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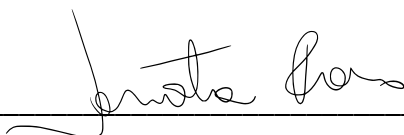
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**THE FOOD SERVICE ATTRIBUTES APPLIED BY THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY
IN DUBLIN TO BUILD CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND SATISFACTION**

Compiled by:

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This project is submitted in part fulfilment of the Degree of Bachelor of Business Studies
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Abstract

The restaurants in Dublin, which are part of the island of Ireland's food service sector value of € 8.2 billion (Bord Bia, 2022), apply prime food attributes that have significance on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

These customer-relationship-focused restaurants always ensure a higher emphasis on the cultivation of trust and commitment than on the mere completion of their targeted orders. However, keeping a long-term customer relationship is highly important for enduring the business in this industry. This necessitates the management teams of these restaurants in Dublin to step up and well apply the food service attributes to build customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The results of this study are anticipated to be useful to those in the hospitality sector. As, for example, this study found, with the help and perspective of consumers and managers of restaurant in Dublin, that the physical atmosphere, staff qualifications, and food quality of restaurants all have a big impact on how happy customers can be during their experience with the food service provider.

Thus, restaurant operators should prioritize at least five variables that each have a specific role to play in enhancing client satisfaction and not only the food attributes. Also, this research project demonstrated that employees have a key impact in influencing customer satisfaction. Thus, the discussion will revolve around how important food service attributes are in different aspects.

Acronyms:

Q1 - Questionnaire 1 (survey for regular people; consumer of restaurants in Dublin)

Q2 – Questionnaire 2 (survey for managers of restaurant in Dublin)

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CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of research

The restaurant industry in Dublin represents a marketing network consisting of exceptional food producers, drink creators, retailers and distributors spread in Dublin city of Ireland. Due to the relatively strong position of the Irish foodservice industry seen in recent years (Technomic, Bord Bia, 2021), restaurant owners in this Dublin are applying and improving food service attributes to build client loyalty which is possible through prioritising customer satisfaction. This is the why that research projects like these are needed for exploring what restaurants have been doing to deliver exceptional restaurant customer service from the moment of making a booking until the end of a guest visit. The interest of the researcher in this domain comes from his observation while working for renowned award-winning restaurants in Dublin for the last five years.

1.2 Rationale for the study

The Irish food service industry saw significant disruption in 2020 after eight years of consecutive growth. Foodservice, which had been an €8.6 billion industry across the island of Ireland in 2019, fell to €4.5 billion as Covid-19 created challenging moments (Bord Bia, 2021). Now, in 2022, it is estimated to be at a value of €8.2 billion. Despite the challenges, the Irish food service industry continues to be a great contribution to the economy of the country and already demonstrates signs of recovery (Bord Bia, 2022). This study is crucial as it presents how major food operator companies in Dublin are using service attributes in existing competition to provide amazing customer experience, which explains how customer loyalty is being built; and to maintain the sector warm and how customer perceive it when consume in these restaurants. The chief question that led to this research is what food service attributes are being applied by the restaurant industry

in Dublin to build this customer loyalty and satisfaction. This research question arouses the readers with sub-research questions which are like the research objective and will be discussed in subsequent sections.

1.3 Statement of the research objectives

The current research seeks the achievement of the below-mentioned objectives:

- 1) To discuss how the restaurant industry in Dublin is maintaining its quality of service and what factors that attribute to the fulfilment of this purpose.
- 2) To elaborate on the significance of standard quality maintenance of food and beverage and how it contributes to the growth of the restaurant industry in Dublin.
- 3) To state the contribution of the quality of restaurant setup in its operation and customer loyalty process.
- 4) To discuss price and value and how it is perceived by the customer.
- 5) To enlighten readers on the importance of customer satisfaction for Dublin's restaurant industry.

1.4 Information gathering & data collection technique

This research will opt for a mixed methodology and aims to gather information from residents in Dublin to understand their perspectives on how restaurants in Dublin apply food service attributes. It will observe the practices of restaurants in Dublin in the light of two different yet interlinked questionnaires. The first questionnaire framed is for regular people and utilises a quantitative research methodology so it will be easier to express numbers and establish facts about the topics later in the quantitative assessment. This will be a major step in the statistical analysis of the

importance of the quality of food, drink and service which are the chief attributes that need addressing. However, to the management team, it will probably be a mixed methodology, as there won't be only closed questions but also open questions to understand their thoughts or experiences as well.

1.5 Expected Outcomes of the study

The goal of this study is to understand how restaurants in the capital city of Dublin catch customer loyalty and satisfaction via the perspective of food service. The expected outcome is to find the importance of applying well the chief elements of a restaurant such as the food, the beverage, the service, the ambience and the price and how they are related to consumer satisfaction.

1.6 Chapter by chapter Overview

Literature Review: This chapter highlight the main points obtained from secondary research to what concerns to food service.

Methodology: This chapter elaborate on methods and approaches opted for collecting and analysis of the primary and secondary databases utilized in this study.

Findings and Discussion: This chapter reports the analysis finding and discuss them in association with the research questions and literature review.

Conclusion: This chapter reports a critical conclusion obtained from the analysis of collected data.

CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Literature Review

The literature review involves an inductive approach to explore data on restaurant industry attributes with the incentive to frame theories which later be tested alongside the literature.

