

Participatory Service Innovation for Strengthening Family Dining Experience at Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman

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Abstract. Culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) face increasing competition that requires them to strengthen not only product quality but also customer experience and service innovation. This community service activity aimed to strengthen the family dining experience at Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman through participatory service innovation using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The activity involved participatory identification of customer preferences, service conditions, unmet needs, and improvement priorities through direct observation and semi-structured interviews with 17 dine-in customers. The findings revealed that the partner had strong service and product assets, particularly the distinctive “Bumbu Bakar Medok” identity, Bebek Bakar as a signature menu, spacious lesehan areas, an anjungan, and a mini playground. However, several service gaps were identified, including limited beverage variation, insufficient children-oriented menu options, air circulation problems, limited waiting facilities, playground limitations, cleanliness concerns, and parking constraints during peak hours. Through the participatory process, these findings were translated into service innovation priorities, including the development of children-oriented meal packages, beverage diversification, facility improvement, enhanced cleanliness management, parking and waiting-area management, and digital promotion emphasizing the family dining experience. The activity strengthened the partner’s understanding of customer needs and provided a practical framework for customer-oriented service improvement without changing the partner’s core culinary identity. The activity demonstrates that participatory service innovation can help culinary MSMEs transform customer insights into practical strategies for strengthening family dining experiences and sustainable competitiveness.

Keywords: Participatory Action Research; Service Innovation; Culinary MSME; Customer Experience; Family Dining.

1. Introduction

Customer experience has become an increasingly important basis for service improvement in the culinary sector because customers evaluate restaurants not only from the quality of food but also from the totality of interactions, physical environments, convenience, and social experiences encountered throughout the dining process (Barbu et

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al., 2021; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Danurdara & Masatif, 2025). Lemon & Verhoef (2016) explain that customer experience develops across multiple touchpoints and requires organizations to integrate different aspects of service delivery to create positive and meaningful experiences. In the restaurant context, this perspective is particularly relevant because dining is simultaneously a consumption, social, and experiential activity. Recent evidence confirms that restaurant customer experience is shaped by interconnected dimensions, including food, atmosphere, service, price and value, as well as customer-related factors Bonfanti et al. (2025). Therefore, culinary MSMEs ideally need to move beyond a product-centered orientation toward a customer-centered service model in which customer needs become an important basis for continuous service innovation.

The importance of customer experience is even more pronounced in family dining, where the dining experience involves multiple individuals with different expectations and needs. Family customers may evaluate restaurants according to food preferences, comfort, accessibility, children's needs, cleanliness, facilities, service responsiveness, and opportunities for social interaction. Labrecque & Ricard (2001), for example, demonstrated that children can influence family restaurant decision-making, indicating that restaurants targeting families cannot treat children merely as accompanying consumers. Similarly, research on hospitality consumption among parents and children shows that service interactions adapted to children's needs can generate positive emotions and enhance the experience of both children and accompanying adults. In the Indonesian context, Rathnasiri et al. (2025) also emphasize the importance of service-related attributes in shaping customer satisfaction in family dining establishments. These findings indicate that strengthening family dining experiences requires attention to the entire service environment rather than relying exclusively on menu quality.

This condition is relevant to Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman in Bandar Lampung, a culinary MSME that has developed a distinctive identity through its “Bumbu Bakar Medok” seasoning and signature dishes such as Bebek Bakar, Ayam Bakar, and Bebek Goreng. The partner also possesses several physical and experiential assets that support family and group dining, including spacious lesehan areas, an anjungan, and a mini playground. The activity conducted with the partner identified that customers commonly visited in groups consisting of family members, friends, and coworkers, while the dominant customer segment was 24–35 years old. Customer feedback further indicated strong appreciation for taste, seasoning, tenderness, portion size, price, facilities, and the overall dining environment. Nevertheless, the participatory identification process also revealed several service gaps, including limited beverage variation, limited children-oriented menu choices, limited sambal variation, air circulation in the lesehan area, waiting facilities, playground conditions, parking arrangements, and cleanliness. These conditions suggest that the partner possesses substantial experiential assets but still requires a more systematic process for translating customer needs into service improvement priorities.

