Factors Affecting Customer's Menu Item Selection in Restaurants

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Abstract

With the intent of investigating the factors that affected restaurant menu item choice, the data collected from 40 respondents from various restaurants, it was expected that most restaurant supervisors knew the inclinations of their clients. This knowledge was utilized to maximize the experience of the customers and, consequently, increase the restaurant's income. The quantitative data was gathered through a questionnaire survey method, encompassing factors such as customers' personal preferences, budget considerations, variety and options, enticing descriptions, and visual appeal, which all played a role in influencing customers' choices. Moreover, social and cultural factors, health and nutritional concerns, recommendations and reviews, and seasonal specials were found to have an impact on customers' choices.
Keywords: Affecting, Customer, Menu, Restaurant

Introduction

the acceleration growth of the restaurant industry, it is very much essential for food service operation about the attributes that influences the customer`s choice for menu item to generate and maximize the customer satisfaction and retain them for the business (Sabir, Irfan, Akhtar, Pervez, & Rehman, 2014). It helps the restaurant to maximize their sales and also helps them in menu pricing. Menu item selection directly associates with the people thinking and it is a fallacy masking a very complex task to understand about the perception in menu item selection in restaurant (Peters, 2020). People choose menu item as per their different perspective like price of the food, menu item description healthy option, method of preparation, combination of ingredients, portion size, and different religious background of customer (Peters, 2020).

Menu item selection is the factor which is directly related with the consumer thinking behavior. It influences the menu planning in the restaurant (Ozdemir, 2014). If the manager knows about the preferences of the people, the greater chance to maximize the satisfaction and revenue of restaurant (Tyagi & Bolia, 2022). The research on the attributes that influences customer's menu item selection which was conducted in the restaurant of Australia by Kimberley PETERS (LeeDavid & Cranage, 2020). Comprehensive studies on the variables influencing patrons' choice of menu items in nearby restaurants are lacking in the Boudha Area. There is currently a knowledge gap about the precise characteristics that influence menu choices in this particular region, despite the importance of knowing customer preferences and decision-making processes (Fidan, Teneva, Satanko, & Dimitrova, 2018). Local restaurants would benefit greatly from the knowledge gained by doing research in the Boudha area to better understand the factors driving menu item selection. This will allow them to customize their menus to better suit patron tastes and enhance eating experiences.

This study was important to identify customer perception about the menu item choice. This study contributes in menu engineering and pricing (Linassi, Alberton, & Marinho, 2016) .This study aim to enhance customer satisfaction and maximize revenue (Ahmed, 2015). This study will contribute to restaurant in forecasting the sales and helps to know the attributes that influences the menu item selection in restaurant. The aim of this study was to explore the reason that influences menu item selection in restaurant.

Material & Method

The quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire survey method (Mahat & Agrawal, 2019). This study was carried out in different casual restaurants in the Boudha area of Kathmandu Valley. The inclusion criteria consisted of guests who frequently visited different restaurants. The targeted population of this research was 40 respondents from different casual restaurants, whose age was above 18 and who visited the restaurants frequently. The survey was taken from the voluntary participation of people with a high level of confidentiality regarding their personal information. In this research, snowball sampling was used for the selection of respondents and to fill out the questionnaire related to factors influencing menu

item selection in restaurants. The researcher used snowball sampling for the selection of respondents and to fill out the questionnaire related to factors influencing menu item selection in restaurants. SPSS 20 Version software was used to analyze the data, employing frequency, percentage, and cumulative percent to derive the results (Mahat, Kandel, & Shrestha, 2021).

Results and Analysis

Demographic

A sample of 40 respondents and depicted their age distribution. The majority, comprising 77.5% of the total, fell within the 18-24 age groups, with 31 individuals. The 25-30 age groups represented 7.5% of the sample, consisting of 3 respondents. Additionally, the 31-40 age groups accounted for 10% of the respondents, with 4 individuals. Lastly, 5% of the sample, or 2 respondents, were above the age of 40. Regarding gender,22 respondents identified as male, making up 55% of the total, while 18 respondents identified as female, accounting for 45% of the total. Similarly, 8 respondents were married, accounting for 20% of the total, while 32 respondents were unmarried, representing 80% of the total.

