

## ANTECEDENTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN FOOD SERVICE BUSINESS (A REVIEW)

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### ABSTRACT

This study presents literature review relating to antecedents of customer satisfaction in food service business. The review is based on literatures about customer satisfaction in food service related business that have been published in peer reviewed journals in the period from 2012 to 2016. A total of 17 articles were reviewed. Through a systematic review process, the result of this study shows there are three major antecedents of customer satisfaction in food service related business, namely quality of service, food attributes, and atmospheric factors.

Keywords: antecedents of customer satisfaction; food service business, journal.

### INTRODUCTION

Food is an important element of tourism. The role of food service cannot be separated from tourism industry. Tourism and food production are seen as potentially significant sources of economic development in rural areas (Hall, *et al*, 2003). Spending on food is a major item in the tourist budget which in total may constitute a pillar of many national and sub-national economies with estimates that food and beverages account for as much as a third of overall expenditure (Henderson, 2009).

Food has become important attraction for international visitors to visit a destination. As Ardabili, *et al* (2011) stated that one of the main implicit factors that tourists consider in choosing the destination is food. In line with that, Wijaya, *et al*, (2013) noted that visitors are increasingly travelling to destinations in search of culinary experiences.

Given the fact that food is important aspect of tourism, it is important for food service provider to maintain satisfaction of its customers. Customer satisfaction leads to advantage consequences for food service industry. In the restaurant business, customer satisfaction can be linked directly to restaurant sales (Hwang & Zhao, 2010). Restaurateurs are striving hard to satisfy customers in order to retain them and build market share (Noone, 2008). Many researchers discovered that in food service business, satisfied customer lead to positive behavioral intention (Liu, *et al*, 2009; Qin,

& Prybutok, 2009; Ryu, *et al*, 2012; Liang & Zhang, 2012), revisit intention (Han, *et al* 2009; and Law, *et al* 2004), and word of mouth (Babin, *et al* 2005).

Satisfaction can be described as the fulfillment obtained by a customer after consuming a product or service (Oliver, 1997). Satisfaction is the feeling that occurs in a customer upon completing a purchase, in the phase following the acquisition of a service (Senic & Marinkovic, 2013). Customer satisfaction is essential component for successful business, especially in service business. As Sabir, *et al* (2014) noted that customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in success of every business organization whether it is meant for a product or a service. Rimmington & Yuksel (1998) stated that the concept of customer satisfaction is essential to the effective delivery of service. Customer satisfaction with a company's products or services is often seen as the key to a company's success and long-term competitiveness (Law, *et al*, 2004). Many researchers agreed that customer satisfaction is essential for successful and survival of a business (Pizam & Ellis, 1999; Gilbert, *et al* 2004; Gupta, Mclaughlin, & Gomez, 2007).



Figure 1  
Customers are Enjoying Food at Restaurant.

Food service business must provide satisfaction to its customer for the purpose of advantages. In the restaurant business, customer satisfaction can be linked directly to restaurant sales Hwang & Zhao (2010). Restaurateurs are striving hard to satisfy

customers in order to retain them and build market share (Noone, 2008; Zhang, et al, 2013).

As suggested previously, customer satisfaction lead to advantage consequences for food service business providers, this paper aim to explore literatures to provide information regarding antecedents of customer satisfaction in food service business.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a literature review focusing on relevant studies on antecedents of customer satisfaction in food service business that published during the period of 2012 through 2016. To accomplish the aim of this study, author searched for literatures on customer satisfaction from on line literatures database by typing relevant search terms such as "guest", "customer", "consumer" "satisfaction", "restaurant", "food service" in the search tool. A total of 17 relevant articles were downloaded and reviewed.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Quality of Service**

Research shows there are many antecedents to customer satisfaction in food service business. One of the major antecedents to customer satisfaction is the quality of service given by a food service provider to its customers. Gorondutse & Hilman (2014) conducted a research to explore the most common constructs for quality in the food and beverages industry that influence customer satisfaction. They found that attributes of service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance & empathy) have positive and significant influences on customer satisfaction. In line with previous research, Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016) investigated factors that may enhance quick-service restaurant consumer dining satisfaction and behavior intentions. They found that restaurants that offer higher Service quality (speedy service, accuracy of order received, professionalism of staff, etc.), are more likely to have satisfied consumers. Other researchers conducted survey research to explore International tourists' satisfaction with Ghanaian upscale restaurant services and revisit intentions were Adam, Adongo & Dayour (2015). They concluded that attributes of service quality in the Ghanaian upscale restaurant have impact on visitor's satisfaction.