The existing literature provides substantial evidence concerning restaurant customer experience, service quality, customer satisfaction, and innovation, but an important gap remains in how these insights are translated into participatory community-service interventions for culinary MSMEs. Bonfanti et al. (2025), based on a systematic review of 135 studies, found that restaurant customer experience research has predominantly examined the customer perspective, while substantially fewer studies have incorporated the perspectives of restaurant managers and staff in designing customer experience.



Similarly, studies of restaurant innovation have demonstrated relationships between menu innovation, service innovation, customer experience, and satisfaction, but much of the literature remains oriented toward evaluating restaurant performance rather than facilitating collaborative problem identification and action with MSME partners. Research on restaurant innovation also indicates that menu, service, and customer-experience innovations are important dimensions of perceived innovativeness and satisfaction (Lee et al., 2016, 2022; Makona et al., 2023). Thus, there is a need for community-service approaches that position customers and MSME partners not simply as research subjects but as participants in identifying problems, determining priorities, and developing feasible improvements.

The novelty of this community-service activity lies in integrating Participatory Action Research (PAR) with customer-experience-oriented service innovation to strengthen the family dining experience of a culinary MSME (Feekery, 2024; Mallory, 2024). Rather than treating customer feedback as an endpoint of evaluation, the approach positions customer insight as a resource for collaborative diagnosis and service improvement. This orientation is consistent with the principles of co-creation proposed by Meynhardt et al. (2016), who argue that value increasingly emerges through interaction between firms and empowered consumers, as well as Chastin et al. (2025), who emphasize dialogue and interaction between customers and service providers in value co-creation. Within PAR, participation is not limited to data collection but involves collaborative cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis et al., 2014). Accordingly, the present activity seeks to connect customer experience analysis with a participatory process through which the partner can identify service gaps, prioritize feasible interventions, and strengthen its capacity to continuously improve the family dining experience.

The significance of this activity is both practical and developmental. For the partner, strengthening family dining experience can help transform existing business assets such as the “Bumbu Bakar Medok” identity, signature menus, spacious dining areas, and family-oriented facilities into a more coherent service proposition. The identified improvement priorities, including children-oriented meal packages, beverage diversification, facility enhancement, cleanliness management, waiting and parking arrangements, and family-oriented digital communication, provide practical directions that can be adapted to the partner's resources and operational conditions. More importantly, the activity emphasizes that innovation in culinary MSMEs does not necessarily require sophisticated technology or major capital investment. Innovation can also emerge through incremental improvements in service processes, facilities, menu offerings, communication, and the management of customer touchpoints. This orientation is consistent with community-service initiatives that have used PAR to improve the customer experience of food and beverage MSMEs through participatory assessment and intervention (Andriana, 2025; Gusnardi et al., 2025; Sudari et al., 2019).

Based on this context, this community-service activity aims to strengthen the family dining experience at Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman through participatory service innovation using a Participatory Action Research approach. Specifically, the activity seeks to (1) identify customer preferences and existing service assets, (2) collaboratively identify service gaps and unmet needs affecting family dining experiences, (3) determine priority areas for service improvement based on customer and partner perspectives, and (4) develop practical service innovation strategies that are compatible with the partner's existing culinary identity and operational capacity. Through this approach, the activity is



expected to contribute not only to immediate service improvement but also to the partner's capacity to use customer insight as a continuous resource for participatory decision-making, service innovation, and sustainable competitiveness.

2. Methods

This community-service activity employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to identify customer needs and formulate participatory service innovations for strengthening the family dining experience at Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman, Bandar Lampung. PAR was selected because it emphasizes the active involvement of community or partner stakeholders in identifying problems, understanding existing conditions, determining priorities, and developing contextually appropriate solutions (Feekery, 2024; Mallory, 2024). In this activity, the partner was positioned not merely as an object of observation but as a collaborative stakeholder in understanding customer experience and identifying feasible areas for service improvement. The activity was conducted on 14 May 2026, from 12:15 p.m. to 3:50 p.m., during the lunch period, allowing the service conditions and customer interactions to be observed during a relatively active dining period.

