

The Influence of Service Quality and Price on Customer Satisfaction: An Empirical Study on Restaurant Services in Khulna Division

Md. Arifur Rahman

Department of Business Administration, Northern University, Bangladesh

Abul Kalam

Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University
Dinajpur, Bangladesh

Md. Moshir Rahman

Department of Marketing, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh

Md. Abdullah (Corresponding Author)

Department of Marketing, Comilla University, Comilla, Bangladesh

Email: mabdullahru@yahoo.com

Abstract

One of the vital needs of increasing population in our country is food. There are a few number of restaurant goers to meet the necessity of food. Most of the people in our country occasionally go to the restaurant to enjoy ethnic and some of western food items. The main purpose of this study is to identify some key drivers of customer satisfaction on restaurant services. The study covers the opinion of restaurant goers in Khulna region. This research is based on empirical study. Primarily, researchers contacted with 450 customers for their valuable opinion regarding restaurant services. But, 246 customers gave their spontaneous response in this regard. Chi-square test has been applied for testing hypothesized by using SPSS software. This study aims to link some factors of service quality and price fairness of restaurant with the customers' satisfaction. The researchers find out that customers of restaurant have negative impression about product and service quality fairness, price fairness, staff's service, environment of the restaurant, image of the restaurant and loyalty of the restaurant. The researchers suggest emphasizing on those critical issues to attract new customers and retain existing customers.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Service Quality

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a densely populated country. People are increasingly moving from rural to urban areas hoping to lift up standard of live. Over the last 10 years the population of all urban areas in the Bangladesh grew by 38% compared with only 10% growth in rural areas (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistic, Dhaka, 2001). One of very important need of this increasing population is food. People of urban areas in Bangladesh are merely habituated to have their necessary meals from household cooking. There are a few number of restaurant goers to consume domestic cuisines. Most of the people in our country occasionally go to the restaurant to enjoy ethnic and some of western food items. Unhygienic environment, poor food quality, insufficient structural facilities, deficiency of available food items, uneducated chefs, unskilled waiters and ineffective management system make people reluctant to consume foods from restaurant in our country. Nonetheless, very recent the number of restaurant goers has been increased in the urban areas of Bangladesh because the Bangladeshi way of life has changed. As the proportion of married women in the work force has been raised, resulting in women having less time to plan and prepare meals at home. Today, meals are more of an afterthought rather than a planned occasion. People themselves hungry with no time to cook; so they eat out. The result is the flourishing demand of food services of restaurant. Despite the increasing interest in the area there is very little research on customer satisfaction of food and service in our domestic restaurant. Increase expectations and changing culinary tastes of consumers make the restaurant business in general in Bangladesh. This paper will explore the prevailing service quality of restaurant in Khulna region and examine the effects of restaurants' service quality on customer satisfaction.

2. Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality

Many researchers have looked into the importance of customer satisfaction. According to Hansemark and Albinsson (2004), “satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfillment of some need, goal or desire”. Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as: “a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations”. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) said that satisfaction can be associated with feelings of acceptance, happiness, relief, excitement, and delight. It has been argued that while the two concepts have things in common, “satisfaction is generally viewed as a broader concept service quality is a component of satisfaction” (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Customer satisfaction is defined here in Oliver’s (1997) terms: that it is the consumer’s fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption related fulfillment. In other words, it is the overall level of contentment with a service/product experience. A recent meta-analysis of the empirical research on customer satisfaction found that equity exhibited a dominant effect on satisfaction judgments with a correlation between equity and satisfaction of 0.50 (Szymanski and Henard, 2001). Understanding what makes customers satisfied and satisfaction outcomes remain a key challenge and critical management issue today (Bloemer and Odekerken-Schröder 2002). It was observed that the fundamental practice of retailing has prominently undergone dramatic transformation, particularly with the increased popularity of non-store retailing (e.g. personal selling, catalogues, TV shopping, the Internet, etc.). This burgeoning trend is fuelled by a consumers’ increased willingness to purchase via these alternative channels, greatly influenced by their changing lifestyles and work patterns (Msweli-Mbanga and Lin 2003). Service quality determines an organizations success or failure. Companies and organizations that virtually every industry employs customer satisfaction measures for the straightforward reason that satisfied customers are essential for a successful business (Gupta, S., McLaughlin, E., and Gomez, M. 2007). Service quality also determines a customer’s satisfaction. However, the determinants of service quality are complicated with the dynamic business environment (Pun, K.F., and Ho, K.Y. 2001). Therefore, this measurement dimensions depend on the industry itself. Service quality is influenced by expectation, process quality and output quality; in other words the standards of service is defined by customers who have experienced that service and used their experience and feelings to form a judgment (Chen, F.P., Chen, C.K.N., and Chen, K.S. 2001). In order to achieve a quality service organization, commitment from employees and support from all levels of management is necessary. Therefore, it is important for managers who provide goods or services constantly to keep track of information about the company’s well being as far as meeting its customers’ needs are concerned (Aigbedo, H., and Parameswaran, R. 2004). Service companies are trying to find ways to improve and provide superior quality service to satisfy their customers (Thongsamak, S. 2001). The level of customer satisfaction may be influenced by various attributes from internal and external factors. Customer satisfaction may be identified as internal and external customer satisfaction of an organization. From the literature review, researchers on external customer satisfaction have been identified. However, there seems to also be dissatisfaction of internal customer satisfaction from organization’s point of view. This is an issue that has raised concern among certain organizations who are interested in employees’ welfare. Such dissatisfaction has been identified through opinion surveys conducted in organizations. These dissatisfactions are based on the facilities provided by the organization for the employees, such as the staff cafeteria. As mentioned by John Feilmeier, director of retail management for Morrison Healthcare Food Service (cited from (Perlik, A. 2002), we need to run cafeterias similar to what an outside business or regular restaurant would do. Many food service providers have a perception that people only go to eating outlets for the food. There is an assumption that the primary reason people go to restaurants is for the meal (Andaleeb, S.S., and Conway, C. 2006). Josiam and Monteiro (2004) found that patron of Indian restaurants in Minneapolis (USA) metropolitan area were better educated and more affluent. The fact that Sydney is more cosmopolitan and more multicultural than Minneapolis may explain this. Food markets were the first to become globally integrated, linking distant cultures of the world (Nutzenadel and Trentmann 2008, Sharpless 1999). Food habits undergo continuous change as they adapt to travel, immigration, and the socio-economic environment (Jerome 1982; Lowenberg et al. 1974; Senauer et al. 1991; Kittler and Sucher 1995). However, Food preferences, a result of physiological and psychological development and social experience related to the degree of linking a food, play an important role in food selection because they give an indication of the amount of satisfaction an individual anticipates from eating a food. Other influences of consumer food choices include cultural and lifestyle factors, and food trends (ASP 1999). According to Zugarramurdi (2003), people are increasingly concerned about nutrition, food safety at a reasonable cost. Marketers

face a set of environmental issues that substantially determine customer acceptance of their products. The definition of good quality food, however, may vary depending upon the type of food and the individual's food preference. Some of the important features of quality include wholesomeness, freshness, nutritional value, texture, color, fragrance, and flavor. It was also found that as raw material quality level rises, these variables increase as well as operating costs decrease (Giannini et al., 2001; Zugarramurdi et al., 2002). The results indicated that the quality of raw material has a direct correspondence to the quality of the product. To many consumers safe food means that there will be no danger from harmful elements such as pathogenic microorganisms, naturally occurring toxins and other potentially harmful chemicals which appear to be deliberately added to food products in the country. The presence of microorganisms in food poses the greatest threat to human health compared to all forms of contamination (Rouf, 2004).