2.1 Quality of Service

Service quality is one of the major priorities of restaurant service providers as it can provide a strong competitive advantage as stated by Wu, (2013). It is stated in the study by Khan and Shaikh, (2011) that the type and quality of food served to clients are no longer the exclusive focus of the restaurant industry. Through their research, Ribeiro and Prayag (2019) have advocated these past publications by elaborating on how the food service can impact customers' perspectives and result in greater satisfaction. Nguyen et al (2018) state that customers drive to restaurants primarily for the food but it is their positive experience that compels them to revisit this place. This means customer satisfaction denotes a process where various factors contribute to triggering the cognition and sentiments of a customer (Hyun, 2010). Amongst these factors, the service quality under prevailing circumstances has a significant impact on generating negative or positive emotions. Hence, as per observations of Andaleeb and Conway (2006), customers get negatively impacted if service quality is poor, and as an outcome, they will never revisit the same restaurant. In the case where the service provided by a restaurant is not satisfactory, customers generate unhappy word of mouth, which is so powerful that it can spread negativity about that restaurant and make other individuals not give a chance to a particular restaurant based on these reviews (Zhang et al., 2010). Consequently, customer loyalty and retention deeply is impacted by the quality of service (Ribeiro and Prayag, 2019).

Abdullah et al. (2018) believed that various in-house factors inside the restaurant could affect the quality of service. For example, the hygiene involved while serving, minute details of whether the plates are clean or not, if customers request change in dishes or cutlery, the behaviour of servers, and everything gets piled up under the quality of service category. The concept is supported by the research done by Hanks, Line, and Kim (2017) shows how service quality can profoundly impact the customer retention aspect and the brand reputation. However, the limitation is that researches focuses on a specific nation, and people's personalities may differ due to their nationality. So the reasons for dissatisfaction can be different from nation to nation.

2.2 Quality of food and beverage

Food quality and beverage are considered a fundamental part of the restaurant experience; there is no doubt that quality food and beverage significantly impacts customer loyalty and satisfaction in hospitality sites such as the top-notch restaurants. However, one of the most significant challenges facing the restaurant industry today is producing high-quality food and drink appealing to customers. In the race to beat the competition, tasty and fresh are crucial. As a result, good cuisine is one of the essential matters to succeed in the restaurant business and generate good profits along with lasting customer loyalty (Schaeffer, 2007).

Given that food and beverage quality is vital as a core product of a food service operation, Ahmad Shariff et al (2015) have explained and demonstrated how the quality of food and beverage is the primary factor that impacts customer loyalty, brand recognition, and the overall growth of the restaurant. Also, it is stated by many that the primary reason for going to a restaurant is to have

good food and beverage or enjoy a particular unique cuisine that is not cooked at home. Hence the quality of the food item itself will matter the most (Ahmad Shariff et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Berliansyh and Suroso (2018) have explained how food quality can generate negative reviews about the restaurant if customer expectation are not reached. The opinions regarding restaurants are something that customers nowadays check before visiting the place; simultaneously, the ratings they have. Reviews and scores from food critiques are essential (Berliansyh and Suroso, 2018) to the foodservice industry; if the scores and reviews are not good, then customers will not be visiting the restaurant, which can lead to failure in the gain of new customers due to a fall in the quality of food.

Anggraeni, Sulistyo, and Affandy (2020) as explained in their work how the freshness of the food can have a significant impact on the quality of food. At the same time, there can be an impact on customer loyalty and retention part. When food is not fresh or somewhat frozen, customers can notice, have a negative experience and then provide negative feedback. Fresh food with fresh ingredients is essential as it also guarantees safety (Anggraeni, Sulistyo, and Affandy 2020);

Theses researchers did not compare the influence of beverages over food, or vice versa. This means that no findings were found demonstrating if customers would choose a restaurant just because of the quality of beverages for example. So it is challenging to comprehend whether they have the same or different influence on the customer satisfaction.

2.3 Price and value

Yi, Zhao, and Joung (2018) have explained how the price can dictate the customer's satisfaction with the value for money factor. If they consume a product they do not perceive to have value, be it in terms of quality and quantity, for the money charged, they will probably prefer not to revisit the restaurant, which fails to retain customers (Yi, Zhao, and Joung 2018). Under general circumstances, when customers check the menu card and see a high-priced item, they perceive it as a premium top-quality dish. As Konuk (2019) explained, when that expectation does not match the final representation of the dish and the taste - or even the experience perceived, the disappointed customers may feel that there was no value compared to what they were charged (Konuk 2019). This example of a situation can lead to dissatisfaction with the food service experience.

Boo (2017), in the research, has explained that value in this industry is an entirely perception-generated object. The value aspect is created from every restaurant element where the idea is to make the customers feel valued. Not only is their treatment given by staff, but it is the price that has the most significant impact (Boo 2017) at the end of the service. In another investigation, Singh et al. (2021) discuss various aspects and conclude how price mechanisms in restaurants can lead to dissatisfaction or satisfaction depending on the customers' perception of the service. Therefore, however researchers discuss how customers perceive the value of a product consumed, it is critical to observe how well customers understand and use this understanding in their comparison, that the money charged for a dish or any other product in a restaurant includes other important elements of the food service such as the quality of the service, sitting and so on.

2.4 Quality of setting

The quality of the ambience appears to have important role in the foodservice industry. According to Abdullah et al. (2018), the restaurant's ambience gives the customer a valid reason to visit multiple times. In addition to that, Nawawi et al. (2018) have explained how the theme encourages revisits for the customers. While Tripathi and Dave (2017) suggest that adjustments and modifications to make the ambience more effective.

