from both data sets (Gime, 2025). It is suitable for

studying heritage food business sustainability because it captures measurable outcomes through quantitative data while also exploring lived experiences, cultural values, and adaptive strategies through qualitative inquiry (Gempes & Obenza, 2025). It has been effective in studies on family-owned heritage enterprises, helping explain how quantitative results are enriched by qualitative insights, especially in balancing cultural preservation and economic viability (Ombasi & Escandallo, 2025; Dawadi et al., 2021).

The quantitative part uses a customer satisfaction survey to measure food quality, cleanliness, and service among selected customers from five heritage food establishments, analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation. The qualitative part involves semi-structured interviews with owners of Maciang Pancit with Ketchup, Universal Bakery, Nilas Puto Biñan, Mang Tony's Original Pospas, and Aling Taleng's Halo-halo, focusing on their lived experiences, adaptive strategies, and challenges in a BANI environment, with thematic analysis applied. Both findings are then integrated using joint displays to form deeper conclusions about business resilience (Guetterman et al., 2015; Younas et al., 2023), recognizing that sustainability includes both measurable outcomes and cultural dimensions that cannot be captured by numbers alone (Gime, 2025).

The study is conducted in Laguna, specifically in San Pedro City, Biñan City, and Pagsanjan, selected for their strong presence of heritage food establishments. These areas provide contexts for examining long-standing family-run businesses that maintain traditional practices while adapting to modern demands. San Pedro reflects a vibrant food scene with long-established businesses, Biñan highlights multi-generational bakeries and native delicacies, and Pagsanjan, known for Pagsanjan Falls, represents a tourism-driven setting with rich culinary traditions. Together, these locations show how heritage food establishments maintain cultural identity, support communities, and adapt to social, economic, and environmental challenges.

This study involves two groups of participants following John W. Creswell's mixed-methods approach. The first group includes owners of five heritage food establishments in Laguna that are family-owned, operating for at least twenty years, and known for traditional dishes. These participants are purposely selected for in-depth interviews based on their direct involvement in daily operations, decision-making, and preservation of food practices, providing narratives on their experiences, challenges, and adaptive strategies in cultural heritage, resilience, and sustainability. The second group consists of thirty regular customers from each establishment, composed of adults aged 18 and above who have dined at least twice in the past six months, ensuring familiarity with food quality, cleanliness, and service. A structured survey is administered to 150 customers to describe trends, attitudes, and opinions. Respondents are equally distributed across the five establishments, with Pancit Maciang, Universal Bakery, Nila's Puto Biñan, Mang Tony's Pospas, and Aling Taleng's each having 30 respondents or 20.0 percent. This ensures balanced representation and equal contribution to the data. Equal distribution follows balanced sampling principles, allowing findings to reflect the shared experience of different establishments rather than one source (Ossowska et al., 2024). Since culinary traditions are living cultural assets, equal representation strengthens validity and supports more generalizable conclusions (Chukwurah et al., 2025; Demetillo et al., 2021).

The study uses purposive sampling for both groups. For the qualitative part, owners or key informants with strong knowledge of operations are selected as main sources of information. For the quantitative part, regular customers recommended by owners or managers are chosen based on their familiarity with food quality, cleanliness, and service. This approach ensures that the data gathered is relevant, detailed, and suitable for comprehensive analysis.

Researcher-made instruments are used for both qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. A semi-structured interview guide is used for the qualitative component to ask open-ended textual and structural questions about business resilience, sustainability practices, and cultural heritage, with interviews conducted in person or online, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis. For the quantitative component, a structured survey questionnaire is administered to customers, containing statements on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceptions of business sustainability measured using a Likert scale. The instruments undergo a multi-layered validation process involving a Qualitative Data Analyst, selected participants, and an academic expert with a master's or doctoral degree, ensuring clarity, relevance, and academic quality.

The main method of data collection is semi-structured key informant interviews, allowing the researcher to explore participants' experiences, strategies, and perspectives, with prior consent obtained to ensure voluntary participation and ethical handling of data. Interviews are conducted in person or online, audio-recorded, and guided by open-ended questions and probing techniques. All recordings are transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involving coding, pattern identification, theme development, and refinement, with findings presented in narrative form supported by direct participant quotes to understand how heritage food establishments navigate challenges while preserving cultural heritage.

Ethical considerations are prioritized throughout the study to protect the welfare and rights of participants, guided by principles ensuring scientific integrity and validity (Bhandari, 2023). Participation is voluntary, based on informed consent, and free from coercion, with participants given clear explanations of the study's objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits. The Data Privacy Act of 2012 ensures that all data is securely stored and used only for research purposes, with confidentiality and privacy strictly maintained. Anonymity is ensured through data aggregation and anonymization, and participants may ask questions or withdraw at any time, with full assurance that their rights are protected throughout the research process.

3. Result

The quantitative component of this study measures the level of customer satisfaction across two overarching dimensions: Food Quality and Service Quality. Service Quality is assessed through the five established dimensions of the SERVQUAL model – Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy – supplemented by Cleanliness as an additional dimension that is relevant to the food service industry. These metrics provide a structured, evidence-based lens through which the performance of heritage food establishments can be evaluated against the expectation of their customers.

The qualitative component goes beneath the surface of performance indicators to capture the live experiences of owners who keep the establishments alive. Their stories are situated within the BANI Framework, a contemporary lens that describes today's operating environment as brittle, anxious, nonlinear, and incomprehensible. BANI reflects the very real pressures these entrepreneurs face: economic disruptions, shifting consumer behaviors, generational transitions, and the weight of preserving culinary heritage. By converging both strands of data, it connects customer satisfaction scores with the owner's business decisions and strategies in the BANI environment. The framework that emerges from this integration is grounded in data shaped by owners' lived experiences and anchored in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Tangible Cultural Heritage, which recognizes traditional food preparation practices, indigenous ingredients, and heritage culinary knowledge as cultural heritage worthy of protection and support.

3.1 Level of customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments in Laguna.

For RQ1, which focuses on the level of customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments in Laguna, the study measured Food Quality, Service Quality—specifically Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy—and Cleanliness.