The activity involved the management of Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman and 17 dine-in customers who had experienced the complete dining process at the partner's restaurant. The customers were selected using a combination of purposive sampling and intercept sampling. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants had direct experience with the partner's dine-in services, while intercept sampling enabled the community-service team to engage customers who were present at the restaurant during the activity. The participants represented customers from several areas of Bandar Lampung, including Teluk Betung, Enggal, Kedaton, and Way Halim, with a dominant age range of 24–35 years. Particular attention was given to customers visiting in groups, including families, friends, and coworkers, because the activity focused on understanding the conditions that contribute to a positive family and group dining experience.

The PAR process began with participatory diagnosis, conducted through direct observation and semi-structured interviews with customers. Observation focused on the dining environment, service processes, facilities, menu offerings, customer interactions, and conditions that potentially influenced the dining experience. The interviews explored customer preferences, reasons for visiting, preferred menus, perceptions of food quality and value, facility satisfaction, service convenience, and suggestions for improvement. The participatory diagnosis also considered the partner's existing business assets, including the “Bumbu Bakar Medok” culinary identity, signature menu items, spacious lesehan areas, an anjungan, and a mini playground. These activities generated an initial map of customer needs, existing service strengths, and service gaps that could become priorities for subsequent improvement.

The collected information was analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview responses and observational findings were organized into recurring themes related to food and menu preferences, service quality, facilities, family-oriented needs, convenience, and customer expectations. The findings were then interpreted comparatively to identify areas where existing business assets were aligned with customer expectations and areas where improvements were required. Particular attention was given to recurring concerns concerning beverage variety, children-oriented menu options, sambal variation, air circulation in the lesehan area, waiting facilities, playground conditions, parking



arrangements, and cleanliness. The participatory analysis enabled these issues to be grouped according to their relevance to the family dining experience and their feasibility for improvement within the partner's existing operational context.

The final stage involved participatory priority setting and formulation of service innovation recommendations based on the identified customer needs and service gaps. The proposed improvement areas included children-oriented meal packages, beverage diversification, improvement of dining facilities and air circulation, waiting-area and parking management, playground enhancement, strengthened cleanliness practices, and digital promotion emphasizing the partner's family dining positioning and “Bumbu Bakar Medok” identity. Because the documented activity primarily focused on participatory diagnosis, customer insight identification, and formulation of improvement priorities, the present study does not claim measurable post-intervention financial outcomes or direct increases in sales. Instead, the methodological contribution lies in providing the partner with a customer-oriented and participatory framework for translating customer insights into feasible service innovation priorities that can subsequently be implemented and evaluated.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Participatory Identification of Customer Needs and Existing Business Assets

The participatory diagnosis showed that Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman has substantial assets that can support its positioning as a family-oriented culinary MSME. The restaurant has a distinctive culinary identity through its “Bumbu Bakar Medok” concept, with Bebek Bakar, Ayam Bakar, and Bebek Goreng emerging as the main preferred menu items. The restaurant also offers spacious lesehan areas, an anjungan, and a mini playground, which create an environment that accommodates family and group dining. In addition to dine-in services, the partner is connected to GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood, providing opportunities to reach customers through digital channels.

Customer feedback indicated that the dining experience was influenced by a combination of product and non-product attributes. Product-related considerations included taste, seasoning, meat tenderness, portion size, and price suitability. Customers generally perceived the food portions as satisfying and the prices as appropriate. The distinctive “Bumbu Bakar Medok” was also considered an important element differentiating the partner from restaurants offering similar chicken and duck dishes. These findings demonstrate that the partner already possesses a strong core product proposition that should be maintained rather than replaced.

At the same time, the participatory process showed that customers perceived the restaurant as more than a place to consume food. Many visits involved families, friends, or coworkers, indicating that the restaurant also functioned as a social dining space. Family-oriented facilities, spacious seating, comfort, and opportunities for social interaction therefore contributed to the overall customer experience. This finding supports the consumer behavior perspective of Peter & Olson (2009), which explains that consumption decisions are shaped by both cognitive and affective processes. Customers cognitively evaluate attributes such as taste, price, portion, and product quality, while affective responses emerge from comfort, atmosphere, enjoyment, and social interaction.