Shapoval, Murphy, and Severt (2018) have explained how the ambience or the restaurant's themes can be related to the type of cuisine they are serving. A prevalent example is that Chinese restaurants will have Chinese dragons engraved on pillars and walls with embedded jade-like ornaments, completing customer experience and satisfaction.

For the current and possibly upcoming generations, the restaurant's theme plays a significant role (Nawawi et al. 2018). For them, taking pictures is a crucial part of the food experience; hence having a good theme can be a reason to revisit, which effective customer retention. Karki and Panthi (2018) believe and researched to prove that in bars, the ambience is more important than the drinks. It is a proven fact from multiple observations that the ambience is a influential factor in deciding which bar or pub the customer will visit. Benkhedda, Santani, and Gatica-Perez (2017) have explained how ambience is essential for upselling, and state that when in a bar, people are ordering beverages, the combination of lights and music creates a cognitive reaction that makes the customer consume more or enjoy more which leads to a very positive experience that further leads to revisits.

In addition to all that, Kukanja, Planinc, and Jakulin (2020), in their research work, have explained how various features that are tangible can have an impact on customer service in the restaurant. Boo (2017), on further research, has found that the factors such as physical seating arrangements

and capacity have a profound impact on customer retention as well. For example, services like seating arrangements and a comfortable climate-controlled room and perhaps offering water or drinks when customers need to wait their turn is an adequate quality of service (Kukanja, Planinc, and Jakulin 2020). As customers sit inside, customers waiting outside the house need attention. So the service provided to them should be comfortable and relaxing as they are willing to wait if there is no space inside. If not done, customers may get annoyed and frustrated with waiting and tend to leave, failing to retain customers (Hwang and Yoon, 2009). Nonetheless, even though the researchers above mention that failing in the quality of the setting can result in failing customer retention, studies do not demonstrate whether customers would accept this failure if other food service elements are good.

2.5 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an essential matter that can significantly impact customer retention. Aftab (2016) explained that the logic is simple: if customers are satisfied with their experience, they will revisit for another meal, and if they are not, they will not revisit the place. Hence, it is vital to serve the customers efficiently and ensure their demands and expectations are fulfilled. Tripathi and Dave (2016) suggest that customer satisfaction is not driven by the food quality alone but is largely influenced by the service. In general, good quality service outcomes in a high level of customer satisfaction, which is a critical factor that leads the customer loyalty (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2002) and favourable word of mouth.

Uslu and Eren (2020), in their research, have demonstrated how customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are related to each other. They have concluded that customers will be loyal, and restaurants will be able to retain them only if they return home with a positive experience. They

explain how the overall factors involved in the restaurant business related to customer satisfaction, such as service quality, value for money, product quality, ambience, and all other factors, can impact customer satisfaction. They also explain why and how vital restaurant management may be to maintaining and improving all these factors; if one of the elements is not up to the mark, customer satisfaction may be lost.

Grönroos (1984) states that customer satisfaction generally depends on two variables: expected service and perceived service. Consumer expectations of service are influenced by their demands, previous experiences, and public reputation (Pai, Yeh and Tang, 2016). Consequently, the post-consumption evaluation of the service will be an outcome of an evaluation process, where the consumer compares expectations with the service s/he perceived s/he has received (Grönroos, 1984). These studies suggest that customer satisfaction is a result of customer post-consumption evaluation, however no data on whether a customer would react after this evaluation, in the case they are still in the restaurant.

CHAPTER 03: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Methodology chapter

The methodology of research was intended to explore the attributes contributing to a successful restaurant business in Dublin and attain insight into some restaurant managers' and peoples' thoughtful words and discernments in terms of the food service attributes applied by the restaurant industry in Dublin.

3.2 Theoretical Paradigm / Philosophy employed

The implicit research adopts a constructivist approach in the ontology along with the utility of an inductive approach as the main pillar of the study to achieve mixed methodological analysis successfully. The reason for its selection is the idea to talk with regular people and understand their perspectives and the opinions of the restaurants' management team with the incentive to observe their practices. To attain a complete picture, two different questionnaires were provided.

The first questionnaire for regular people and mostly contain closed questions so it would be easier to express numbers and establish facts about the topics in the final results. These questions assist in finding the importance of the quality of food, drinks and services for most of them that provide quantitative measurements. However, the questionnaire prepared for the management team is based on mixed methodology, but with most of them open, so that they get to answer not only closed questions but also open questions to understand their thoughts or experiences as well and notice critical stuff regarding the topics that had not so far.

3.2. Justification for the adoption of mixed method

In this research, it seems that some of the food service attributes applied by the restaurant industry in Dublin are a predictor variable while other such as the one regarding the building of customer loyalty and satisfaction are variables outcome, considering this, this study utilise a mixed method type of research design.

The inclusion criteria for active participation can be outlined as below:(i) any gender (ii) Adult i.e., minimum age of 18 years and older (iii) participants fluent in English (iv) individuals capable of understanding the questions and can sign voluntary consent (v) individuals from management

team belonging to the restaurant industry in Dublin (vi) individuals of Dublin can participate only since this research target the restaurant industry exclusively in Dublin. Exclusion Criteria for participants include (i) age groups lesser than 18 and greater than 75 (ii) individuals unable to speak and read the English language (iii) individuals who don't reside in Dublin (iv) individuals facing difficulty in understanding research questions due to any reason.