Table 1.1
Level of customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments in Laguna in terms of Food Quality

	Taste	WM	Interpretation
1.	My meal was seasoned appropriately. <i>Ang aking pagkain ay may tamang timpla.</i>	3.4667	Strongly Agree
2.	The ingredients in my meal appeared fresh. <i>Ang mga sangkap sa aking pagkain ay mukhang sariwa.</i>	3.4667	Strongly Agree
3.	The ingredients used in my meal appeared to be of good quality. <i>Ang mga sangkap na ginamit sa aking pagkain ay mukhang may magandang kalidad.</i>	3.5000	Strongly Agree
4.	The food appeared to be prepared using traditional methods. <i>Ang pagkain ay mukhang inihanda gamit ang mga tradisyunal na pamamaraan.</i>	3.4933	Strongly Agree
5.	The food was presented in an appealing manner. <i>Ang pagkain ay inihain sa kaaya-ayang paraan.</i>	3.5067	Strongly Agree
6.	The food was served at an appropriate temperature. <i>Ang pagkain ay inihain sa tamang temperatura.</i>	3.4933	Strongly Agree
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.4879	Strongly Agree

Table 1.1 results show that customer satisfaction in terms of food quality among heritage food establishments in Laguna is very high, with a general assessment mean of 3.4879, interpreted as Strongly Agree. This means customers are highly satisfied with the taste, freshness, preparation, and presentation of the food. All indicators fall within the “Strongly Agree” range, showing consistent positive perceptions. The highest-rated indicator, “The food was presented in an appealing manner,” has a mean of 3.5067, making presentation the most appreciated aspect. This is followed by the perceived good quality of ingredients (3.5000). The lowest-rated indicators, “My meal was seasoned appropriately” and “The ingredients in my meal appeared fresh,” both have a mean of 3.4667, but are still Strongly Agree. Even as the lowest, these scores remain high, meaning seasoning and freshness are still positively evaluated, though slightly less emphasized than presentation. This very high level of satisfaction supports existing studies on the importance of food quality. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) found that sensory quality and consistency strongly influence satisfaction. The strong rating for presentation aligns with Demetillo et al. (2021), who explain that visual appeal shapes customer impressions. Chukwurah et al. (2025) also highlight that heritage food establishments use authentic and locally sourced ingredients as a strength, while Ossowska et al. (2024) note that customers look for culturally authentic experiences. Overall, these findings show that heritage food establishments in Laguna successfully deliver food quality that supports both cultural authenticity and customer satisfaction.

Table 1.2
Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Service Quality: Tangibles

	Tangibles	WM	Interpretation
[1]	The dining area looked organized <i>Maayos tingnan ang kainan.</i>	3.3467	Very Satisfied
[2]	The menu was easy to read. <i>Madaling basahin ang menu.</i>	3.4600	Very Satisfied
[3]	The menu had an appealing layout. <i>Kaaya-aya ang disenyo ng menu.</i>	3.2467	Satisfied
[4]	The utensils and serving ware were presentable. <i>Maayos tingnan ang kubyertos at mga gamit sa paghahain.</i>	3.3067	Very Satisfied
[5]	The physical appearance of the establishment is visually appealing. <i>Kaaya-aya tingnan ang lugar ng kainan.</i>	3.2000	Satisfied
[6]	The staff appeared neat. <i>Maayos ang itsura ng mga empleyado.</i>	3.3333	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.3157	Very Satisfied

Table 1.2 presents the level of customer satisfaction in terms of service quality: tangibles. The highest-rated indicator, “The menu was easy to read,” obtained a mean of 3.4600. The lowest-rated indicator, “The physical appearance of the establishment is visually appealing,” recorded a mean of 3.2000, interpreted as satisfied, while the menu layout (3.25) was also rated as satisfied. The general weighted mean of 3.32 indicates that respondents were generally very satisfied in terms of tangibles. This implies that physical and visible elements such as cleanliness, organization of dining areas, presentability of utensils, staff neatness, and menu readability were positively perceived by customers. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) emphasized that tangibles serve as immediate cues of service quality, while Demetillo et al. (2021) noted their influence on perceived professionalism and reliability. The slightly lower ratings for physical appearance and menu layout suggest areas for aesthetic improvement, which McDonagh et al. (2024) linked to sustainability and cultural branding in heritage food establishments.

Table 1.3
Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Service Quality: Reliability

	Reliability	WM	Interpretation
1.	My order was served correctly. <i>Naibigay nang tama ang aking order.</i>	3.5733	Very Satisfied
2.	The food I received matched what I ordered. <i>Ang pagkaing natanggap ko ay tumugma sa aking inorder.</i>	3.5667	Very Satisfied
3.	The heritage dish I ordered tasted authentic. <i>Ang inorder kong pagkaing pamana ay may tunay na lasa.</i>	3.5467	Very Satisfied

4. My order was served within the promised time. <i>Naibigay ang aking order sa ipinangakong oras.</i>	3.5067	Very Satisfied
5. The food I received matched the presentation/description of what I ordered. <i>Ang pagkaing natanggap ko ay tumugma sa presentasyon ng aking inorder.</i>	3.5733	Very Satisfied
6. The establishment provided consistent service during my visit. <i>Naipakita ang establisyemento ng pare-parehong serbisyo sa kabuuan ng aking pagbisita.</i>	3.4867	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.5419	Very Satisfied

Table 1.3 presents service quality in terms of reliability. Results show very high satisfaction, with the highest-rated indicators (3.5733) reflecting correct order fulfillment and consistency between ordered and received food. The lowest-rated indicator (3.5067) still reflects very satisfied responses regarding timely service. The general weighted mean of 3.5419 indicates that respondents were very satisfied, implying that establishments consistently delivered accurate, timely, and authentic service. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) identified reliability as a key determinant of trust and loyalty, while Demetillo et al. (2021) emphasized its importance in repeat patronage. The strong rating for authenticity aligns with Chukwurah et al. (2025), who highlighted the importance of preserving traditional culinary identity in customer retention.