The identification process further revealed several unmet needs. Customers expected greater beverage variety, children-oriented menu alternatives, non-spicy menu choices, better air circulation, additional waiting seats, playground improvements, better



cleanliness, and improved parking management. These findings indicate that the partner's principal challenge is not the absence of a strong culinary identity but the need to strengthen the supporting elements surrounding the core product. In this sense, customer experience is produced through the interaction between food, service, physical environment, and social context. This finding is consistent with Cankül et al. (2024), who found that gastronomic experience can influence restaurant image, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty.

The customer perspective also revealed the importance of social influence. Recommendations from family members, friends, and coworkers contributed to customers' decisions to visit the restaurant. This is consistent with Solomon (2020), who emphasizes that consumer behavior is influenced by social groups and interpersonal interactions. The finding is also relevant to Liu (2023), who demonstrated that restaurant reviews and service-related sentiments can provide valuable information for understanding customer satisfaction and revisit intention. Thus, the participatory diagnosis suggests that the partner's existing social dining character can become an important resource for strengthening its family dining positioning.

3.2. Participatory Prioritization of Service Innovation for Family Dining

The identified customer needs were subsequently organized into practical service-improvement priorities. Rather than recommending fundamental changes to the partner's culinary identity, the improvement strategy focused on strengthening the supporting elements of the dining experience. This approach recognizes that the partner already has a strong product asset through its signature grilled duck and chicken products and "Bumbu Bakar Medok" identity. The priority is therefore to create greater consistency between the core product, physical environment, supporting facilities, and customer communication.

The first priority concerns menu and beverage innovation. Customers expressed the need for additional beverage variations and menu alternatives suitable for children and customers who prefer non-spicy food. The recommended direction includes the development of kids meal packages, smaller portions, non-spicy chicken-based alternatives, and simple complementary foods such as sausage and fries. Beverage innovation can include more varied traditional and contemporary beverages. These innovations can broaden the restaurant's appeal without disrupting its existing culinary identity. From a perceived-value perspective, the combination of food quality, portion, price, and complementary offerings can increase the functional and emotional value perceived by customers (Croitoru et al., 2024).

The second priority involves improving the physical dining environment. The existing lesehan areas, anjungan, and playground constitute important family-dining assets, but customer feedback indicates that their effectiveness can be improved. Better air circulation, additional waiting seats, playground enhancement, cleanliness management, and more systematic parking arrangements were identified as areas requiring attention. These improvements are relatively incremental and can be undertaken according to the partner's operational capacity. The approach therefore reflects a form of service innovation that does not necessarily depend on major capital investment but instead emphasizes improvements to customer touchpoints and service processes.

The third priority is strengthening family-oriented communication and digital promotion. Because customers are influenced by social recommendations and digital



exposure, the partner can communicate its family-friendly facilities more explicitly through Instagram, TikTok, and other digital channels. Promotional content can emphasize the combination of “Bumbu Bakar Medok,” signature menus, spacious family seating, the playground, and the overall group dining experience. Customer testimonials and family-oriented visual content can also reinforce the positioning. This strategy is consistent with the finding that restaurant customers evaluate not only food but also the broader experience surrounding consumption. Cankül et al. (2024) similarly demonstrate the relationship between gastronomic experience, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty.

The prioritization process demonstrates the practical value of a participatory approach. Customer feedback was not treated merely as descriptive information but was translated into a set of improvement areas that can guide managerial decision-making. In the context of PAR, such participatory diagnosis provides an important foundation for subsequent planning and action because the priorities emerge from actual customer experiences and the partner's existing business context. However, because the documented activity primarily covered diagnosis and formulation of improvement priorities, the present activity does not claim that all recommended interventions had already been implemented.

3.3. Community-Service Impact and Strategic Direction for the Partner MSME

The community-service activity produced several practical outputs for Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman. First, the partner gained a clearer understanding of its strongest product identity. Bebek Bakar emerged as the most preferred menu, followed by Ayam Bakar and Bebek Goreng. This finding indicates that the “Bumbu Bakar Medok” identity represents an important competitive asset that should be maintained through consistent taste, portion, and meat quality. Rather than changing the core product, the service-improvement strategy therefore emphasizes strengthening the experience surrounding the product.