3. Objective

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the key drivers of customer satisfaction on restaurant services
2. To link the perceptions of service quality and customer satisfaction of restaurant goers and empirically demonstrate the influence of service quality and price on satisfaction judgments.
3. To examine how local customers perceive the quality of food and service in local restaurant of Bangladesh.
4. To explore the perceptions of customers on price fairness of food and services of restaurant.
5. To provide some recommendation to improve the service quality of restaurant.

4. Hypothesis

1. H_1 = There is no association between the image of the company and choice of the restaurant, recommend to others as well as loyal to the services of the restaurant.
2. H_2 = Product and service quality fairness are not dependent to the serving ordered food accurately and the dedication of the employees on their services.
3. H_3 = There is no relation between the price of the items and the choice of the restaurant
4. H_4 = There is no association between the customer loyalty to the restaurant with the regularly visit the restaurant and intend to visit this restaurant again
5. H_5 = There is no association between the satisfactions of the customers with the satisfaction of the staffs in a restaurant.
6. H_6 = There is no association between the satisfactions of the customers with the satisfaction of the environment in a restaurant.
7. H_7 = Satisfaction with the restaurant do not depend on the overall atmosphere of the restaurant and the any reasons of complains to the restaurant.

5. Methodology

This is an empirical study which is mainly based on primary data. Data are collected from the restaurant goers of Khulna city. This study had been conducted from mid 2010 to December 2010. Respondents were selected randomly from customers of the restaurant. Researcher contacted with 450 customer face to face, but 246 customers agreed to participate in the survey. A structured questionnaire was designed by using five – point scales ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. Chi-square test is applied to analyze collected data by using SPSS software. Besides, secondary sources, like – journals, thesis, books, were explored to assess past researchers conducted on customer satisfaction in the restaurant business.

6. Analysis and Discussion

Table-1: Image of the Restaurant

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X ² at 8 df)
I usually use this restaurant as my first choice compared to other restaurant	86	71	19	58	32	CV = 205.07 TV = 15.50 0.05LSF
I would recommend this restaurant to others.	49	63	11	76	47	
I would not switch to another restaurant in next time.	24	25	32	56	109	

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

CV- Calculated value of chi square test, TV- table value, LSF- level of significance

The image of the restaurant has positive relation with the choice of the restaurant as a first choice compared to other restaurant, recommendation to others and switch to another restaurant in next time. Table-1 shows that 63% customers choose the restaurant as a first choice due to the image of the restaurant but 36% customers do not choose the restaurant as a first choice due to the image of the restaurant, 45% customers recommend others who has good image in market but 50% customers do not recommend others who has no good image in market, only 20% customers will not switch to another restaurant in next time but 67% customers will switch to another restaurant in next time. Since $X_c^2 > X_t^2$, it has mentioned that the image of the restaurant is highly required to make the restaurant as a first choice and recommend to others as well as not to switch to another restaurant.

Table-2: Product and Service Quality Fairness

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X ² at 4 df)
Serving ordered food accurately.	38	33	21	71	83	CV = 129.40 TV = 9.49 0.05LSF
Employees are dedicated to maintain speed and quality of service.	15	37	05	90	99	

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

Product and service quality fairness has the effect to the satisfaction of the customers. Serving ordered food accurately and the dedication of the employees to maintain the speed and quality of service are considered to know the product and service quality fairness. Since $X_c^2 > X_t^2$, the product and service quality fairness depend on the Serving ordered food accurately and the dedication of the employee to maintain the speed and quality of service. Table-2 shows that 29% customers of the study areas are agreed that the employees of the restaurant serve ordered food accurately but more than 62% customers of the study areas are not agreed that the employees of the restaurant serve ordered food accurately, only 21% customers of the study areas are agreed that the employees are dedicated to maintain speed and quality of service but 77% customers of the study areas are not agreed that the employees are dedicated to maintain speed and quality of service

Table-3: Price Fairness

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X ² at 12 df)
Price of food items comparatively cheaper.	57	64	13	74	38	CV = 146.95 TV = 21.00 0.05LSF
All customers are treated equally by the price of food items.	72	81	01	26	66	
I think the price of products and	17	28	33	70	98	

services is based on cost.						
Taste of food items is compared with price.	46	60	12	55	73	

