

INVENTORY AND SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT OF QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS IN NEGROS ISLAND: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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Abstract:

This study investigated the extent of inventory and supplier relationship management practices in selected quick service restaurants (QSRs) on Negros Island, Philippines. Using a descriptive mixed-methods design, the study combined survey responses from 101 managerial employees with in-depth interviews from selected store managers. Quantitative findings revealed that while inventory management practices such as material storage and classification were generally implemented to a very great extent, material coding and inspection were rated slightly lower, suggesting procedural inconsistencies. Variations across age, sex, tenure, and brand assignment highlighted gaps in standardization and training. The qualitative data supported these results, uncovering recurring challenges related to inspection lapses, unclear inventory categorization, communication breakdowns with suppliers, and staffing constraints. Integration of findings identified three priority areas for improvement: material inspection, inventory classification, and supplier information sharing. The study concludes with recommendations focused on protocol reinforcement, digital tracking, supplier coordination, and continuous training. These measures aim to support agile, accountable, and customer-responsive QSR operations in dynamic service environments.

Keywords: inventory management, supplier relationship management, quick service restaurants, material inspection, inventory classification, food service operations, mixed-methods research, operational efficiency, Negros Island, Philippines

Introduction:

In the increasingly competitive and fast-paced landscape of the food service industry, inventory management and supplier relationships have emerged as critical factors influencing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Quick service restaurants (QSRs), known for their high transaction volume, standardized processes, and rapid turnaround times, face unique challenges in ensuring the availability of materials while minimizing waste and cost. Managing inventory in this context is not merely an administrative function but a strategic necessity that directly affects service quality, profitability, and resilience (Bouadam & Maiza, 2022; Hui et al., 2025). As such, understanding how inventory management practices are implemented across various QSRs provides valuable insight into both strengths and vulnerabilities in the system.

Inventory management encompasses a range of practices that ensure the optimal availability, tracking, and movement of goods. Specifically, it involves inventory classification, material storage, material coding, and material inspection—all essential for reducing losses, ensuring product quality, and streamlining operations (Adalim et al., 2025; Immadisetty, 2025). Each of these dimensions contributes to the restaurant's ability to meet customer demand with precision and consistency. Yet, despite advancements in digital inventory systems and supply chain technologies, many establishments—especially in developing regions—struggle with implementation gaps and inconsistent practices, often influenced by contextual factors such as staffing, training, and infrastructure (Sharma et al., 2022; Valence & Magada, 2025).

Inventory classification is the process of categorizing goods based on use, perishability, or value. It allows organizations to prioritize attention and resources toward high-impact items through systems such as ABC analysis. However, improper classification can lead to overstocking of low-priority items or stock-outs of critical materials, thereby undermining efficiency (Katsaliaki et al., 2021). Material storage, on the other hand, pertains to how goods are physically arranged and preserved—an issue particularly salient for perishable items common in food service.

Poor storage practices can result in contamination, spoilage, or loss of stock, exacerbating operational costs and compliance risks (Rizkya et al., 2021).

Material coding and inspection represent more technical aspects of inventory control. Coding refers to assigning identifiers to materials to facilitate tracking, reordering, and auditing. While many QSRs adopt some form of item coding, standardization is often lacking across branches or store brands, complicating inventory reconciliation and quality control (Macas et al., 2021). Material inspection involves checking goods upon receipt and periodically thereafter to ensure consistency with specifications. However, this is often deprioritized in fast-paced environments, despite its critical role in ensuring food safety and supplier accountability (Malagon-Suarez & Orjuela-Castro, 2023).

The extent to which these practices are consistently and effectively applied may vary based on demographic and organizational variables. For example, employee age, sex, length of stay, and store brand assignment may influence both familiarity and adherence to inventory procedures. Younger staff may be more comfortable with technology-based solutions, while more tenured personnel may rely on intuition and manual practices. Likewise, brand-level differences in training, resources, and managerial culture can affect the depth and standardization of inventory control measures (Holloway, 2024; Ramadan et al., 2024). These variations merit a closer look, as they may help explain discrepancies in performance and identify leverage points for system-wide improvements.

Complementing inventory management is the practice of supplier relationship management (SRM), which includes supplier collaboration, information sharing, and trust-based relationships. SRM refers to the strategic coordination of supplier interactions to ensure timely deliveries, consistent quality, and mutual value creation (Kaya et al., 2022; Abosag et al., 2014). In a fragmented food service supply chain, especially in island or rural economies, the strength of these relationships can be the difference between smooth operations and disruptive bottlenecks (Sreenivasan & Suresh, 2024). However, despite widespread recognition of SRM's importance, many QSRs continue to rely on informal arrangements, resulting in missed opportunities for innovation and responsiveness.