Table 1.4
Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Service Quality: Responsiveness

	Responsiveness	WM	Interpretation
1. Staff welcomed me promptly. <i>Agad akong binati at inasikaso ng mga empleyado.</i>		3.3400	Very Satisfied
2. When I raised a concern, the staff responded promptly. <i>Kapag may inilahad akong concern, agad itong tinugunan ng mga empleyado.</i>		3.3933	Very Satisfied
3. Service remained efficient even when the establishment was busy. <i>Nanatiling mabilis at maayos ang serbisyo kahit matao ang establisyemento.</i>		3.4000	Very Satisfied
4. Staff were willing to assist me when needed. <i>Handang tumulong sa akin ang mga empleyado kapag kinakailangan.</i>		3.4600	Very Satisfied
5. Staff offered help before I had to ask. <i>Nag-alok ng tulong ang mga empleyado bago pa ako humingi nito.</i>		3.3533	Very Satisfied
6. The staff attended to my needs without unnecessary delay. <i>Inasikaso ng mga empleyado ang aking pangangailangan nang walang hindi kailangang paghihintay.</i>		3.3867	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.3889	Very Satisfied

Table 1.4 presents responsiveness, where the highest-rated indicator (3.4600) shows staff willingness to assist customers. The lowest-rated indicator (3.3400), though still very satisfied, relates to prompt welcoming. The general assessment of 3.3889 indicates very high satisfaction, implying that staff were attentive, responsive, and efficient even during busy conditions. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) emphasized responsiveness as a critical dimension of service quality, while Bodescu et al. (2022) linked it to employee motivation and engagement. This suggests that heritage food establishments benefit from strong interpersonal service culture.

Table 1.5
Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Service Quality: Assurance

	Assurance	WM	Interpretation
1. Staff were knowledgeable about the menu. <i>May sapat na kaalaman ang mga empleyado tungkol sa menu</i>		3.5267	Very Satisfied
2. I felt safe consuming food in this establishment. <i>Naramdaman kong ligtas kainin ang pagkain sa establisyementong ito.</i>		3.5800	Very Satisfied
3. When asked, the staff were able to explain the heritage background of the dishes. <i>Kapag tinanong, naipapaliwanag ng mga empleyado ang pamana o kasaysayan ng mga pagkain.</i>		3.3667	Very Satisfied
4. The staff behaved in a courteous and professional manner. <i>Magalang at propesyonal ang pakikitungo ng mga empleyado.</i>		3.4933	Very Satisfied
5. I trusted the authenticity of their heritage dishes. <i>May tiwala ako sa pagiging tunay ng kanilang mga pagkaing pamana</i>		3.5333	Very Satisfied
6. The staff answered my questions clearly and confidently. <i>Malinaw at may kumpiyansang sinagot ng mga empleyado ang aking mga tanong.</i>		3.4800	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.4967	Very Satisfied

Table 1.5 presents assurance, where the highest-rated indicator (3.5800) reflects customers' sense of safety in consuming food. The lowest-rated indicator (3.3667) relates to staff ability to explain heritage background. The general assessment of 3.4967 indicates very high satisfaction, implying trust in staff competence, courtesy, and food safety standards. Acuin (2023) emphasized the importance of hygiene and safety perceptions, while Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) identified assurance as a core trust-building dimension. The lower score on cultural explanation suggests a need for improved heritage storytelling, as noted by Ossowska et al. (2024).

Table 1.6
Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Service Quality: Empathy

	Empathy	WM	Interpretation
1. Staff gave me personal attention. <i>Nagbigay sa akin ng personal na atensyon ang mga empleyado.</i>		3.3933	Very Satisfied
2. Staff listened carefully to my concerns. <i>Maingat na nakinig ang mga empleyado sa aking mga alalahanin.</i>		3.4333	Very Satisfied
3. Staff adjusted their service when I made a reasonable request. <i>Inaangkop ng mga empleyado ang serbisyo kapag may makatwirang kahilingan ako</i>		3.4133	Very Satisfied

4. Staff were patient in answering my questions. <i>Matiyagang sinagot ng mga empleyado ang aking mga tanong.</i>	3.4467	Very Satisfied
5. Staff treated me with genuine care. <i>Tinrato ako ng mga empleyado nang may tunay na malasakit.</i>	3.4600	Very Satisfied
6. I felt that the staff understood my specific needs as a customer. <i>Naramdaman kong nauunawaan ng mga empleyado ang aking partikular na pangangailangan bilang customer.</i>	3.4267	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.4289	Very Satisfied

Table 1.6 presents empathy, where the highest-rated indicator (3.4600) reflects genuine care from staff, and the lowest-rated indicator (3.3933) reflects personal attention. The general assessment of 3.4289 indicates very high satisfaction, implying that customers felt understood, valued, and personally attended to. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) emphasized empathy as individualized care, while Bodescu et al. (2022) linked it to organizational culture. This confirms that heritage food establishments in Laguna maintain strong human-centered service values.

Table 1.7

Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments in Terms of Cleanliness

Indicators	WM	Interpretation
1. The dining area was clean. <i>Malinis ang lugar ng kainan.</i>	3.4133	Very Satisfied
2. The tables and chairs were clean before I was seated. <i>Malinis ang mga mesa at upuan bago ako umupo.</i>	3.3400	Very Satisfied
3. The floors and walls appeared clean throughout my visit. <i>Mukhang malinis ang sahig at mga dingding sa kabuuan ng aking pagbisita.</i>	3.3067	Very Satisfied
4. The restrooms were clean. <i>Malinis ang mga palikuran.</i>	3.2733	Very Satisfied
5. Handwashing facilities were available when needed. <i>May magagamit na pasilidad sa paghuhugas ng kamay kapag kinakailangan.</i>	3.2667	Very Satisfied
6. I felt confident that the establishment followed proper hygiene practices. <i>Nakaramdam ako ng tiwala na ang establisyemento ay sumusunod sa wastong pamantayan ng kalinisan.</i>	3.3200	Very Satisfied
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.3199	Very Satisfied

Table 1.7 presents cleanliness, where the highest-rated indicator (3.4133) reflects a clean dining area, while the lowest ratings (3.2733 and 3.2667) relate to restrooms and handwashing facilities. The general assessment of 3.3199 indicates very high satisfaction, implying acceptable hygiene standards across establishments. Acuin (2023) emphasized heightened post-pandemic sensitivity to cleanliness, while Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) highlighted cleanliness as a core tangible dimension of service quality. McDonagh et al. (2024) further noted that cleanliness reinforces customer trust and sustainability perception.