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

Table-3 shows the customers overall opinion about price fairness of the restaurant in the study areas. The Researchers find that 49% customers are agreed about the price of food items comparatively cheaper, 61% customers are agreed to treat the restaurant equally by the price of food items, only 18% customers are thinking the price of products and services is based on cost and 43% customers agreed that the taste of food items is compared with price. Since $X_c^2 > X_t^2$, the satisfaction of the customers depends on the fairness of price of the items in a restaurant. Therefore, few customers are agreed positively about the considered factors. So, there is an option to modify the prices of the items in a restaurant of the study areas.

Table-4: Customer Loyalty to the Restaurant Service

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X^2 at 4 df)
I regularly visit this restaurant.	54	61	02	77	52	CV = 5.07
I intend to visit this restaurant again.	63	49	01	66	67	TV = 9.49 0.05LSF

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

To sustain and regularly visit the restaurant of the customers depend on the loyalty to the restaurant. The table-4 represents that more than 46% customers regularly visit the restaurant but 52% customers do not regularly visit the restaurant, 45% customers have intention to visit this restaurant again but 54% customers have no intention to visit this restaurant again. In this study $X_c^2 < X_t^2$ so, the null hypothesis is accepted. Customer loyalty to the restaurant service has no association with the regularly visit the restaurant and intend to visit the restaurant again.

Table-5: Satisfaction with the Staff's Service

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X^2 at 12 df)
The staff serves food in promised time.	23	44	03	57	119	CV = 76.23 TV = 21.00
The staff quickly corrects mistakes.	21	39	07	72	107	0.05LSF
The staffs are well dressed, neat and clean	42	55	10	86	53	
The staffs are knowledgeable about the menu.	43	37	16	91	59	

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

Regular visit in the same restaurant almost depends on the satisfaction with the staff's service. To measure the level of satisfaction with the staff's service, the researchers consider the above four factors to whom customers are satisfied or not. The table shows that only 27% customers are agreed about the served food in promised time and more than 71% customers were not agreed about the served of food in promised time, about 24% customers were agreed about the quickly correction of mistakes of the staff's of the restaurant and more than 72% customers were not agreed about the quickly correction of mistakes of the staff's of the restaurant, 39% customers were satisfied about the neat and clean as well as well dressed of the staff's of the restaurant and more than 56% customers were not satisfied about the neat and clean as well as well dressed of the staff's of the restaurant, 32% customers believed that the staffs are knowledgeable about the menu but more than 61% customers do not believed that the staffs are knowledgeable about the menu.

Table-6: Satisfaction with the Environment of the Restaurant

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X ² at 8 df)
The dining area is frequented.	36	30	15	95	70	CV = 69.72
It maintains appropriate sound level.	70	57	13	88	18	TV = 15.50
It has sufficient air conditioning and lighting facility.	29	46	11	82	78	0.05LSF

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

Basically, the environment of the restaurant has impact on the satisfaction of the customer as well as the employees working in a restaurant. In this study, the researchers considered the three areas as a restaurant environment such as dining areas, sound level and air conditioning as well as the lighting facility. Since $X_c^2 > X_r^2$ the null hypothesis is rejected. That means there is a relationship between the restaurant environment and the three considered factors. Here 26% customers are agreed about the frequent dining areas and 67% customers are not agreed about the frequent dining areas, 51% customers are agreed about the appropriate sound system of the restaurant and 43% customers are not agreed about the appropriate sound system of the restaurant, 30% customers are agreed about the sufficient air conditioning and lighting facility of the restaurant and 65% customers are agreed about the sufficient air conditioning and lighting facility of the restaurant and 65% customers are not agreed about the sufficient air conditioning and lighting facility of the restaurant.