Table 1.  
Summarize of Service Attributes

No	Author(s)	Service Attributes
1	Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016)	Service quality (speedy service, accuracy of order received, professionalism of staff)
2	Min (2016)	Kindness of staff
3	Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015)	Accuracy, Ease of understanding, Speed, High friendliness
4	Adam, Adongo & Dayour (2015)	Service quality: Tangible aspects, reliability, assurance, responsiveness & empathy
5	Min & Lee (2014)	Service factor (skill of handling complaints, level of English communication by staff, and kindness of servers)
6	Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014)	Service quality
7	Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic (2014)	Quality of interaction
8	Gorondutse & Hilman (2014)	Attributes of service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance & empathy)
9	Mathe-Soulek, Scott-Halsell & Roseman (2014)	Customer orientation
10	Ma, Qu & Eliwa (2014)	Staff service quality
11	Han & Ryu (2013)	Service encounter performance
12	Gazzoli, Hancer & Kim (2013)	Employee-level customer orientation
13	Choi & Sheel (2012)	Sitting service & human service
14	Liang & Zhang (2012)	Interaction orientation

In 2012, Choi & Sheel examined the relationship between the services offered to waiting customers and customer satisfaction in family restaurants. They confirmed that the most critical factor that affected customer satisfaction was sitting service. That is, providing spaces and chairs for waiting customers significantly enhance their satisfaction. In addition, the human service was also proven to affect customer

satisfaction. Han & Ryu (2012) explored what factors driving customers' word-of-mouth intentions in full-service restaurants. They found that the effect of service encounter performance on customer satisfaction is positive and significant. Another researcher that examined the relationships between interaction orientation and customer satisfaction were Liang & Zhang (2012). The analytical results of their research demonstrated that interaction orientation significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Min (2016) found out that kindness of staff were the top three significant factors to customer satisfaction with ethnic Korean restaurant.

Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015) applied mixed-method research to address drawbacks of importance–performance method and develop a novel approach that identifies satisfaction drivers for unit-level quick service restaurant (QSR). They found that the service attributes such as ease of understanding the order taker, cleanliness, and speed provide a surprise and delight that will enhance customers' satisfaction. Finally, high friendliness will increase satisfaction. Moreover, Min & Lee (2014) conducted a study to explore the connection between Australian residents' satisfaction with Korean cuisine. The study findings reveal that the service factors such as skill of handling complaints, level of English communication by staff, and kindness of servers had relationship to Australian residents' satisfaction with Korean cuisine. Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014) conducted a study specifically in Quick Service Restaurant to examine the relationship between service quality, and customer loyalty. Results of the study showed that service quality directly influence customer satisfaction. Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic (2014) in their attempt to identify the antecedents of satisfaction and revisit attentions of full-service restaurants found that atmosphere and quality of interaction have surfaced as significant antecedents of satisfaction. Mathe-Soulek, Scott-Halsell & Roseman (2014) shows that customer orientation will be positively related to customer satisfaction. Ma, Qu & Eliwa (2014) examined the structural relationships among staff service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the context of fine-dining restaurants with a special focus on gender's moderating effects. The results showed that staff service quality contributed to the customers' satisfaction. Gazzoli, Hancer & Kim (2013) were motivated by a desire to understand why employee-customer orientation influences customers' perceptions of the service encounter. The result of the survey research shows that employee level customer orientation was significantly related to customer's perception of Internal Quality, which in turn positively affects customer service.

## Food Attributes

Food attributes plays important role as antecedent of customer satisfaction in food service business. This literature review has shown that many researches indicated that food attributes have positive influence on customer satisfaction. As Bufquin, DiPietro & Partlow (2016) investigated the effects of specific service quality dimensions from the DinEX model on customers' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. They found that food healthfulness and food quality have an influence on customers' satisfaction. Min (2016) conducted a study to identify the selection attributes and satisfaction of ethnic restaurants in a multi-ethnic society. The study indicated that freshness of food, followed by taste of food, kindness of staff were the top three significant factors to customer satisfaction with ethnic Korean restaurant. In addition, Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016) investigated factors that may enhance quick-service restaurant consumer dining satisfaction and behavior intentions. Result analysis shows that: firstly, restaurant that provides higher quality food (flavor, freshness, etc.), they tend to be more highly satisfied with their dining experience.