Reason that influences menu item selection

Table 1: Local produce dish
I prefer a dish that is local produce.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	12.5
	Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	20.0
	Agree	18	45.0	45.0	65.0
	strongly agree	14	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field study, 2023

The data showed that a majority of respondents (80.0%) expressed a preference for dishes made with local produce. This indicated a strong inclination towards supporting and consuming locally sourced ingredients. Only a small percentage (2.5%) disagreed with this preference, while the remaining respondents fell into the neutral category. Overall, the data suggested a positive sentiment towards dishes that utilized local produce, highlighting a potential interest in supporting local food systems and enjoying the benefits of fresh, regional ingredients.

Table 2: Price in menu before order
 I look for the price of dish in menu before ordering.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	3	7.5	7.5	12.5
	Neutral	12	30.0	30.0	42.5
	Agree	12	30.0	30.0	72.5
	Strongly agree	11	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, 2023

The data indicated that a substantial majority (57.5%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I looked for the price of a dish on the menu before ordering." This suggested that pricing played a significant role in their decision-making process. A smaller portion disagreed or strongly disagreed (12.5% and 5.0%, respectively), while a considerable percentage remained neutral (30.0%). Overall, the data highlighted the importance of price transparency for a significant portion of customers when choosing a dish from a menu.

Table 3: Choose dish on past experience
 I choose the dish as per my past experience about the dish.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	17.5
	Neutral	6	15.0	15.0	32.5
	Agree	22	55.0	55.0	87.5
	Strongly agree	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Based on the data provided, it was evident that a majority of respondents (67.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "They ordered the menu item that they thought to consume based on their past experiences." This indicated that personal experiences played a significant role in their decision-making process when choosing a dish. A smaller percentage (12.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 15.0% remained neutral. The data highlighted the importance of past encounters with dishes in shaping their menu selections, underscoring the influence of previous experiences.

Table 4: Order menu item that consume
Do you agree that you order the menu item that you thought to consume.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	12.5
	Neutral	10	25.0	25.0	37.5
	Agree	17	42.5	42.5	80.0
	Strongly agree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

The majority of respondents (62.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they ordered the menu item they had intended to consume based on their past experiences. A smaller percentage disagreed or strongly disagreed (12.5% and 7.5% respectively), while 25% remained neutral. Overall, the data indicates a tendency among respondents to follow through with their initial menu choices, reflecting the influence of their prior intentions and decision-making.

Table 5: New Experience
The food I order that provide the new experience to me.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Neutral	17	42.5	42.5	45.0
	Agree	14	35.0	35.0	80.0
	Strongly agree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Respondent strongly disagreed with this statement, representing 2.5% of the total. 17 respondents, accounting for 42.5%, had a neutral stance. 14 respondents (35.0%) agreed that the food they ordered provided a new experience, while 8 respondents (20.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, out of the 40 respondents, 80.0% expressed agreement or strong agreement that the food they ordered provided a new experience.

Table 6: Order dish that will appetite
I would order a dish that will appetite my hunger and satisfy me.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	7.5
	Neutral	1	2.5	2.5	10.0
	Agree	12	30.0	30.0	40.0
	Strongly agree	24	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Out of the 40 respondents, 2 respondents (5.0%) strongly disagreed with this statement, while 1 respondent (2.5%) disagreed. Additionally, 1 respondent (2.5%) remained neutral on the matter. On the other hand, 12 respondents (30.0%) agreed that the dish they ordered fulfilled their appetite, while the majority of 24 respondents (60.0%) strongly agreed. In summary, a significant portion of the respondents (90.0%) expressed agreement or strong agreement that the dish they ordered successfully satisfied their hunger.