Table-7: Satisfaction with the Restaurant

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Impartial	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	significance (X ² at 4 df)
I am satisfied with the overall atmosphere.	54	61	02	77	52	CV = 17.54 TV = 9.49
There is no reason to complain.	63	49	01	66	67	0.05LSF

Source: Field survey at 12/12/2010

The above table shows that null hypothesis is rejected. That means there is an association between the satisfaction and atmosphere of the restaurant as well as the complaining of the customers. But we find that only 47% customers of the restaurant of Khulna division are agreed regarding the satisfaction with the overall atmosphere of the restaurant. Again more that 45% customers have the complain to restaurant of Khulna division.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1. Image of the Restaurant

Image of the restaurant has positive impact on the satisfaction of the company. But more than 51% customers have negative idea about the image of the restaurant in the study area. They do not use the restaurant as their first choice compared to other restaurant, they would not recommend to others and they may switch to another restaurant in next time. For these reasons the authority of the restaurant in the study area should take the necessary action to build the image of their restaurant.

7.2. Product and Service Quality Fairness

Measuring the product and service quality fairness considered how much the employees are served the food accurately and how much they are dedicated to their duties and responsibilities. But more than 69% customers are not agreed about the level of serving ordered food accurately and the dedication of the employees. So, it can be said that staffs don't have adequate competency and dedication to serve quality food in right time. Therefore, owners of the restaurant should take care about the necessary skills and motivation to supply foods in the right time.

7.3. Price Fairness

To know about the price fairness of the food items in a restaurant ask different question to the customers mentioned in the table where on an average 51% customers do not agree about the price of food items comparatively cheaper, are not treated equally by the price of food items, they do not think that the price of products and services is based on cost and taste of food items is compared with price. So, restaurant owners should redesign the price of products comparing with the quality and taste of the food items.

7.4. Customer Loyalty to the Restaurant Service

It is found that customer loyalty to the restaurant service has no association with the regular visited customers of the restaurant and intended customers to visit the restaurant again. They are totally opposed regarding the loyalty of the restaurant. That means the customers of the study areas are not loyal to the restaurant services. They do not agree about the matter to the respondent. So, they have to develop the strategy to make the loyal of the customer to the restaurant.

7.5. Satisfaction with the Staff's Service

Satisfaction with the staff's service is measured by asking questions about promised time to serve food, efficiency to solve mistakes, well dressed, neat and cleanliness and knowledge of the staffs about the menu. On average 65% customers express about the dissatisfaction with the staff's services where 48% customers are not agreed that they serve the ordered food in promised time and 43% told they can not correct the mistake quickly. So the authority of the restaurant in the study areas should play special attention with the performance of the staffs in the restaurant.

7.6. Satisfaction with the Environment of the Restaurant

The environment of the restaurant has great impact on the satisfaction of the customers. In this study 58% customers are not satisfied with the environment of the restaurant. 67% customers are not agreed that the dining area is frequented, 43% customers are not agreed that it maintains appropriate sound level and 65% customers are not agreed that it has sufficient air conditioning and lighting facility. So, authority of restaurant should special care regarding this issue.

7.7. Satisfaction with the Restaurant

Satisfaction with the restaurant means customers overall satisfaction level about the restaurant. It is known through the asking question about the overall atmosphere of the restaurant and any matter of complains. 52% customers are not satisfied about the overall atmosphere of the restaurant and 54% customers have any reasons of complains to the restaurant in the study area. So, they should find out that reasons and should take corrective measures to solve the problem immediately.

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Appendix:

Socio – demographic structure of the respondents

Items	Sample (%)	Items	Sample (%)
Gender:		Educational Level:	
Male	75.2	Illiterate	7.7
Female	24.8	Primary School	28.1
		High School	30.9
		College	9.7
		University	23.6
Age:		Residence:	
<25	6.1	Bagerhat	26.8
25 – 49	56.2	Khulna	41.9
50 – 65	29.3	Satkhira	24.0
>66	8.5	Others	7.3
Marital Status:			
Single or living alone	81.3		
Married or living together	18.7		

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