Table 1.8

Overall Level of Customer Satisfaction Among Heritage Food Establishments

Scale	Domains	WM	Interpretation
Customer Satisfaction	Food Quality	3.49	Very Satisfied
	Service Quality	3.43	Very Satisfied
	Cleanliness	3.32	Very Satisfied
(OVERALL)		3.43	Very Satisfied

Table 1.8 presents the overall level of customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments. Food Quality (3.49), Service Quality (3.43), and Cleanliness (3.32) were all rated Very Satisfied, with an overall mean of 3.43. This implies that respondents were generally very satisfied across all dimensions. Demetillo et al. (2021) emphasized that customer satisfaction is multidimensional, while Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) described it as a holistic service experience where all dimensions interact. Acuin (2023) noted that food quality remains the strongest driver in heritage food contexts, while McDonagh et al. (2024) highlighted cleanliness as an area needing continuous improvement. Overall, the findings affirm that Laguna's heritage food establishments maintain strong service performance, cultural authenticity, and customer satisfaction across all measured dimensions.

3.2 Significant difference in the level of customer satisfaction among heritage food establishments in Laguna in terms of Food Quality; Service Quality; and Cleanliness

The results in Table 2 show that there is no significant difference in the level of customer satisfaction among the heritage food establishments in Laguna across all service quality dimensions, as all p-values are above 0.05. This means customers consistently perceive similar levels of satisfaction in food quality, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and cleanliness across the establishments. In a BANI environment, this suggests that these businesses have developed stable and adaptive service practices that maintain consistent satisfaction despite uncertainties, reflecting their resilience and ability to sustain operations. Although Responsiveness has the highest H-value ($H = 7.572$), showing more variation, it is still not significant, meaning differences in how establishments respond do not greatly affect satisfaction. Tangibles has the lowest H-value ($H = 0.904$), showing very consistent perceptions of physical facilities. These results show that even in a BANI environment, the establishments maintain operational consistency and service reliability, supporting long-term sustainability. Overall, the absence of significant differences shows that they preserve their traditional identity while adapting to changing conditions, ensuring continued satisfaction and business viability. These findings align with existing studies. Rajput and Gahfoor (2020) explain that satisfaction is shaped by consistent performance across

SERVQUAL dimensions, leading to similar levels of trust and loyalty. Demetillo et al. (2021) also highlight that consistent service, rather than excellence in one area, drives sustained customer loyalty. Table 2 further confirms that all indicators—Food Quality, Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Cleanliness—have p-values greater than 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (Accept Ho: Not Significant). This includes Food Quality (H = 3.994, p = 0.407), Tangibles (H = 0.904, p = 0.924), Reliability (H = 1.267, p = 0.867), Responsiveness (H = 7.572, p = 0.109), Assurance (H = 1.892, p = 0.756), Empathy (H = 3.765, p = 0.439), and Cleanliness (H = 4.130, p = 0.389), confirming that there are no significant differences in satisfaction across Pancit Maciang, Universal Bakery, Nila's Puto Biñan, Mang Tony's Pospas, and Aling Taleng.

Table 2
Significant Difference in the Level of Customer Satisfaction among Heritage Food Establishments in Laguna in BANI Environment

Indicator	Pancit Maciang	Universal Bakery	Nila's Puto Binan	Mang Tony's Pospas	Aling Taling	H-value	df	p-value	Interpretation
Food Quality	67.55	79.30	76.65	68.45	85.55	3.994	4	0.407	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Tangibles	71.37	75.38	74.02	81.47	75.27	0.904	4	0.924	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Reliability	74.58	82.02	76.52	73.47	70.92	1.267	4	0.867	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Responsiveness	63.07	90.47	73.58	80.83	69.55	7.572	4	0.109	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Assurance	68.18	81.90	72.95	76.13	78.33	1.892	4	0.756	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Empathy	68.80	86.90	78.32	73.12	70.37	3.765	4	0.439	Accept Ho: Not Significant
Cleanliness	63.42	83.28	72.32	80.08	78.40	4.130	4	0.389	Accept Ho: Not Significant

The quantitative phase of this study measured the level of customer satisfaction among Laguna's heritage food establishments in terms of food quality, service quality, and cleanliness, and determined whether significant differences exist across establishments. While results provided a broad empirical picture of customer perceptions, numbers alone cannot fully capture the deeper experiences behind them. To address this, the study shifts to a qualitative inquiry, exploring the lived experiences of heritage food establishment owners, how they navigate challenges, and how they sustain their business within a BANI environment. The following section presents the thematic analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with five owners.

3.3 Description of Laguna's Heritage Food Establishments and the role of the owner

Table 3.1. Legacy through Generations

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Nag-start nung ang mother ko nagkasakit nung 2009, I decided na mag stay dito sa Pagsanjan... Ako na ang owner at nag-ma-manage ngayon...	Taking ownership of an unbranded inherited business
Owner 2	...dalawa kami ang nag-ma-manage ngayon, shifting kami every three days.	Shared rotating stewardship among family members
Owner 3	Nag-start siya sa aking late grandmother na si way back 1920 or 1930 na hobby lang siya noonang pamangkin niya ng natuloy ng business. Then ako na yung parang huling nag-ma-manage ng business, almost 20 years na.	Gradual generational transfer from hobby to business
Owner 4	...may-ari is yung great grandparents ko. It started from the 1950 na naging meeting place sa bayan ang pancitan. Ngayon ang role ko naman diyan is dun sa management na lang ng tao, pag-sche-scheduling, hiring, tapos yung mga logistics more on operations pero behind the scenes.	Taking ownership of an unbranded inherited business
Owner 5	...nag-start ito nung late 50s sa grandparents from a different bakery name. My father from Manila, siya nag-develop ng products na rich in egg, ang specialty lines namin: role is in marketing and ingredients purchasing.	Gradual generational transfer from hobby to business