Supplier collaboration involves joint problem-solving, demand forecasting, and flexibility in meeting operational needs. In contexts where restaurants experience fluctuating demand or limited supplier options, collaboration can mitigate delays and ensure continuity. Supplier information sharing—such as inventory levels or expected orders—helps reduce uncertainty and enables better planning. Trust-based relationships form the foundation for such exchanges and reduce the need for costly monitoring or enforcement. However, achieving these ideal conditions often depends on the maturity of the business, the quality of communication, and the consistency of past transactions (Rosário & Casaca, 2023; Susitha et al., 2024).

As with inventory management, supplier relationship practices may be influenced by staff demographics and organizational structures. Store brand protocols, manager tenure, and even gendered expectations of leadership and communication can shape how supplier relationships are cultivated and maintained (Mitchell, 2024; Reynolds, 2024). Understanding these patterns is essential for designing interventions that build capacity in areas where relational capital is underdeveloped or strained.

While quantitative assessments of inventory and supplier management practices are crucial for benchmarking and diagnostics, they often fail to capture the lived experiences, challenges, and improvisations of front-line managers. This is where qualitative insights offer significant value. Store managers in QSRs operate in high-pressure, fast-changing environments, and their narratives offer rich perspectives on the operational, relational, and systemic barriers they face. Exploring their experiences can reveal informal workarounds, internal conflicts, and creative adaptations that are not reflected in numeric scores but are vital for real-world practice and policy-making (Ahmad et al., 2023; Chen & Lewis, 2023).

Therefore, this study sought to describe (1) the extent of inventory management across four core dimensions (inventory classification, material storage, material coding, and material inspection) when taken collectively and by age, sex, tenure, and brand assignment, and (2) the level of supplier relationship management in terms of collaboration, information sharing, and trust-based relationships across the same variables. In addition, it aims to explore the experiences and insights of managerial employees regarding how they implement and navigate inventory and supplier management within their respective restaurants. This descriptive and exploratory focus contributes to

a more nuanced and actionable understanding of operational practices in quick service settings on Negros Island, Philippines.

Methodology:

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods design using a concurrent triangulation strategy to examine inventory and supplier relationship management practices in quick service restaurants (QSRs) on Negros Island. Descriptive research is appropriate for this investigation as it seeks to document and describe current practices, experiences, and variations without testing causal relationships or predictions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The use of mixed methods enabled the researcher to gather both statistical summaries and in-depth insights from managerial employees to present a more holistic account of operational realities in the fast-paced food service sector. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase of the study and analyzed separately, with the intention of integrating the results for comprehensive interpretation.

The study was conducted in selected branches of QSRs operated by a single food service group located in four cities in Negros Island: Bacolod, Silay, Sagay, and Dumaguete. These locations were selected based on their commercial activity and operational relevance, as they represent the core service areas of the brands under study. The participating restaurants, although part of the same corporate group, operate under distinct store brand identities, each with their own protocols and management systems. This context allowed for a descriptive comparison of practices within and across brands.

The study population consisted of 136 managerial employees, as recorded by the company's Human Resource Department. A sample of 101 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling with proportional allocation to ensure that each store brand was adequately represented in the data. The sample included employees from different demographic backgrounds, including variations in age, sex, length of stay in the company, and brand assignment. These factors were considered important in understanding how individual characteristics and organizational context shape inventory and supplier relationship practices.

For the quantitative phase, the primary tool for data collection was a researcher-developed structured questionnaire. It comprised three sections: demographic profile, inventory management practices, and supplier relationship management practices. The inventory section assessed four dimensions: inventory classification, material storage, material coding, and material inspection. The supplier relationship management section measured three aspects: supplier collaboration, information sharing, and trust-based relationships. Responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale to indicate the frequency or strength of practice, ranging from "Very Small Extent" to "Very Great Extent" for inventory items, and from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for supplier relationship items. This allowed the researcher to describe how widely and consistently these practices were perceived to be implemented across the organization.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of 15 field experts and assessed using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR). The final score of 0.81 indicated that the items were valid and relevant to the constructs being measured (Jeldres et al., 2023). For reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested with a group of 30 managerial employees not included in the final sample. Cronbach's Alpha was computed, yielding a value of 0.89, confirming high internal consistency (Taherdoost, 2016). These results established that the tool was both valid and reliable for use in describing inventory and supplier management practices.