Table 2.  
Summarize of Food Attributes

No	Author(s)	Food Attributes
1	Bufquin, DiPietro & Partlow (2016)	Food healthfulness and food quality
2	Min (2016)	Freshness of food, taste of food
3	Kim, Park, Kim & Ryu (2013)	Perceived healthiness
4	Min & Lee (2014)	Food factor (taste of food, amount of food, and freshness of food).
5	Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014)	Food quality
6	Ma, Qu & Eliwa (2014)	Food quality
7	Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015)	Taste, temperature
8	Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016)	Food quality (flavor, freshness)

Other researchers, Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016) investigated factors that may enhance quick-service restaurant consumer dining satisfaction and behavior intentions. Result analysis shows that the restaurant that provides higher quality food (flavor, freshness, etc.) they tend to be more highly satisfied with their dining experience. Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015) applied mixed-method research to address drawbacks of importance–performance method and develop a novel approach that identifies satisfaction drivers for unit-level quick service restaurant (QSR). They found that taste, temperature, and accuracy are factors that a QSR drive-thru must be proficient at as a minimum threshold for consumer satisfaction. Kim, Park, Kim, & Ryu (2013) examined the inter-relationships among perceived restaurant food healthiness, value, satisfaction, and re-patronage intentions in mid-to-upscale restaurants in South Korea. Their finding indicated that perceived healthiness and value have a significant direct influence on diner's satisfaction. Moreover, Min & Lee (2014) conducted a study to explore the connection between Australian residents' satisfaction with Korean cuisine. The study found that selection attributes (facility, menu, service & food) of Korean Restaurant. The study findings reveal that four factors were derived as selection attributes of Korean restaurants: the facility factor (atmosphere, interior design, scale and size, and room lighting), the menu factor (diversity of menu, and uniqueness or originality of menu), the service factor (skill of handling complaints, level of English communication by staff, and kindness of servers), and food factor (taste of food, amount of food, and freshness of food). However, the menu factor has the most positive influence on customer satisfaction. Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014) conducted a study specifically in Quick Service Restaurant to examine the relationship between the three dimensions of relationship quality (food quality, service quality, and environment quality) and customer loyalty. Results of the study showed that food quality, service quality, and environment quality directly influence customer satisfaction. Ma, Qu & Eliwa (2014) examined the structural relationships among food quality, staff service quality, image, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the context of fine-dining restaurants with a special focus on gender's moderating effects. The results showed that food quality and staff service quality both contributed to the customers' satisfaction.

## Atmospheric Factors

Atmospheric factors have important role in enhancing customer satisfaction in food service business. Researchers such as Raab, Zemke, Hertzman & Singh (2013) in their study to gain knowledge of the impact of the noise environment on restaurant customers' overall satisfaction levels concluded that noise level factors such as effects of noise and appropriateness of noise levels, influenced overall satisfaction. Other researchers that investigated factors that may enhance quick-service restaurant consumer dining satisfaction were Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016). The results of their study shows that the restaurants that provide desirable Physical Surroundings (attractive décor, suitable music, appropriate lighting, etc.) can also improve their consumers' levels of Dining Satisfaction. Moreover, Min & Lee (2014) conducted a study to explore the connection between Australian residents' satisfaction with Korean cuisine. The study revealed that the facility factor (atmosphere, interior design, scale and size, and room lighting) have relationship to Australian residents' satisfaction with Korean cuisine. Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014) conducted a study specifically in Quick Service Restaurant to examine the relationship between environment quality) and customer loyalty. Results of the study showed that environment quality directly influence customer satisfaction. Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic (2014) in their attempt to identify the antecedents of satisfaction and revisit attentions of full-service restaurants found that atmosphere and quality of interaction have surfaced as significant antecedents of satisfaction. Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015) applied mixed-method research to address drawbacks of importance–performance method and develop a novel approach that identifies satisfaction drivers for unit-level quick service restaurant (QSR). They found that the factor of cleanliness will enhance customer's satisfaction.

Table 3.  
Summarize of Atmospheric Factors

No.	Author(s)	Atmospheric Attributes
1	Raab, Zemke, Hertzman & Singh (2013)	Noise level factors such as effects of noise and appropriateness of noise levels
2	Min & Lee (2014)	Facility factor (atmosphere, interior design, scale and size, and room lighting)



3	Swimberghe & Wooldridge (2014)	Environment quality
4	Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic (2014)	Atmosphere
5	Mathe-Soulek, Slevitch & Dallinger (2015)	Cleanliness
6	Mason, Jones, Benefield & Walton (2016)	Physical surroundings (attractive décor, suitable music, appropriate lighting)

## CONCLUSION

This study has reviewed the literature on consumer satisfaction in the food service business. The results of systematic review of literatures shows there are three major factors of antecedents of customer satisfaction in the food service business, namely quality of services, Food attributes and atmospheric factors.

Recommendation: food service business marketing practitioners can develop a marketing strategy according to the results of this study.

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