The responses of the five heritage food establishment owners in Table 3.1 form the super-ordinate theme of **Legacy Through Generations**, showing a pattern of inherited stewardship where businesses are passed down through familial necessity, cultural obligation, and personal initiative rather than formal plans. The sub-ordinate themes of "taking ownership of an unbranded inherited business" and "gradual generational transfer from hobby to business" show that heritage enterprises in Laguna developed organically. These are reflected in lived transitions of ownership, where responsibility is assumed and slowly shaped into full business management. Owners 1 and 4 represent the first sub-theme, inheriting informal ventures like a halo-halo business and an ancestral pancit house, then giving them identity and structure. This aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), where existing cultural and relational assets are activated (Otoo, 2024), and with the idea of strategic resilience, where informal traditions become formal enterprises (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003). Owners 3 and 5 reflect the second sub-theme, where small or hobby-based activities—like sharing puto or starting a bakery—gradually became full businesses through generations. This mirrors findings from Ossowska et al. (2024), showing that emotional attachment and knowledge transfer sustain heritage enterprises even without formal training. Overall, these responses show that heritage food businesses in Laguna are driven by legacy rather than profit. The owners did not simply choose the business—the business was passed to them, shaping a strong sense of responsibility that supports resilience and continuity.

Table 3.2: Vulnerability to Environmental Shifts

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Sa ngayon, medyo hindi masyadong maganda dahil dumarating ang mga krisis pero before pandemic, maganda, maganda ang flow ng customers...	External disruptions affecting customer flow
Owner 2	...kaso siyempre sa ngayon dami nang lumalabas na makakainan dami nang burger, milk tea. Medyo konti na customer at dumami na ang kompetisyon...	
Owner 3	... Consistent lang sa product hindi kami nag bago ang lasa since noon. Sa ngayon hindi kami peak season, pero araw-araw namin na-me-maintain yung luto, so sapat lang sa pangangailangan. Peak kami every October hanggang December...	Stable but seasonal demand with consistent product quality
Owner 4	Before 70s, 80s, 90s, malakas then 2000 na madami nang competitor na nag offer ng iba't ibang pancit... After nung pandemic, medyo gumanda. Gumanda ang sales kasi naging active kami sa Facebook page, thankful din kami sa mga vloggers.	Resilient brand recognition amid market saturation
Owner 5	Actually, still doing good kasi kilala na yung products namin. Bagaman may time talaga na may peak at off-peak, lalo na 'pag panahon ng fruits, humihina ang bakery pero ngayon, angat ulit ang bakery kahit madami nag open na bakeries na malapit sa amin.	

The responses in Table 3.2 center on the superordinate theme of **Vulnerability to Environmental Shifts**, showing that heritage food establishments in Laguna are strong in identity but fragile in operations. The three subordinate themes – external disruptions affecting customer flow, stable but seasonal demand with consistent product quality, and resilient brand recognition amid market saturation – highlight how these businesses experience and respond to change in a BANI environment. Owners 1 and 2 reflect the brittle dimension of the BANI framework introduced by Jamal Cascio (2020), where reliance on specific customers makes them vulnerable to shocks like rising fuel prices and modern competition. The anxiety they express is both financial and cultural, aligning with Peter Senge (2021), who notes that traditional businesses fear cultural loss alongside economic pressure. Owner 3 shows stable but seasonal demand, where consistency in product quality across generations becomes a form of resilience. This reflects reliability as a strength, where customers return because of trust and familiarity (Chukwurah et al., 2025). Owners 4 and 5 show resilient brand recognition built over time. Despite strong competition, they remain relevant through brand equity and digital visibility. Owner 4’s use of Facebook and vloggers during the pandemic reflects the nonlinear nature of BANI, where unexpected changes become opportunities, as explained by David Teece (2018). Overall, these responses show that challenges come more from external changes than internal weakness, and that resilience comes from strong cultural identity.

B. The lived experiences of Laguna’s heritage food establishment owners in relation to resilience and sustainability

Table 4.1 Adaptive Innovation Under Constraint

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Sa ngayon, medyo hindi masyadong maganda dahil sa crisis ngayon hindi ko alam kung papaano gagawin ulit. Pero before pandemic, maganda talaga ang flow.	Uncertainty and stalled recovery post-crisis
Owner 2	Noong pandemic, nag-close kami. Tapos nung naging okay na, binigyan kami ng oras, 6 hanggang 5 ng umaga. Medyo mahina, hindi ganun ka-ano kalakas pero nung naging open na ulit, diniretso na namin ulit yung 24 hours...	
Owner 3	Nag-stop yung production namin nung pandemic kasi bawal lumabas. Sabi ko, bakit natin kailangang itigil? Food business 'to. So nakaisip ako na why not free delivery buong Biñan? Pinost ko sa social media biglang lalong nag-boom.	
Owner 4	Nung pandemic, naging positive outlook namin, sabi ko gagamitin natin social media, try natin magkaroon ng facebook page, wala namang mawawala sa atin kung di natin itry. Madaming nag online orders that time, tapos kami deliver dito, deliver doon.	Pivoting to free delivery via social media during lockdown
Owner 5	During the pandemic malakas din kami kasi open naman kami... we didn't close kasi pagkain 'to eh. So open kami, nagluluto kami ng mga products namin dahil essential kami.	Uncertainty and stalled recovery post-crisis

Table 4.1 highlights the lived experiences of heritage food owners during disruption, with the super-ordinate theme of **Adaptive Innovation Under Constraint** showing how they improvised under conditions they did not choose and could not fully control. The two sub-ordinate themes – uncertainty and stalled recovery post-crisis, and pivoting to free delivery via social media during lockdown – show two ways they adapted to the same crisis. Owners 1, 2, and 5 experienced the pandemic as a time of uncertainty, with reduced hours, revenue loss, and unclear recovery. Yet none closed their business. Owner 5’s statement “essential kami” reflects a strong sense of purpose that kept operations going. This aligns with Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which highlights the ability to continue and adapt even in difficult conditions (Abdurrahman et al., 2024). Owners 3 and 4 show a more proactive response. Both

shifted to social media and delivery out of necessity. Owner 3's decision to offer free delivery in Biñan led to a surge in orders, showing the nonlinear effects in a BANI environment, as explained by David Teece (2018). Owner 4's use of a family-managed Facebook page also turned a crisis into a lasting marketing tool. Overall, these experiences show that heritage food owners in Laguna did not just survive the pandemic—they adapted in ways that expanded their reach. Their strength comes not from technology, but from cultural commitment, where the business holds meaning beyond profit.