The data gathering procedure involved both online and in-person methods. A digital version of the questionnaire was distributed through secured survey links, while a trained field enumerator assisted with the paper-based administration of surveys on-site. The enumerator was briefed on ethical considerations and standard procedures to ensure uniformity in administration. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without penalty.

For the qualitative component, three conversation partners (CPs) were purposively selected based on their managerial role, at least five years of tenure, and involvement in store-level inventory and supplier operations. The selected CPs represented different store brands and cities, ensuring diversity of perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted online and lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. These interviews explored the participants'

personal experiences, strategies, and reflections related to inventory handling and supplier coordination in daily practice. The interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative data were analyzed using Lichtman's (2013) three-step process: coding, categorizing, and conceptualizing. Codes were first generated from the transcripts, then grouped into categories based on thematic similarities, and finally developed into broader conceptual themes. To ensure credibility, member checking was conducted—transcripts were returned to CPs for confirmation and feedback. A peer review process was also implemented to improve dependability, and an audit trail was maintained to ensure confirmability and transparency in the research process (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Mckim, 2023).

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data confidentiality was ensured through the anonymization of identities and secure storage of digital files. Audio files and survey responses were stored in password-protected drives and deleted upon completion of the study. The research was conducted with the approval of the Graduate School Research Committee of La Consolacion College Bacolod.

Results:

The overall results revealed that inventory management practices in the participating quick service restaurants (QSRs) were generally implemented to a very great extent, with an aggregate mean score of 3.34. Among the four dimensions, material storage ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.368$) and inventory classification ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.356$) received the highest ratings, while material coding ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.428$) and material inspection ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.480$) were rated slightly lower, albeit still within high verbal interpretation categories. These findings suggest that while most inventory procedures are robustly in place, technical areas such as coding and inspection may be more vulnerable to variation or oversight.

When grouped according to age, younger employees (18–29 years old) rated inventory classification ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.303$) and material inspection ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.460$) slightly higher than their older counterparts, suggesting a greater adherence or exposure to updated procedures among the newer workforce. Meanwhile, older employees (30–80 years old) gave higher scores in material storage ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.321$), possibly indicating greater attentiveness to physical stock handling based on longer experience. Both groups consistently rated material coding lower than the other dimensions, reflecting a shared area of concern regardless of age.

In terms of sex, male and female respondents showed a similar trend, with inventory classification and material storage again receiving the highest marks. Females rated material coding ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.346$) and material inspection ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.447$) slightly higher than males ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.521$; $M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.527$ respectively), suggesting potential differences in task focus or role assignments within the store operations. Both sexes, however, reflected the same pattern: material coding, despite being essential for tracking and documentation, remains the least emphasized practice.

When grouped by length of stay, those with shorter tenures (less than 5 years) rated most dimensions higher, with an overall mean of 3.36, compared to 3.30 from longer-tenured respondents. This could reflect the effect of recent training and onboarding, which may have emphasized standard inventory procedures more vigorously. For instance, inventory classification was rated 3.51 ($SD = 0.322$) by shorter-tenured employees versus 3.35 ($SD = 0.398$) among longer-tenured ones. Interestingly, this contrast was most apparent in material coding and inspection, where newer employees appeared more confident in procedural adherence.

Grouping the responses by store brand assignment revealed that Brand B consistently rated all four inventory management practices at the highest levels, with overall means such as inventory classification ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.435$) and material inspection ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.420$) outperforming Brands A and C. This suggests that Brand B may have more rigorous standard operating procedures or more effective supervision systems in place. Brand C, in contrast, recorded the lowest mean in material coding ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.362$), dipping just below the "Very Great Extent" threshold, which may reflect challenges in documentation or discrepancies in inventory tagging practices.

Across all demographic and brand groupings, material coding and inspection were consistently identified as areas performed to a "great extent" rather than a "very great extent," indicating relative weakness. These results align with the qualitative findings where lapses in inspection and lack of coding standardization were frequently cited by

managerial employees. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence strengthens the case for targeted training and system improvements in these areas.

The qualitative phase of the study, based on interviews with selected managerial employees from various store brands, yielded seven themes that offer insight into the practical realities of inventory and supplier management in quick service restaurants (QSRs). These themes deepen the understanding of system strengths and gaps identified in the quantitative data.