Table 7: Dish with healthy option
I would choose a dish that has healthy option.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	7.5
	Neutral	15	37.5	37.5	45.0
	Agree	6	15.0	15.0	60.0
	Strongly agree	16	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Out of the 40 respondents, only 1 respondent (2.5%) strongly disagreed with this statement, while 2 respondents (5.0%) disagreed. 15 respondents (37.5%) remained neutral regarding their preference for a healthy option in their chosen dish. On the other hand, 6 respondents (15.0%) agreed that they would choose a dish with a healthy option, and a majority of 16 respondents (40.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, the data indicates that a significant portion of the respondents (55.0%) expressed agreement or strong agreement with the preference for a healthy option when choosing a dish.

Table 8: Select dish after knowing ingredient
 I would select the dish after knowing the ingredient use in it.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	25.0
	Neutral	13	32.5	32.5	57.5
	Agree	11	27.5	27.5	85.0
	Strongly agree	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Out of the 40 respondents, only 1 respondent (2.5%) strongly disagreed with this statement, while 9 respondents (22.5%) disagreed. Additionally, 13 respondents (32.5%) remained neutral regarding their preference for selecting a dish based on ingredient knowledge. On the other hand, 11 respondents (27.5%) agreed that they would choose a dish after knowing the ingredients, while 6 respondents (15.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, the data suggests that a significant portion of the respondents (42.5%) expressed agreement or strong agreement with the preference for considering the ingredients when selecting a dish.

Table 9: Dish order recommended by friends
 I would order the dish recommended by friend.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Disagree	6	15.0	15.0	25.0
	Neutral	13	32.5	32.5	57.5
	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	90.0
	Strongly agree	4	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Out of the 40 respondents, 4 respondents (10.0%) strongly disagreed with this statement, while 6 respondents (15.0%) disagreed. Furthermore, 13 respondents (32.5%) remained neutral regarding their preference for ordering dishes recommended by friends. On the other hand, 13 respondents (32.5%) agreed that they would order a dish based on their friend's recommendation, while 4 respondents (10.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, the data suggests that a significant portion of the respondents (42.5%) expressed agreement or strong agreement with the preference for ordering dishes based on their friend's recommendation.

Table 10: Dish base on culture
I prefer the dish according to my culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	37.5
	Neutral	4	10.0	10.0	47.5
	Agree	9	22.5	22.5	70.0
	Strongly agree	12	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Field Survey, 2023

Out of the 40 respondents, 3 respondents (7.5%) strongly disagreed with this statement, while 12 respondents (30.0%) disagreed. Additionally, 4 respondents (10.0%) remained neutral regarding their preference for choosing dishes based on their cultural background. On the other hand, 9 respondents (22.5%) agreed that they would prefer dishes according to their culture, and an equal number of 12 respondents (30.0%) strongly agreed. Overall, the data indicates that a significant portion of the respondents (52.5%) expressed agreement or strong agreement with the preference for selecting dishes based on their cultural influences.

Thus, the process of menu item selection in restaurants is shaped by a myriad of factors, each contributing to the complex decisions customers make. Research underscores the importance of understanding these factors and tailoring menus to meet diverse preferences, health concerns, and social dynamics. By strategically addressing these influencing factors, restaurant owners can create a more satisfying dining experience and foster customer loyalty.

Conclusion

The major aim of the study was to explore the reasons that influenced menu item selection in restaurants. The data collected from 40 respondents revealed that several factors played a significant role in influencing customers' choices. These factors included customers' personal preferences, budget considerations, variety and options, enticing descriptions, and visual appeal. Furthermore, social and cultural factors, health and nutritional concerns, recommendations and reviews, as well as seasonal specials, were found to have an impact on customer's choices. The findings highlighted the importance for restaurant owners and managers to consider these factors when designing their menus. By catering to diverse preferences and addressing customer needs, restaurants can enhance the dining experience, increase customer satisfaction, and foster customer loyalty.

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