3.3 An outline of the sampling technique and sample size

As per the limited time available for this study, a sample size of 100 respondents was targeted to collect the data to further analysis, however 106 respondents were reached for Questionnaire 1, and 1 of 5 people for the Questionnaire 2. An opportunity snowball sampling method was adopted including respondent-driven sampling. The first questionnaire was sent to regular people consuming food from the restaurant industry in Dublin while the second one was circulated to managing teams working in various restaurants within Dublin.

3.4 Explanation of employed analysis method

Different types of analysis have been performed to analyse the data and to reach conclusions. The first method of analysis opted for was descriptive statistics, for Questionnaire 1, where questions are closed-ended, and data could be interpreted into graphs, charts and percentages to clear understanding.

Subsequently, the qualitative research approach of a survey consisting of semi-structured questions was conducted by a restaurant manager in Dublin to know about the managerial perspective related to the topic of the research. The collected data through that interview has been thematically analysed in a deductive approach as the themes seen in the literature review.

3.5 Ethical Section

As per research ethics, the purpose of the research will be mentioned at the start of both questionnaires along with the inclusion criteria so that each respondent can fill it out justly and without biases. The respondents' consent will be collected before attempting both questionnaires, and it will be ensured that each respondent is happily and willingly participating in the study, free from any external forces. Also, no personal information related to an individual will be included. The confidentiality/data anonymity will be met as the names of the participating individuals and any relevant identifying information that can be a problem to them is not included in the analysis part.

CHAPTER 04: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic and Behavioral Characteristics of Respondents of Q1

The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

The sample consisted of 49% male respondents and 51% female respondents. Among the 106 respondents, 47% of respondents were Brazilian, 20% were Irish, 6% were Croatian, 6% were Mexican, 4% Moldovan and the other 17% were American (1%), Bolivian (2%), Chilean (2%), Danish (3%), Indian (1%), Mongolian (1%), Portuguese (2%), Russian (1%), Spanish (1%), Swedish (1%) and Ukrainian (3%).

A high percentage of respondents (45%) were aged between 31 and 36 years, 27% were between 25 and 30 years old, 13% were between 37 and 42, 11% were between 18 and 24, and 43 years old and above sums 3%.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

of Q1

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	52	49%
Female	54	51%
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	12	11%
25-30	29	27%
31-36	48	45%
37-42	14	13%
43-48	1	1%
49-54	1	1%
55-59	1	1%
<i>Nationality</i>		
American	1	1%
Bolivian	2	2%
Brazilian	50	47%
Chilean	2	2%
Croatian	6	6%
Danish	3	3%
Indian	1	1%
Irish	21	20%

Italian	1	1%
Mexican	6	6%
Moldovan	4	4%
Mongolia	1	1%
Portuguese	2	2%
Russian	1	1%
Spanish	1	1%
Swedish	1	1%
Ukrainian	3	3%

The behavior characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 2

As demonstrated in table 2, more than half of the respondents (60%) have a meal in one of the many restaurants in Dublin at least once a month, 21% of the respondents once a week, 14% of the respondents twice a week and 5% of respondents more than three times a week.

A bit more than half of the respondents spends up to 100 euros in their monthly average expenditure with restaurants, while 36% of the respondents expressed spending a monthly average between 200 euros and 300 euros. Only 9% reported spending a monthly above 300 euros.

Table 2: Behaviour characteristics of respondents of Q1

Behaviour characteristics	Percentage	
	Frequency	(%)
<i>Average number of times dining in a restaurant</i>		

Once a month	64	60%
Once a week	22	21%
Twice a week	15	14%
More than three times a week	5	5%

Monthly Average Expenditure in restaurants

up to 100 euro	58	55%
200 - 300 euro	38	36%
More than 300 euro	10	9%

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents of Q2

For questionnaire 2, 5 managers of different restaurants in Dublin were invited to share their management perspectives. Unfortunately, only 1 of the 5 replied positively to contribute to this research project.

This respondent declared to have been working in the food service industry for over 4 years. He worked as a restaurant assistant manager, being promoted later to a manager and at present holds the position of Director of Service of a specific hospitality company that holds two of the best-reviewed restaurants in Dublin. The experience and expertise of this respondent back up his words in this research project.

4.3 Food Service Attributes Findings and Discussion

Respondents to questionnaire 1 were invited to share their perspectives in relation to their experience having meals in restaurants in Dublin. While respondents of questionnaire 2 were

invited to share their perspectives in relation to their experience and expertise working as part of a management team in one of the many restaurants in Dublin.

The purpose of both questionnaires was to fulfil the statement of the research objectives as here prior mentioned. This section will be dedicated to the findings and discussion in accordance with the five objectives.

4.3.1 Quality of Service

Given that the main objective of this theme is to discuss how the restaurant industry in Dublin is maintaining its quality of service and what factors that attribute to the fulfilment of this purpose. Firstly, respondents of Q1 rated how important the quality of service for them is when dining in a restaurant in Dublin using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = very unimportant and 5 = very important. Approximately half of the respondents (51%) consider the quality of service very important to their experience, while 43% of the sample indicated to consider it important. Only 4% were neutral, and 2% were unimportant – Figure 1.

Quality of service is one of the major priorities of restaurant service providers as it can provide a strong competitive advantage as stated by Wu, (2013). This statement is confirmed by a respondent of Q2 who states that to deliver high-quality service and create an outstanding customer experience "positive energy, communication, and a lot of training" need to be applied with excellence.