Theme 1: Fostering Effective Communication and Collaboration

Managers emphasized the importance of clear and timely communication with suppliers and among team members. However, inconsistencies were noted in how information is relayed, particularly regarding delivery schedules, product substitutions, and defective items. This highlights a need for more structured communication protocols to support collaborative relationships.

Theme 2: Optimizing Inventory Management and Control Systems

Participants described varied implementation of inventory classification, coding, and inspection procedures. While foundational systems exist, actual practices often diverge from standard guidelines, particularly during high-demand periods. Manual tracking and inconsistent inspection contribute to discrepancies, underscoring the need for streamlined digital systems and monitoring tools.

Theme 3: Refining Ordering and Demand Forecasting Practices

Forecasting practices were largely reactive and based on past sales patterns, with limited analytical support. Some managers reported over-ordering or last-minute adjustments due to poor visibility into inventory levels or demand fluctuations, indicating a gap in proactive planning and system-driven forecasting.

Theme 4: Ensuring Efficient Receiving, Storage, and Logistics

Receiving and storage procedures were implemented with varying levels of thoroughness. While some branches adhere strictly to FIFO and temperature controls, others bypass checks during peak hours. Logistics issues, such as unannounced supplier substitutions or delivery delays, further complicate inventory flow and require better coordination mechanisms.

Theme 5: Mitigating Stock Loss and Enforcing Accountability

Losses due to spoilage, misplacement, and undocumented transfers were recurrent themes. Managers acknowledged that accountability mechanisms are either inconsistently enforced or inadequately documented, allowing small errors to accumulate over time. Standardized tracking and audit routines were identified as areas for improvement.

Theme 6: Optimizing Staffing Levels and Training

Manpower constraints were frequently cited as a barrier to proper inventory management. Inadequate staffing during deliveries or peak hours often led to skipped inspection steps or rushed documentation. Moreover, inconsistencies in training delivery contributed to knowledge gaps, particularly among new hires and relievers.

Theme 7: Striving for Continuous Improvement and Optimization

Despite challenges, managers expressed a strong desire to improve processes. Many adopted informal workarounds or localized innovations to meet store needs, reflecting a culture of adaptation and initiative. However, without systemic support or feedback mechanisms, these efforts remain fragmented.

Joint Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The integration of quantitative survey responses and qualitative interview data revealed key dimensions in inventory and supplier relationship management that require targeted improvements. Three priority areas emerged: material inspection, inventory classification, and supplier information sharing.

Material Inspection consistently stood out as a weak point across both data sets. Quantitatively, it received the lowest ratings among the four inventory dimensions, with this pattern evident across all demographic and brand groupings. This signals a system-wide concern. Qualitatively, managerial respondents confirmed this weakness by sharing operational lapses, including skipped inspections during peak hours, improper FIFO implementation, and acceptance of expired or damaged items.

Table 1

Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Highlighted Dimension	Quantitative Results(Mean, SD, Verbal Interpretation)	Qualitative Findings	Meta-Inference
Inventory Management			
Material Inspection	M = 3.25, SD = 0.48, Very Great Extent	Reported lapses in quality checks and FIFO enforcement; acceptance of expired or damaged items during peak hours; inconsistent implementation of inspection procedures.	Weak material inspection practices compromise inventory accuracy and food safety. Strengthening protocols enhances control, minimizes waste, and improves service quality.
Inventory Classification	M = 3.46, SD = 0.36, Very Great Extent	Inconsistencies in item categorization; issues with over-forecasting, unmanaged expirations, and borrowing without documentation. Suggestions included organizing items by perishability or usage frequency.	Lack of standardized classification leads to inefficiencies and overstocking. Systematic tagging improves inventory visibility and replenishment accuracy.
Material Coding	M = 3.19, SD = 0.43, Great Extent	Manual or inconsistent coding practices; difficulty tracing items especially when restocking or returning goods.	Weak coding undermines documentation and traceability. Standardized coding supports tracking, reduces errors, and aligns stock with actual movement.
Material Storage	M = 3.47, SD = 0.37, Very Great Extent	Most respondents followed FIFO and storage protocols; however, lapses occurred when staffing was limited.	Generally strong but dependent on personnel availability. Reinforcing storage routines across shifts ensures consistency and food safety.
Supplier Relationship Management			
Supplier Information Sharing	M = 2.98, SD = 0.52, High	Communication delays and unclear product condition reports from suppliers; over-reliance on internal staff to manage discrepancies.	Poor information sharing hinders proactive planning and accurate inspections. Improved transparency fosters timely responses and coordination.