Table 4.2 Quality-Centric Legacy Preservation

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Legasiya talaga sya ng pamilya, kailangan talagang alagaan ko dahil alam na alam ng mga tao na nag-simula pa kay lola... kailangan monitoring talaga, mula sa ingredients hanggag sa pamamalakad sa tao.	Family legacy as motivation for quality monitoring
Owner 2	Nagtiyaga lang kami. Pinaglaban namin na ituloy. Laban lang kahit medyo humihina, basta tuloy-tuloy lang ang pagtitinda.	Perseverance and commitment to continue despite hardship
Owner 3	Ramdam na ramdam ko yung mahal ng supplies ngayon—gas, asukal, bigas. Mahirap pero kinakaya. Ayaw ko muna mag-price increase baka hindi kami mabilhan ng customers.	Absorbing rising input costs to maintain customer loyalty
Owner 4	Legacy ng lola ko, 'yun lang 'yun. Hindi namin siya itinigil kahit na nalulugi tsaka bahay namin 'to, wala kaming inuupahan, so pagpatuloy lang namin ang negosyo.	Family legacy as motivation for quality monitoring
Owner 5	Ang pinoprotektahan namin yung legacy na iniwan ng father ko. Pinoprotektahan namin yung quality ng products, yung taste. Generous kami pagdating sa ingredients, egg-based kami lahat kaya masarap."	

The responses in Table 4.2 center on the super-ordinate theme of **Quality-Centric Legacy Preservation**, showing the internal logic that keeps heritage food businesses running through hardship. Across all five participants, the decision to continue operating — even at financial loss, rising costs, or uncertain demand — is driven not by profit, but by a strong sense of family legacy and community expectation. Owners 1, 4, and 5 clearly express this through their focus on quality and continuity. Owner 1's careful monitoring of ingredients reflects intergenerational knowledge put into practice, ensuring the product's distinctiveness (Ossowska et al., 2024). Owner 4's statement that the business continued "kahit na nalulugi" shows how place, memory, and identity act as strong foundations beyond profit (Otoo, 2024). Owner 2 highlights resilience through perseverance, with "laban lang" showing a deep emotional commitment to continue despite challenges, aligning with ideas on psychological resilience in small businesses during crises by Peter Senge (2021). Owner 3 shows a different approach by absorbing rising costs instead of increasing prices, prioritizing customer loyalty and trust, consistent with sustainability principles (Jones et al., 2025). Overall, these responses show that preserving quality is not just inherited—it is a daily commitment, forming the core of resilience in heritage food businesses.

C. Owners of Laguna's heritage food establishments respond to operational, market, and environmental challenges in order to sustain their businesses

Table 5.1. Data-Driven Operations and Integrated Brand Visibility

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Monitoring talaga namin yung sahog ng halo-halo dahil sya ang bestseller namin, ako mismo ang gumagawa at naghahanap ng local suppliers mino-monitor ko talaga 'yan. May mga pinupuntahan ako madaming lugar para ma-supply-an ako.	Daily sales analysis to maintain supply and production
Owner 2	Naglagay kami ng mga tarpaulin sa labas para malaman ng tao na open pa kami at tsaka sa Facebook ...	Brand awareness through online, onsite and physical store
Owner 3	Kinalat ko siya sa mga matataong lugar nag-add kami ng mga stores at reseller. Dati 3 branches lang kami pero ngayon meron na kami sa Southwood, Santa Rosa, pati sa expressway sa Total at Shell para aware ang mga customers...	
Owner 4	Naging positive outlook lang kami nung pandemic. Ginamit namin yung Facebook although may hesitations nung una, sinabi ko kami na ng asawa ko ang bahala sa inquiries at orders. Tulong-tulong kaming pamilya	
Owner 5	Every day, tinitingnan namin yung flow, if based sa report mahina magbabawas kami ng production, gabi pa lang ina-analyze na ang report para the next day 'yun ang gagawin. Adjust production based sa sales trend.	Daily sales analysis to maintain supply and production

The responses of the five heritage food establishment owners show a pattern of practical, experience-driven strategies rooted in data awareness and visibility-building. The super-ordinate theme — **Data-Driven Operations and Integrated Brand Visibility** — explains why these strategies emerge and why they work in a BANI environment. Owners 1 and 5 show consistent daily sales monitoring and supply management. Owner 1 personally sources local ingredients, while Owner 5 reviews sales reports each evening to plan the next day. This reflects dynamic capability — the ability to adjust based on changing conditions (Abdurrahman et al., 2024). These owners do not rely only on intuition; they use monitoring as a form of operational resilience to reduce waste and maintain consistency. Owners 2, 3, and 4 focus on multi-channel brand awareness using tarpaulins, Facebook pages, branch expansion, and resellers. This shows that heritage businesses actively maintain visibility rather than waiting for customers. Owner 3's expansion to expressway stops and Owner 4's use of a family-managed Facebook page show how digital tools are used without

losing traditional identity, aligning with the Resource-Based View (Otoo, 2024). Overall, these strategies reflect a dual goal: protect the core product while expanding reach. Their actions are not just business decisions but also ways of preserving cultural continuity.