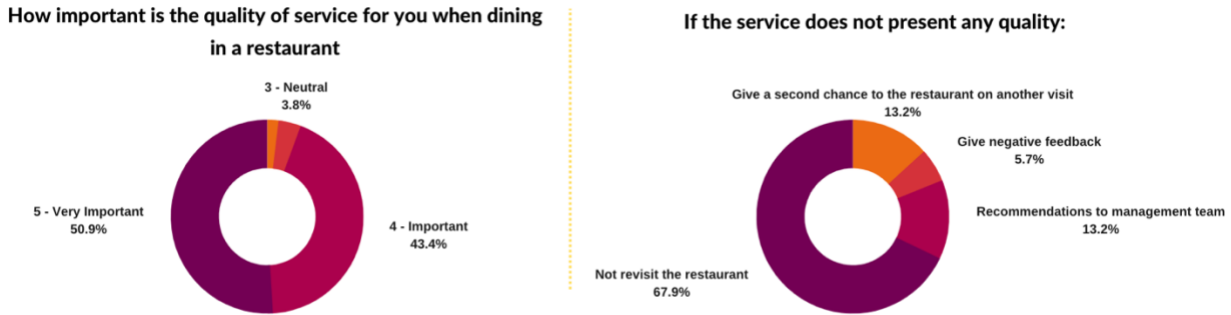


Figure 1: How important is the quality of service

Respondents of Q1 were asked what their reaction to a food service would be if it does not present any quality. Major of them (68%) indicated not to revisit the restaurant, while 13% indicated giving a second chance to the restaurant on another visit, and the same percentage (13%) indicated that they would give recommendations to the management team. Only 6% indicated giving negative feedback about the absence of quality second their perspective – Figure 1. This result is in conformity with the observations of Andaleeb and Conway (2006), that state that customers get negatively impacted if service quality is poor, and as an outcome, they will not revisit the same restaurant.

As suggested by Abdullah et al. (2018), various in-house factors inside the restaurant could affect the quality of service. For this reason, respondents of Q1 were requested to select up to 3 of 4 different factors that most impact the quality of service according to their perspective. Not every respondent selected 3 factors, but almost everyone selected at least 2 of 4. In total, the factors were selected 244 times by the sample of 106 respondents. As result, hygiene involved such as clean plates, tables, floor, cutlery and so on was the most selected, with 34% of the 244 selected times. While the staff manners and behaviour factor was the second most selected with 30%; staff

willingness to attend requests was placed as the third most selected with 21%, and timing of waiting was the less selected factor with 15% of the selection – Figure 2.

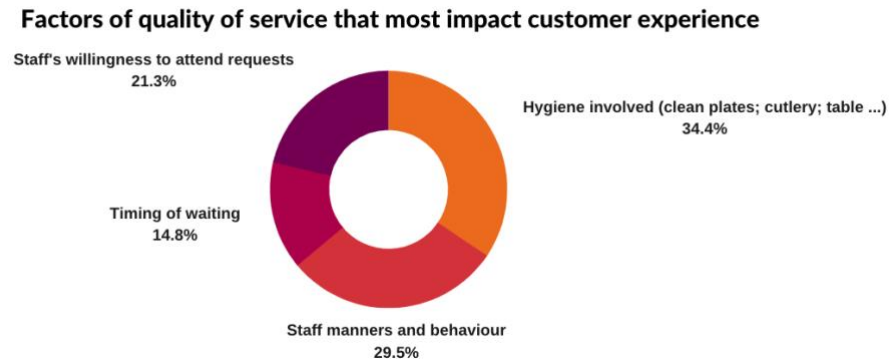


Figure 2: Factors that impact customer experience

These first findings related to Quality of service indicated that restaurant consumers of Dublin (Respondents of Q1) perceive and act in accordance with previous studies as the ones mentioned in the literature review. Furthermore, the results suggest that restaurants in Dublin that develop their quality of service and various in-house factors benefit from customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.3.2 Quality of Food and Beverage

In order to demonstrate that the significance of standard quality maintenance of food and beverage contributes to the growth of the restaurant industry in Dublin. Respondents of Q1 were requested to indicate what is more relevant to them when planning on what restaurant to go to, and not surprisingly 95% of the respondents indicated that the quality of food is the matter that most impacts their decision, while only 5% of the respondents pointed out the quality of the beverage is the most relevant factor to their decision – Figure 3.

Schaeffer (2007) states that good cuisine is one of the essential matters to succeed in the restaurant business and generate good profits along with lasting customer loyalty. For this reason, the respondent of Q2 says that "it is very important to have professional chefs and bartenders that continuously seek to improve what we can, as a team, offer to our guests".