Second, the activity helped the partner recognize family dining as a potential competitive positioning. Customers did not evaluate the restaurant solely according to food quality. Spacious seating, family-friendly facilities, comfort, playground availability, and social interaction were also important elements of the dining experience. This supports the argument of Croitoru et al. (2024) that restaurant value is multidimensional, involving functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional dimensions. The partner's existing physical assets can therefore be transformed into a stronger value proposition when they are intentionally integrated into the restaurant's service and promotional strategy.

Third, the activity generated a practical service-improvement roadmap covering menu development, beverage innovation, facility enhancement, cleanliness management, waiting-area and parking management, playground improvement, and digital promotion. These outputs strengthen the partner's managerial awareness and provide a basis for customer-oriented decision-making. The activity also identified competitor differentiation as an important strategic consideration. While restaurants offering similar chicken and duck menus represent competitive alternatives, the partner has an opportunity to distinguish itself through the combination of its signature taste and family-oriented dining environment.

The impact of the activity should, however, be interpreted primarily as managerial



and operational impact rather than measurable financial impact. The activity did not conduct a post-intervention evaluation of sales, revenue, profitability, or customer retention after implementation. Therefore, it cannot claim that the recommendations directly increased financial performance. Its principal contribution was the generation of customer insight, identification of service gaps, recognition of competitive assets, and formulation of feasible improvement priorities. These outputs can serve as a foundation for subsequent implementation and evaluation.

The findings demonstrate that participatory service innovation can help a culinary MSME transform customer experiences into practical service-development priorities. The case of Ayam Bebek Haji Soleh Pahoman shows that competitiveness does not necessarily depend on replacing an existing product identity. Instead, the partner can strengthen its existing “Bumbu Bakar Medok” identity by improving the complementary dimensions of the dining experience. This orientation is consistent with Liu (2023), who highlight the importance of service quality in influencing revisit behavior, and Sirimongkol (2022), who found that restaurant service quality contributes to customer trust and revisit intention. Accordingly, the recommended strategic direction is to maintain product consistency while progressively improving family-oriented services, facilities, and digital communication.

4. Conclusions

This community service activity demonstrates that consumer insights can be transformed into meaningful community action through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach at Nuju Coffee. The activity showed that consumers possess valuable knowledge, experiences, creativity, social networks, and ideas that can function as community assets when they are given opportunities to participate in dialogue and collective reflection. Rather than treating consumers merely as buyers or sources of feedback, the PAR process positioned them as active participants in identifying issues, discussing priorities, developing solutions, and contributing to practical actions. The transformation from individual consumer experience to shared community knowledge represents an important shift in how local coffee shops can understand and utilize consumer participation.

The main contribution of the activity lies in demonstrating a participatory pathway consisting of consumer insight, collective reflection, collaborative planning, community action, observation, and reflection. This process strengthened interaction between consumers and Nuju Coffee management while creating opportunities for participants to contribute to communication, customer engagement, content creation, and community-oriented activities. The findings suggest that a coffee shop can function not only as a commercial space but also as a social environment where relationships, knowledge, and collective initiatives can develop. In this sense, PAR provides a practical mechanism for connecting consumer engagement with community empowerment and value co-creation. The activity also reinforces the asset-based perspective that sustainable community development can begin by recognizing and mobilizing resources already available within the community, including consumer knowledge and social relationships.

This activity has several limitations. The intervention was conducted within the specific social and organizational context of Nuju Coffee, meaning that its findings should not be generalized directly to all coffee shops or other types of community-based businesses. In addition, the outcomes primarily reflect qualitative observations,



participant experiences, and the participatory process, while longer-term indicators such as sustained participation, customer retention, business performance, and the continuity of community initiatives require further observation. Future community service activities should therefore develop longer PAR cycles, involve a broader range of stakeholders, and establish systematic indicators for measuring changes in participation, community ownership, and social value. Future initiatives could also explore how the model can be adapted to other local businesses and community spaces, thereby strengthening the practical contribution of PAR in transforming everyday consumer interactions into sustained and collaborative community development.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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