Research Question C.2: Internal or external conditions that influences the decision and implementation

Table 5.2 Adaptive Heritage Management and Credibility Building

Participant	Word-by-Word Response	Sub-ordinate
Owner 1	Yung trending ngayon iba na, kailangan mo ring mag-adjust. Inalagaan ko yung legacy ng Negosyo naming kasi alam ng mga tao na mula pa kay lola ito recipe. Ginamit ko na rin ang social media at mga vlogger.	Adaptive Heritage Preservation
Owner 2	..nag-uusap kami kung paano gawin namin. Siya yung anak kayasiya yung nasusunod sa desisyon sa negosyo.	Family-based centralized decision-making
Owner 3	Nanghihingi rin ako ng mga suggestion sa kanila (employees). Ano ba yung magandang paraan para ma-improve pa natin? Like dati gatong ang gamit namin tapos nahihirapan kami maghanap ng gatong kaya naisipan na try gumamit ng gasul. Nag add din kami ng iba't ibang flavors based sa trend at suggestion ng customers like Buko pandan, Chocolate, Ube although original pa rin ang hinahanap ng tao.	Adaptive Heritage Preservation
Owner 4	Nakatulong yung social media, lalo na yung TikTok. Thankful din kami sa mga vloggers kasi mas lalong nakikilala. Sabi ko sa mga tao yung pakikitungo sa customer, 'wag niyo i-dedma kahit masungit sila.	
Owner 5	Yung quality at lasa ng products di namin binago. Sa ibang bakery tinitipid ang ingredients, pero kami egg-based kami kaya masarap. We are generous with ingredients, yun ang binabalikan ng tao.	

The responses in Table 5.2 across all five participants center on the super-ordinate theme of **Adaptive Heritage Management and Credibility Building**, showing that decision-making is shaped not only by market forces but by cultural responsibility and relational trust. Four owners – Owners 1, 3, 4, and 5 – show adaptive heritage preservation, where they update operations and marketing while keeping the core product intact. Owner 3 clearly demonstrates this by shifting from wood fuel to LPG and adding new flavors based on feedback, while maintaining the original product that customers return for. This reflects Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Abdurrahman et al., 2024), where businesses adapt without losing identity. Owner 1’s use of social media and food vloggers strengthens legacy through modern tools, while Owner 4’s rule of never ignoring customers shows that customer care is treated as a value, not just a process. This aligns with service quality studies emphasizing responsiveness and empathy in building loyalty (Demetillo et al., 2021). Owner 2, on the other hand, follows family-based centralized decision-making, where control remains within the family. This provides stability but may limit flexibility. However, it helps preserve authenticity and trust, which are central to the business. Overall, these responses show that decisions in heritage food businesses are not just economic—they are strongly shaped by identity, continuity, and trust.

D. Input for Proposed Framework / Intervention / Program

Table 6.1 Institutional Support for Heritage Sustainability

(please insert the table of TABLE 6.1)

The responses in Table 6.1 reflect a collective aspiration for institutional recognition and structured support, unified under the super-ordinate theme of **Institutional Support for Heritage Sustainability**. The two sub-ordinate themes – equitable institutional support and LGU recognition and awards as legitimacy affirmation – reveal that heritage food owners see external partnerships not merely as economic assistance, but as formal validation of their cultural contribution.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Laguna’s heritage food establishments deliver a high and consistent level of customer satisfaction across all measured dimensions. The strong ratings in food quality and reliability confirm that these businesses have successfully maintained the authenticity, consistency, and cultural integrity of their products over generations. This is not the result of modern quality management systems – it is the result of owners who treat quality as a personal and familial obligation. In practice, heritage food establishments achieve high satisfaction through legacy-driven values rather than formal systems. However, this also highlights the need to gradually complement personal stewardship with basic systems to ensure long-term continuity beyond individual ownership.
2. The absence of significant differences in customer satisfaction across the five establishments, despite differences in product type, size, and location, indicates that a shared set of values – legacy, authenticity, and personal accountability – produces equivalent customer outcomes. This suggests that heritage and culture function as a form of organizational quality standard that transcends individual business characteristics. Even with different structures, these establishments maintain similar satisfaction levels by consistently upholding core values of authenticity and responsibility.

3. Operating in a BANI environment presents genuine and ongoing threats to sustainability. Brittleness appears in aging infrastructure and knowledge concentration, anxiety in competition and cultural erosion, nonlinearity in unpredictable disruptions like pandemics, and incomprehensibility in navigating policy and market changes. These are not abstract ideas – they reflect the daily reality of heritage food businesses in Laguna. This strengthens the BANI framework by showing that it describes real operational conditions that shape survival, not just theoretical concepts.
4. Resilience in these establishments is real but fragile. It is sustained by personal conviction and cultural identity rather than formal systems or succession plans. This creates vulnerability, especially when ownership transitions occur. Strengthening basic systems and knowledge transfer mechanisms would improve long-term sustainability. This shows that resilience is often identity-based, but without structure, it remains highly dependent on individuals.
5. The relationship-driven service culture, especially empathy, is a strong and defensible competitive advantage. Customers feel cared for, and owners genuinely express it. This cannot be easily replicated because it is rooted in personal values and family relationships, making emotional authenticity a unique strength of heritage food enterprises.
6. Physical and infrastructure limitations, particularly in tangibles and cleanliness, are not due to lack of effort but to ancestral or aging structures and limited capital. These gaps reflect structural constraints rather than managerial behavior, meaning improvements require external support rather than changes in owner practices.

4.2 Recommendations

Drawing from the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, and anchored on the scope and significance of the research, the following recommendations are offered to the key stakeholders who stand to benefit most from action:

1. Academics and Future Researchers – Future researchers are encouraged to build on this study by examining the succession and knowledge transfer dynamics of heritage food establishments in greater depth. The findings suggest that the transition from one generation to the next is the most critical and underexplored risk factor for these businesses. A longitudinal study tracking the same establishments over a five- to ten-year period would yield valuable insights into how – and whether – legacy knowledge survives generational change. Researchers may also consider expanding the geographic scope of this study to include other provinces with established culinary heritage, such as Pampanga, Batangas, or Ilocos Norte, to determine whether the patterns identified in Laguna are specific to the region or representative of a broader national phenomenon. A comparative study across provinces would strengthen the generalizability of the findings and contribute to a richer national framework for heritage food sustainability. The BANI framework, applied here to the food industry context, also merits further theoretical development. Future studies could test the framework's dimensions as quantifiable constructs – measuring, for example, the degree of brittleness or anxiety experienced by heritage food owners – to produce a more structured and replicable model for resilience assessment in the cultural enterprise sector.
2. Consumers – Consumers who visit heritage food establishments in Laguna are encouraged to engage more intentionally with the cultural experience these businesses offer – not simply as a dining transaction, but as an act of cultural support. Asking about the story behind a dish, leaving honest feedback, sharing their experience on social media, and returning regularly are small individual actions that collectively contribute to the sustainability of these establishments. Consumers are also encouraged to be patient with the physical limitations of some establishments. The lower scores in tangibles and cleanliness reflect structural constraints, not a lack of care. Understanding that these businesses operate in ancestral spaces – and that this is precisely part of their heritage – helps set appropriate expectations and allows customers to appreciate the full value of what is being preserved.
3. Cultural Supporters and Advocates – Cultural organizations, food bloggers, and heritage advocates play an increasingly important role in the sustainability of these establishments. The qualitative findings revealed that digital exposure through social media and food vloggers has had a measurable and positive impact on customer traffic and brand recognition. Cultural advocates are encouraged to direct their platforms intentionally toward lesser-known heritage establishments – not only the already-famous ones – to widen the reach of support and prevent the concentration of visibility among a small number of businesses. Advocacy organizations may also consider supporting the documentation and publication of Laguna's culinary heritage through cookbooks, oral history projects, or digital archives. These efforts would complement the operational recommendations for owners and contribute to a public record of traditional food practices that extends beyond the lifespan of any single establishment.
4. Heritage Food Establishment Owners – Owners are encouraged to begin documenting their recipes, sourcing practices, and preparation methods in a structured and accessible format. While oral and hands-on transmission of culinary knowledge has sustained these businesses across generations, the risk of knowledge loss – through illness, aging, or the absence of willing successors – is real. A written or recorded archive of core practices would not compromise authenticity; it would protect it. Owners should also consider developing a simple daily operational routine that captures sales data, ingredient inventory, and customer feedback in a consistent format. Several owners are already doing this informally – formalizing the habit would make it transferable to the next generation or to trusted employees, reducing dependence on a single person for operational continuity. On service quality, owners are encouraged to invest time in briefing their staff on the heritage story behind their products. Customers value this – the assurance score showed a gap specifically in staff ability to explain the heritage background of dishes. Teaching staff two to three key talking points about the establishment's history and signature products would strengthen customer engagement at no significant cost. Finally, owners should explore forming or joining a heritage food business association at the local or provincial level. As several participants expressed, having a collective voice would allow them to advocate more effectively for their needs – from LGU support to fair inclusion in tourism promotions – and to learn from each other's experiences in navigating the BANI environment.
5. Local Government Units (LGUs) – LGUs are encouraged to develop an inclusive and structured heritage food support program that reaches all qualifying establishments, not only those with existing visibility or political connections. The findings show that owners feel the distribution of institutional support is uneven, and that smaller or less-known establishments are often left out of tourism promotions and business development programs. A priority area for LGU investment is physical facility improvement. The lowest satisfaction scores in this study were in restrooms and handwashing facilities – areas that are directly tied to infrastructure, not to the owners' attitudes or effort. A grant or

subsidy program targeted specifically at facility upgrades in heritage food establishments operating in ancestral or aging structures would directly address the weakest dimension of customer satisfaction identified in this research. LGUs should also consider creating a permanent, fixed-location heritage food showcase – similar to a public market dedicated to traditional Laguna products – where these establishments can sell and promote their products year-round, not only during festivals or seasonal events. This would provide a stable sales channel, increase visibility, and position Laguna's culinary heritage as a sustainable tourism asset rather than a periodic attraction. Staff training and development programs, delivered through the LGU or in partnership with academic institutions, would address the informal training gap identified in the qualitative findings. Basic training in food safety, customer service, and cultural storytelling – tailored to the context of heritage food businesses – would build capacity without imposing corporate frameworks that are inconsistent with the identity of these establishments.

6. Provincial Government of Laguna - Institutionalize a province-wide heritage food mapping cycle. One of the most pressing realizations from this study is that Laguna's heritage food knowledge is quietly slipping away, and every recipe that never gets written down. To address this, the Provincial Government, through the Provincial Tourism, Culture, and Arts Office, in partnership with the NCCA and the NHCP, should conduct and institutionalize a heritage food mapping cycle across all cities and municipalities of Laguna every two to three years. A regular cycle, rather than a one-time inventory, allows the province to build a living record of its dishes, techniques, and the establishments that carry them, and to track how that landscape shifts over time. Anchored in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Republic Act No. 10066, this initiative deserves a permanent line item in the provincial budget. Heritage mapping cannot survive as a project; it has to become a habit. Maximize Laguna's festivals as platforms for heritage food promotion. Laguna already has the celebrations; what is missing is a deliberate strategy to make heritage food as one of the highlights rather than a side attraction. The Provincial Government should fully leverage existing festivals, most notably the Anilag Festival held every March, as primary platforms for promoting the province's heritage food. Beyond the standard food booths and provincial booths, Anilag and similar municipal celebrations such as the Sampaguita Festival, the Puto-Latik Festival, and various town fiestas across Laguna should feature dedicated heritage food pavilions, live cooking demonstrations led by tradition-bearers, storytelling sessions about the origins of signature dishes, and cross-promotional packages that direct festival-goers toward participating heritage establishments long after the festival ends. This transforms a short tourism spike into year-round patronage and ensures that the province's many local celebrations consistently surface heritage cuisine alongside their cultural and agricultural themes. Pass a province-wide memorandum on the promotion of heritage food. To sustain a heritage food agenda across 30 LGUs and changing political administrations, the province needs a binding instrument. A Sangguniang Panlalawigan ordinance should be enacted to mandate the promotion of Laguna's heritage food across all LGUs, tourism offices, and DepEd-affiliated cultural programs. This measure would standardize the use of a unified heritage food brand identity consistent with the proposed Luto ng Laguna program under the HFRSF, which requires every LGU to allocate space for heritage food in its tourism collaterals, and signal to private partners that Laguna's food heritage is a recognized provincial priority.

Funding: This research received no external funding

Conflicts of Interest: "The authors declare no conflict of interest."

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