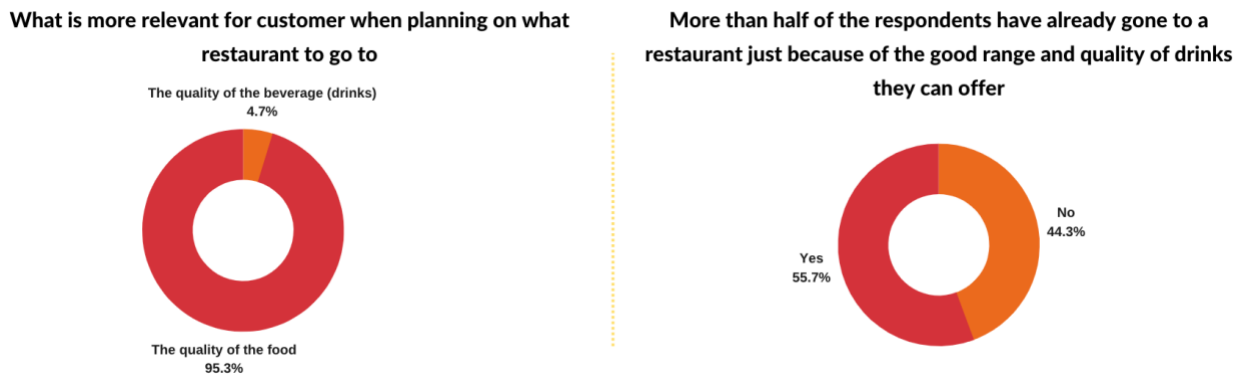


Figure 3: Food and beverage relevance for customer

A study by Ahmad Shariff et al (2015) has explained and demonstrated that the quality of food and beverage impacts customer loyalty, brand recognition, and the overall growth of the restaurant. With that in mind, a curious question was made to Respondents of Q1, and this question points out that 56% of the respondents have already gone to a restaurant just because of the good range and quality of drinks that a restaurant can offer. Against 44% of the respondents that declared never done the same – Figure 3. This indicates that the quality of food is not the only reason that drives consumers in Dublin to a food service provider.

If respondents enjoyed the food and drinks provided, but not the quality of service, more than half of them would not go again



Figure 4: Service quality appears to be more important than food and beverage quality

With the intention of seeing more comparison between different food service attributes, the sample of Q1 was asked if they would go to the same restaurant if they enjoyed the quality of food and drinks but not the quality of service; 54% of the respondents declared that they would not, while 46% of the respondents declared that they would – Figure 4. This finding suggests that consumers in Dublin place quality of service over the quality of food and drinks.

4.3.3 Quality of Setting

Whether to state or not, the contribution of the quality of restaurant setup in its operation and customer loyalty process, participants of Q1 were asked what their reaction to a restaurant would be if it does not present any quality of the setting, such as decor, good table, pleasant music, nice ambience, good lighting and so on. With 4 options of reactions to select, 75% of the sample selected the action that corresponds to giving a chance to the service and food; 15% indicated that they would leave the place; 8% selected that they would give recommendations to the management team and only 1% of the sample selected that they would leave negative feedback – Figure 5. This indicates that restaurants in Dublin that cannot invest much in the quality of the setting still have a chance to win customer loyalty with good quality service and food.



Figure 5: The importance of quality of setting

Yet, participants of Q1 were asked to rate whether they agreed with the Karki and Panthi (2018) statement that in bars, the ambience is more important than the drinks using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Almost half of the sample (47%) demonstrated agreement with the statement; 10% of the sample strongly agreed; 30% of the sample neither agree nor disagree; 10% of the sample disagree and only 2% strongly disagree – Figure 5.

According to Abdullah et al. (2018), the restaurant's ambience gives the customer a valid reason to visit multiple times. In addition to that, Nawawi et al. (2018) have explained how the theme encourages revisits for the customers. The respondent of Q2 shares that "setting, the decor is extremely important" as it "is the first thing they see". And concludes by saying that he "always emphasizes to the staff that every table should be set perfectly, with the glasses and cutlery being spotless chairs to be cleaned, and toilets need to be spotless". However, the results indicate that consumers in Dublin do not prioritize the quality of service over other attributes.

4.3.4 Price and Value

A study indicates that guests seek to perceive the value of what they consume, be it in terms of quality and quantity, for the money charged (Yi, Zhao, and Joung, 2018), with this in

consideration, respondents of Q1 were asked whether at the end of the service they compare the money paid and the quality of food, service, drink and so on that was provided, and the result pointed out that 93% of the participant do make this comparison, while 7% do not – Figure 6. This demonstrates that the price and value are indeed perceived by consumers in Dublin.

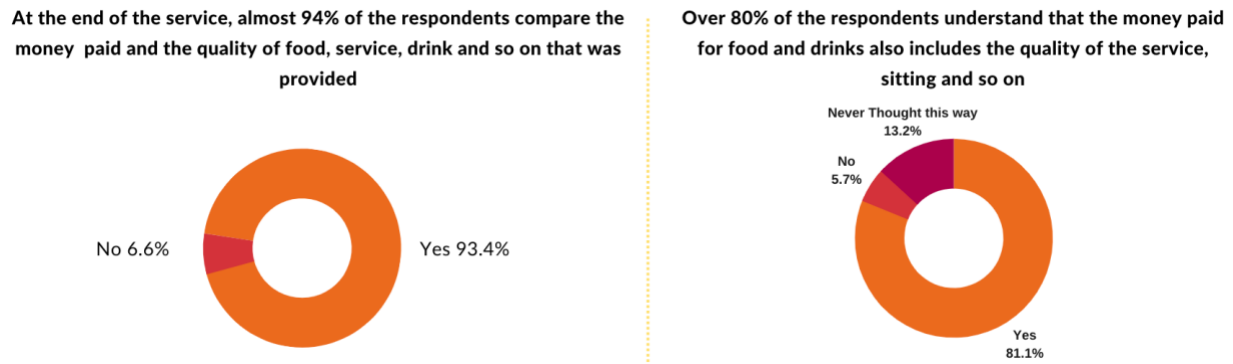


Figure 6: Comparison between service and food provided and the price paid

When respondents of Q1 were also asked if as customers, they understand that the money paid for food and drinks also includes the quality of the service, quality of setting and so on; 81% of the sample declared to have this understanding; 6% of the sample declared not have the same understanding and 13% of the sample informed never have thought this way before – Figure 6. Different from these figures above, the respondent of Q2 states that "For excellent service, great food and drinks, customers are not judging the prices". He also states that "If we make their evening perfect, they will not think about the money they spend in the restaurant". Perhaps, what the respondent of Q2 meant to say is that consumers are happy to pay if they perceive value in all aspects of the service provided.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that price mechanisms in restaurants can lead to dissatisfaction or satisfaction depending on the customers' perception of the service (Singh et al, 2021).

