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A Study on Customer Preferences and Service Experience

Vignesh. S[1*], Dr. T. Vetriprabu[2]

[1,2] *Jeppiaar University, Chennai 600119*

[*] *Corresponding author*

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Abstract

The globalization of food culture has significantly transformed consumer preferences, leading to an increased demand for international cuisines, particularly desserts. This research paper examines customer preferences and service experience in Egyptian dessert outlets, with specific reference to 11:11 Laban in Chennai. The study adopts a descriptive research design and utilizes both primary and secondary data sources.
Primary data was collected from 50 respondents using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data was obtained from food blogs, industry reports, and online platforms. The research analyzes key factors influencing customer satisfaction, including product quality, service efficiency, pricing, ambience, and promotional strategies. The findings reveal that product quality and word-of-mouth promotion are the primary drivers of customer attraction, while service quality, staff behavior, and cleanliness significantly influence customer satisfaction. The study concludes that Egyptian dessert outlets have strong growth potential in Chennai's competitive food industry.

Keywords: Customer Preference, Service Experience, Egyptian Desserts, Consumer Behavior, Chennai

1. Introduction

The food and beverage industry has undergone rapid transformation due to globalization, urbanization, and evolving consumer lifestyles. Modern consumers are increasingly inclined toward exploring diverse and international cuisines, particularly desserts that offer unique taste experiences and aesthetic appeal.

Egyptian desserts such as Kunafa, Basbousa, and Umm Ali are gaining popularity in urban markets due to their rich flavors, creamy textures, and visually attractive presentation. These desserts provide a distinct alternative to traditional Indian sweets, thereby attracting younger consumers and food enthusiasts.

In Chennai, outlets like 11:11 Laban have successfully introduced Egyptian dessert concepts to the local market. These outlets combine traditional recipes with modern presentation techniques, creating a unique value proposition. Social media platforms further amplify their popularity by showcasing visually appealing desserts, influencing customer preferences and purchase behavior.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze customer awareness, preferences, satisfaction levels, and service experience in Egyptian dessert outlets.

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of this study draw from extensive scholarly literature on consumer behavior, service quality, and food marketing. Kotler and Keller (2016) established that customer satisfaction is fundamentally a product of the relationship between perceived value and customer expectations. When perceived value meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction is achieved; conversely, when expectations are unmet, dissatisfaction results. This framework is particularly pertinent to the food service industry, where expectations are shaped by a complex interplay of sensory, aesthetic, social, and economic factors.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), in their seminal work on service quality, introduced the SERVQUAL model, which delineates five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. Subsequent research applying this model to the food service sector has confirmed that all five dimensions contribute significantly to customer satisfaction, with reliability the ability to consistently deliver what is promised often emerging as the most critical dimension (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

The role of food quality in driving customer satisfaction in restaurants has been extensively documented in the literature. Liu and Jang (2009) found that food quality is the most significant predictor of customer satisfaction in ethnic restaurants, particularly where customers are encountering the cuisine for the first time. This finding aligns strongly with the context of Egyptian dessert outlets in India, where the novelty of the cuisine means that quality becomes the primary reference point for evaluating the overall experience.

The influence of social media and digital word-of-mouth on consumer decision-making in the food industry has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years. Kim, Lim, and Brymer (2015) demonstrated that social media exposure significantly increases the likelihood of restaurant visitation among younger, urban consumers. Visual content —particularly food photography shared on Instagram and YouTube — plays an especially powerful role in shaping perceptions of new and unfamiliar cuisines.

Research on the globalization of food cultures indicates that culinary globalization is not a one- dimensional process of Western food spreading to developing markets, but rather a complex, multidirectional exchange in which diverse food cultures gain global audiences through diaspora communities, tourism, media, and entrepreneurship (Wilk, 2006). The increasing popularity of Middle Eastern cuisine in Indian cities can be understood within this broader context of culinary globalization.

Studies on pricing sensitivity in the Indian food and beverage sector suggest that urban, middle-class consumers are willing to pay premium prices for perceived quality and novelty, provided that the overall value proposition encompassing product, service, and experience is clearly communicated and consistently delivered (Nair & Choudhary, 2020). This has important implications for pricing strategies in specialty dessert outlets such as 11:11 Laban.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for the purpose of systematically describing the characteristics of the phenomenon under study specifically, customer preferences and service experiences at 11:11 Laban. The descriptive design enables the researchers to accurately portray the profile,

opinions, and behaviors of the target population without manipulating variables, making it ideal for applied business research of this nature.

Primary Data:

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 50 respondents who had visited 11:11 Laban in Chennai. The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions covering demographic information, awareness channels, product preferences, service quality perceptions, satisfaction levels, and willingness to recommend the outlet to others.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data was sourced from peer-reviewed academic journals, food industry reports, consumer review platforms such as Zomato and Google Reviews, food blogs, and relevant publications on consumer behavior and food marketing.

4. Results and Discussion

The results highlight that product quality is the primary determinant of customer satisfaction. Customers prioritize taste, freshness, and consistency over pricing factors.

Word-of-mouth marketing plays a crucial role in attracting new customers, indicating strong customer trust and brand reputation. The influence of discounts suggests that pricing strategies can enhance customer retention.

Service quality, including staff behavior and efficiency, significantly impacts the overall customer experience. Cleanliness and ambience also contribute to customer satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of maintaining high operational standards.

5. Findings

Word-of-mouth is the primary source of customer awareness Product quality is the most important factor influencing preferences Customers are highly satisfied with service and ambience

Discounts influence purchasing decisions

The outlet is gaining popularity among new customers High customer loyalty is observed

6. Suggestions

The business can introduce new dessert varieties to attract more customers. Offering combo deals and discounts can improve customer retention. Improving service efficiency during peak hours can enhance customer experience. Increasing social media marketing can further boost brand awareness.

7. Limitations of the Study

Small sample size (50 respondents) Limited to Chennai region

Time constraints

Based on self-reported data

8. Conclusion

The study clearly establishes that Egyptian dessert outlets are steadily gaining popularity in Chennai, primarily due to their unique product offerings, rich flavors, and visually appealing presentation. These outlets provide a distinctive alternative to traditional desserts, which attracts a wide range of consumers, particularly young customers and food enthusiasts who seek new culinary experiences. The findings indicate a high level of customer satisfaction, especially in terms of product taste, service quality, staff behavior, cleanliness, and overall ambience. This suggests that the outlet has successfully created a positive and memorable customer experience, which plays a crucial role in building customer loyalty and encouraging repeat visits.

Furthermore, the research highlights that effective marketing strategies, particularly word-of-mouth promotion and social media engagement, significantly contribute to customer acquisition and brand visibility. Continuous innovation in product variety, presentation, and promotional offers can further enhance customer interest and retention. In a highly competitive food industry, businesses that consistently focus on maintaining high product quality, efficient service delivery, and a pleasant store environment are more likely to achieve long-term success.

Overall, the study emphasizes that customer experience is a critical determinant of business performance. By understanding customer preferences and adapting to changing market trends, Egyptian dessert outlets have strong potential for sustained growth and expansion in emerging urban markets like Chennai.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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