Supplier Collaboration	M = 3.40, SD = 0.42, Very High	Mixed experiences in proactive supplier engagement; feedback mechanisms often informal and reactive. accountability and inventory flow improvements.	Stronger collaboration support mutual
Trust-Based Relationships	M = 3.42, SD = 0.39, Very High	Trust dependent on long-standing relationships rather than formal agreements; occasional inconsistencies.	Building formalized trust-based systems ensures consistency and supplier resilience in supply operations.

These practices compromise stock quality, increase waste, and create discrepancies in inventory records. The convergence of these findings underscores that material inspection is not just a procedural task but a strategic control point. Enhancing inspection protocols and compliance will strengthen inventory accuracy, improve food safety, and increase operational efficiency.

Inventory Classification also emerged as a concern. Although not the lowest-rated dimension, it received consistently moderate scores, especially compared to storage and coding. The quantitative results suggest inconsistent application of categorization systems, which may contribute to misaligned ordering and inefficient stock handling. The qualitative narratives further highlighted issues such as untracked borrowed items, unmanaged expirations, and ad hoc inventory grouping. These practices reflect a lack of standardized classification criteria. The integration of shelf-life tracking, usage frequency, and supplier tagging could streamline stock movement, reduce waste, and improve planning accuracy.

In the area of Supplier Relationship Management, Supplier Information Sharing was identified as the most problematic. While overall SRM scores were relatively high, this specific dimension received the lowest ratings and showed variation across brands and employee tenure. Managers echoed these concerns in interviews, citing delays in communicating defective deliveries, unclear stock conditions, and the absence of pre-delivery notifications. These lapses shift the burden of resolution to internal staff and hinder proactive inventory planning. Better information sharing from suppliers can enhance coordination, enable accurate classification upon delivery, and reinforce inspection processes, leading to a smoother inventory cycle and stronger supplier partnerships.

Discussion:

This study reveals that quick service restaurants (QSRs) in Negros Island generally demonstrate a strong implementation of inventory management practices. However, closer analysis of both quantitative and qualitative results reveals persistent vulnerabilities in material inspection, inventory classification, and supplier information sharing—three dimensions that, while often functional, remain inconsistent across brands and demographic groups.

Quantitatively, material storage ($M = 3.47$) and inventory classification ($M = 3.46$) were the most consistently implemented inventory practices, indicating operational strengths in preserving stock quality and applying categorization techniques. These results align with previous findings highlighting the importance of well-maintained storage for food safety and service continuity (Bouadam & Maiza, 2022; Hui et al., 2025). On the other hand, material inspection ($M = 3.25$) and material coding ($M = 3.19$) scored lower, pointing to recurring procedural lapses. Given their roles in quality assurance and traceability, these areas warrant greater emphasis in training and routine monitoring.

Demographic analysis offered further nuance. Younger employees (aged 18–29) rated classification and inspection higher, possibly due to more recent exposure to standard procedures and digital systems (Immadisetty, 2025). Older employees (aged 30 and above), however, rated material storage highest—reflecting accumulated experience and possibly more conservative handling of stock. Gender-based responses were largely similar, though female respondents rated inspection and coding slightly higher, potentially linked to division of labor in QSRs (Sharma et al., 2022).

Employee tenure was also significant. Respondents with less than five years in the company gave higher ratings across most dimensions, suggesting stronger adherence to recently reinforced protocols. Conversely, longer-tenured staff may revert to informal practices over time (Valence & Magada, 2025). Brand-level differences further

underscored organizational influence: Brand B consistently outperformed other brands, particularly in material inspection ($M = 3.67$), pointing to stronger enforcement of standard operating procedures. Brand C's low rating in material coding ($M = 2.98$) suggests potential documentation or tagging gaps that could hinder inventory accuracy.

These patterns were substantiated by qualitative findings, which brought forward rich contextual insights. Seven themes emerged, three of which—material inspection, inventory classification, and supplier information sharing—converged directly with the weaker dimensions from the quantitative analysis.

Material inspection was identified as the most pressing operational gap. Reports from managerial staff highlighted insufficient verification of expiration dates, failure to implement FIFO consistently, and rushed inspections during peak hours. These lapses expose QSRs to spoilage risks, inventory inaccuracies, and reduced product quality. As emphasized by Malagon-Suarez and Orjuela-Castro (2023), material inspection is a foundational control point—its weakness reverberates across multiple operational functions.

Inventory classification, while rated favorably overall, showed inconsistencies in application. Qualitative accounts revealed untracked borrowed items, unmanaged expiry dates, and informal stock grouping practices. These challenges suggest a lack of standardization in categorizing items based on perishability, frequency of use, or source—factors critical for strategic ordering and waste prevention (Katsaliaki et al., 2021; Rizkya et al., 2021). Without a clear classification framework, even well-stored items may become unmanageable, affecting supply flow and forecasting accuracy.

Among supplier relationship dimensions, supplier information sharing emerged as a persistent weakness. Although supplier collaboration and trust received very high ratings, the flow of timely and accurate information remained inconsistent. Interview data confirmed that unclear product conditions, late notifications of delivery changes, and inadequate documentation of defective items were common. These issues compelled in-store personnel to improvise, often with limited guidance. Such inefficiencies, as documented by Kaya et al. (2022) and Rosário & Casaca (2023), can delay resolution, disrupt workflows, and reduce service responsiveness.

Importantly, these operational shortcomings are not isolated. As illustrated in the joint display of findings, weak supplier communication compounds deficiencies in material inspection and classification. Stores depend on reliable pre-delivery information to validate, tag, and organize incoming stock. Improving supplier transparency through real-time notifications and structured reporting would not only reduce internal bottlenecks but also reinforce compliance with internal inventory protocols (Susitha et al., 2024).

Other themes—such as staffing limitations, fragmented training, and informal workarounds—reveal broader systemic constraints. Managers displayed initiative through localized process innovations, but these adaptations remain unsystematized and unsupported by formal policy or feedback mechanisms. This echoes findings by Ahmad et al. (2023) and Chen & Lewis (2023), who argue that individual ingenuity cannot substitute for comprehensive system design in high-volume service environments like QSRs.

In sum, the study affirms that while QSRs are largely effective in basic inventory management, strategic improvements are essential in inspection rigor, classification structure, and supplier communication. Addressing these gaps requires not only procedural refinement but also stronger cross-functional alignment, sustained training, and digital integration. These steps will help create a more agile, accountable, and customer-focused supply system, essential for maintaining operational excellence in fast-paced restaurant settings.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study examined the extent of inventory and supplier relationship management practices among selected quick service restaurants (QSRs) on Negros Island, focusing on key operational dimensions such as inventory classification, material storage, material coding, material inspection, supplier collaboration, information sharing, and trust-based relationships. The findings revealed that while inventory and supplier management practices are generally implemented to a very great extent, specific areas such as material inspection, inventory classification, and supplier information sharing emerged as relative weaknesses that demand focused attention.

Material inspection, in particular, was consistently rated lower across demographic and brand groupings and was further supported by qualitative narratives pointing to skipped inspections, inconsistent FIFO implementation, and lapses during delivery verification. These deficiencies compromise food safety, lead to stock discrepancies, and contribute to product wastage. Similarly, inventory classification practices, though moderately rated, were found to be inconsistently applied. The absence of standard tagging and categorization criteria for items based on perishability, usage rate, or supplier source reduces ordering efficiency and complicates stock tracking. Supplier information sharing also showed variations in ratings across brands and tenure, highlighting gaps in communication protocols and a reliance on internal staff to address delivery issues.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, there is a need to strengthen material inspection protocols through the use of standardized checklists, barcode systems, and dedicated inspection personnel. Reinforcing compliance with FIFO and proper documentation will help ensure quality control and reduce inventory errors. Second, QSRs should adopt a standardized inventory classification framework across all store brands. Tagging items according to shelf life, usage frequency, and supplier origin would streamline tracking and ordering processes. These efforts can be supported by inventory management software that allows for real-time updates and monitoring.

Third, enhancing supplier information sharing is critical. Formalizing communication procedures—such as pre-delivery notifications and structured reporting of product conditions—would enable stores to better coordinate with suppliers and respond proactively to issues. Fourth, training and onboarding programs should be improved to ensure that both new and experienced staff are familiar with updated inventory practices. Regular refresher courses and targeted training modules should be institutionalized.

Furthermore, staffing levels during critical operational hours should be optimized to ensure that key inventory tasks such as inspection and documentation are not neglected due to multitasking. Dedicated inventory personnel can help reduce errors and improve accountability. It is also essential to foster a culture of continuous improvement by recognizing branch-level innovations, encouraging employee feedback, and establishing mechanisms for sharing best practices across stores. Finally, management should implement regular audits and monitoring systems to evaluate performance, enforce compliance, and guide corrective actions.

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