4.3.5 Customer Satisfaction

To enlighten the importance of customer satisfaction for Dublin's restaurant industry, respondents of Q1 were asked if they would demonstrate their satisfaction regarding all aspects of the restaurant service when it is more than good according to their own perspective, as a result, 96% of the sample declared that they would do so. Against this, 4% of the sample indicated that they would not do the same – Figure 7.

Yet, for the 96% of respondents that declared that they would demonstrate their satisfaction after a good service, they had a chance to select up to 4 of 4 different actions that would represent their satisfaction. Not every respondent selected all 4 actions, but almost every respondent selected at least 2 of the 4 actions. In total, the 4 actions were selected 200 times, meaning that some of them were selected more than others. As a result, giving staff good tips was the most selected action, representing 40% of the selection; recommending the restaurant to family and friends was the second most selected action representing 38% of the selection; thanking the staff team more than once was placed as the third most selected representing 18% of the selection, and leaving good feedback was the less selected action representing 5% of the 200 times selection – Figure 7.

Following this finding, customer satisfaction can represent staff a good opportunity to make extra money, which in consequence will make them happier in providing their best work. And, for the business itself, a happy client means that they will recommend the place to others and certainly

come back for another visit (Aftab,2016). Tripathi and Dave (2016) suggest that customer satisfaction is not driven by the food quality alone but is largely influenced by the service. In addition to that, the respondent of Q2 states that "attention to detail and guest anticipation" keep customer satisfaction at a good level.

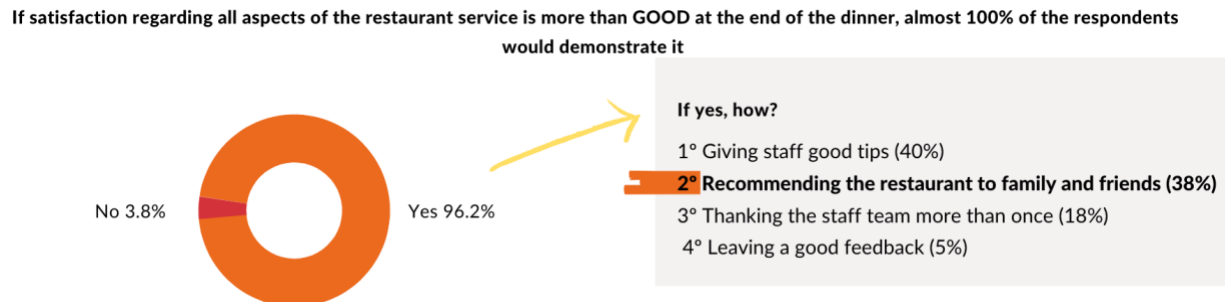


Figure 7: Customer responses for satisfaction with a food service provider

Furthermore, to know the reactions of an opposite situation, respondents of Q1 were also asked if they would demonstrate their unsatisfaction regarding all aspects of the restaurant service when it is not good according to their own perspective, as a result, 68% of the sample declared that they would demonstrate their unsatisfaction. And 32% of the sample indicated that they would not do the same – Figure 8. Very different figures from the previous question.

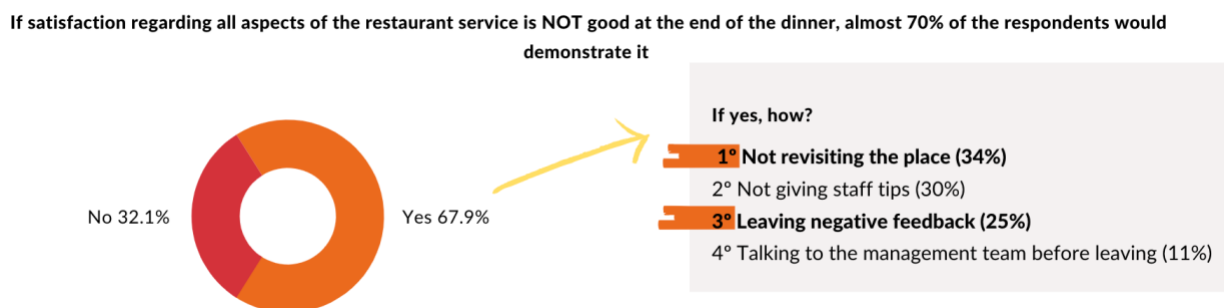


Figure 8: Customer responses for dissatisfaction with a food service provider

Also, 68% of respondents that declared that they would demonstrate their dissatisfaction after a bad service had a chance to select up to 4 of 4 different actions that would represent their dissatisfaction. Not every respondent selected 4 actions, and just a few of them selected at least 2 of 4 possible actions. In total, the actions were selected 125 times by this part of the sample. As a result, not revisiting the place was the most selected action, representing 34% of this part of this sample's selection; not giving staff tips was the second most selected action representing 30% of the selection; leaving negative feedback was the third most selected action representing 25% of this part of sample's selection, and finally talking to management team before leaving was the less selected action representing 11% of the 125 times action's selection – Figure 8.

All the 3 first and most selected actions can impact the business badly for obvious reasons. However, if talking to the management team before leaving was the most selected action, major of the consumers in Dublin would help the restaurants' management team in the city to address efforts to make improvements where it is necessary.

CHAPTER 05: CONCLUSION

From the above study, the conclusions derived were highly beneficial in understanding the current perspective of consumers and management of the restaurant industry in Dublin. It was found that success in building customer loyalty and satisfaction in the restaurant industry depends on how well food service providers apply the food service attributes – the quality of food, beverage, service, price and value.

The study's conclusions revealed how the sample population of this research may react to the quality of some of the food service attributes, delivering to managers of restaurants in Dublin useful insights into where whether concentrate efforts.

Also, the study indicated that customers are more likely to appreciate the ambience and service as much as the food, and for this reason, full-service restaurants should consider the appearance of their place and perhaps develop improvements as much as concerning staff to the importance of delivering a great service.

The reputation of a restaurant and, thus, the possibility that customers would return for another meal, may be greatly improved by positive evaluations from regulars. Customers who are pleased with the quality of the food, the ambience, and the service are more likely to recommend the establishment to others. Therefore, company owners in the hospitality sector should come up with plans to encourage customers to post reviews of their dining experience online.

Furthermore, this study encourages companies in the restaurant sector in Dublin to consistently provide high-quality products and services to foster positive word-of-mouth. When a customer's requirements and desires are addressed, it creates a positive chain reaction that benefits both sides – the restaurant and the customer.

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Appendix 1:

Survey Questionnaire 1 (for regular people/ restaurant consumers in Dublin)

1. Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2. Age

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-30
- ☐ 31-36
- ☐ 37-42
- ☐ 43-48
- ☐ 49-54
- ☐ 55-59
- ☐ +60

3. What is your nationality?

4. How often do you eat out?

- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ More than three times a week

5. How much do you spend monthly eating out?

- Up to 100 euro
- 200 - 300 euro
- More than 300 euro

6.How important is the quality of service for you when dining in a restaurant - being 1 very unimportant and 5 very important.

- 1 – Very Unimportant
- 2 – Unimportant
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Important
- 5 – Very Important

7.If the service does not present any quality for you, how would you act? You would ...

- Give negative feedback
- Give recommendations to management team
- Not revisit the restaurant
- Give a second chance to the restaurant on another visit

8.What factors of quality of service most impact your experience (select NOT more than three):

- Staff's willingness to attend requests
- Hygiene involved (clean plates, cutlery, table ...)
- Staff manners and behaviour
- Timing of waiting

9. When planning on what restaurant to go to, what is more relevant?

- ☐ The quality of the food
- ☐ The quality of the beverage (drinks)

10. Have you ever gone to a restaurant just because of the good range and quality of drinks they can offer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. If you enjoy the food and drinks provided by a restaurant, but not the quality of service, would you go again?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. If the quality of the setting (décor, chairs, table location, music and so on) is not good, what would you do?

- ☐ Leave the place
- ☐ Give a chance to the service and food
- ☐ Negative feedback
- ☐ Recommendations to management team

14. Karki and Panthi (2018) believe and researched to prove that in bars, the ambience is more important than the drinks. From 1 to 5 - how much do you agree that the quality of the setting

(décor, chairs, table location, music and so on) is important? Being 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree

- ☐ 1 – Strongly disagree
- ☐ 2 – Disagree
- ☐ 3 – Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ 4 – Agree
- ☐ 5 – Strongly agree

15. In a restaurant, at the end of the service, do you compare the money you paid and the quality of food, service, drink and so on that has been provided?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. In a restaurant, do you understand that the money paid for food and drinks also includes the quality of the service, sitting and so on?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Never thought this way

17. If your satisfaction regarding all aspects of the restaurant service is more than GOOD at the end of your dinner, do you demonstrate it?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

18. If yes, how?

- Giving staff good tips
- Leaving a good feedback
- Thanking the staff team more than once
- Recommending the restaurant to family and friends

19.If your satisfaction regarding all aspects of the restaurant service is NOT good at the end of your dinner, do you demonstrate it?

- Yes
- No

20.If yes, how?

- Not giving staff tips
- Leaving negative feedback
- Talking to the management team before leaving
- Not revisiting the place

Appendix 2:

Informed Consent for respondents of Questionnaire 1 (for regular people/ restaurant consumers in Dublin)

Research: The food service attributes applied by the restaurant industry in Dublin to build customer loyalty and satisfaction

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*Obrigatório

Informed Consent

The purpose of this research project is to outline the reasons and benefits that lead restaurants in Dublin to make efforts to develop and improve food service attributes, with the contribution of restaurant consumers and the management team of some of the restaurants in the city.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you can contribute to this research by sharing your perspective as a restaurant customer in Dublin.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address. The survey questions will be about your perspective regarding the food service attributes applied by the restaurant industry in Dublin.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and may be shared with academic staff in ICD.

This research is being carried out by Jonata Rosa as part of a Degree in Marketing in Independent Colleges Dublin. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Daniel O'Sullivan (School of Business ICD) and has been granted ethical approval by Independent College Dublin.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Dr. Daniel O'Sullivan (daniel.osullivan@independentcolleges.ie).

This research has been reviewed according to Independent College Dublin procedures for research involving human subjects.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

*

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age
- you live in Dublin, Ireland

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree