

Customers' Attitude toward Buffet Restaurant: A Study Conducted on Selected Buffet Restaurants in Dhaka City

Md. Khairul Alam Rasel¹

Abstract: *Dhaka is one of the largest cities in the world where people are so busy with their life. Having food in restaurants is considered recreation. This gets clear when social media are analysed properly as people upload enormous number of photo while passing good time at restaurants. This study is concentrated to understand the attitude of customers toward buffet restaurants. Descriptive research technique was used to get feedback against a structured questionnaire from 120 respondents. Respondents were selected by applying judgement technique. The result of the study reveals that customer of buffet restaurants seek for quality of food along with variety of food at a fair and fixed price. They also consider the issue of cleanliness profoundly and location of the restaurants is also considered indeed.*

Keywords: Buffet, Recreation, Social Media, cleanliness.

Introduction

The greater Dhaka has a total population of over 18 million, and the city has 4.2% annual population growth rate (Worldpopulationreview.com, 2019). Everyday people are entering into the city with the hope of betterment of their life from different parts of the country. City dwellers are much busy with their work. They rarely find time to entertain themselves. Having food at restaurants has been a wonderful way to entertain them. Thus, restaurant is found in nook and corner of this city.

With a rapid expansion of the glorious Dhaka city, enormous numbers of new restaurants with new design are being opened in popular and crowded place in the city's commercial, residential and office areas in recent past, Huda and Hossain (2009). Increasing number of restaurants has made the food service industry so competitive. Alluring the customers to restaurants has been a challenge. Many restaurants emerged as buffet restaurant to allure customers in their restaurants. Throughout the year, many restaurants of Dhaka city offer buffet.

Generally, restaurants provide food to the customers in many ways. Restaurants deliver food in different ways like dine in, take away and delivery at home. In dine in system, customer has to eat the food within the restaurant. Whereas take away system allows customer to take the food outside the restaurants to eat. Finally in delivery system, customer order the food items through phone call to take the food delivered at home. However, one of the popular buzz words among the food lover is having buffet. A buffet

¹ Lecturer, Dept. of Marketing, National University Bangladesh, Email: khairuldumkt@gmail.com

is a kind of system of serving meal in which various dishes of food is displayed in a public area so that customer or diners can easily look around the available meals and take as much meal as he or she wishes against a fixed price. Generally a buffet is offered at hotels, restaurants and in many social events. Normally a buffet is limited by number of dishes but unlimited by amount of food served in the dishes. There are hot and cold buffets. In a hot buffet, there will be usually some hot dishes.

In a cold buffet, there will be lacking in hot food. A finger buffet includes serving of food which will be small and consumed easily only by hand, such as cupcakes, slices of pizza, foods on cocktail sticks, etc.

Literature Review:

Food is one of the fundamental needs of human being and food is absolutely necessary to maintain the quality of lives as it has a profound relation with maintaining a good health, preventing diseases and recovering from diseases. Therefore food has to be hygienic, healthy, varied, complete and balanced yet having pleasant taste, ZANDONADI et al. (2007).

Gu & Kim (2002) opined that food service market is one of the most highly-competitive industries today. Therefore it is immensely important for the marketer to understand the segment of consumers related to food service market. Marketer has to give considerable amount of effort to understand the attitude of consumers toward food service market while keeping it in mind that food service industry is also the global market's fastest growing industry.

Waldfoegel (2008) viewed that it is essential to note that the swift-evolving preferences of the consumer are incessantly influencing the food service industry.

Stubenitsky et al. (1999) thought in the same way and stated that Consumer's choice of food is determined by various influences which may include functional needs, symbolic interaction, personal taste, perceptions of value beside social and cultural value have significant impact on consumer choice process of food. Research has revealed the fact that people are more enthusiastic about eating outside home and the expenditure on these are increasing day by day in many countries.

In this regard, Pfannhauser and Reichhart (2000) added that diversified and individualistic pattern of human psychology along with ever increasing consumer demand have made consumer's perception and attitude toward food a challenging topic.

Bangladesh is not an exception in this regard. People love to eat outside on different occasion throughout the year. People of this country are food lover. Almost every street of Dhaka city has big restaurants which prove the country's food loving attitude.

Concerning this issue, Akbar & Alaudeen (2012) stated that there is a relationship between the development of a country and number of food service provider. With the development, country's number of restaurant tends to grow rapidly.

City people of Bangladesh are always busy with their tough schedule. They have less time to prepare food at home. Things become much difficult for those who are couple and work outside. They prefer to have ready food during the working days. Busy lifestyle has been major reason to the changing behaviour of city people toward food. This issue has been rightly identified by SANTOS et al. (2005) who opined that one of the main reasons of changes in eating habits is lack of free time of the population. Having food outside of home has become a habit of many families.

Wang and Lin (2017) stated that All-you-can-eat buffet is popular for people who have a habit of eating a lot and want a wide variety of food. In buffet meal-serving system, consumers can have as much food as they want in exchange of a fixed price. In a buffet restaurant, food is generally displayed in an open area within the restaurant so that consumers can directly view the food and instantaneously make choice of the food they love to consume.

Wang and Lin (2017) also showed in their study that food quality, variety, environment, price and food quantity are the most important considerations of the consumers while they take decision to have buffet in a particular restaurant. They also revealed that after the consumption of buffet, consumer like to react like "worth more than its cost", "affect appetite", "revisit" and "delicious foods". Finally they concluded that buffet consumers mostly want to have happiness, satisfaction and get a sense of value.

Few researchers emphasized that food quality and food service are important considerations of the consumers of restaurants. Huda and Hossain (2009) claimed that people gets fascinated to a particular restaurant when the restaurant provide quality food as well as effective food service with the profound involvement of the restaurant staffs.

Based on the priority given by the buffet consumers, restaurants should operate their activity. In this regard, Olsen (2002) also proclaimed that apart from food quality and taste, there are other substantial issues that restaurants should focus. These are place, atmosphere, serving, tangibles, and interior decorations.

Akinyele (2010) supported this with a claim that the restaurant experience should contain more than what customers wishes to consume. Hereafter, for food service industry players, offering good food and service are no longer the only way to attract and retain consumers.

Therefore, some researchers have argued that environment, place, attitude of the staff of the restaurants are important considerations of the buffet consumers. Likewise, Bilog

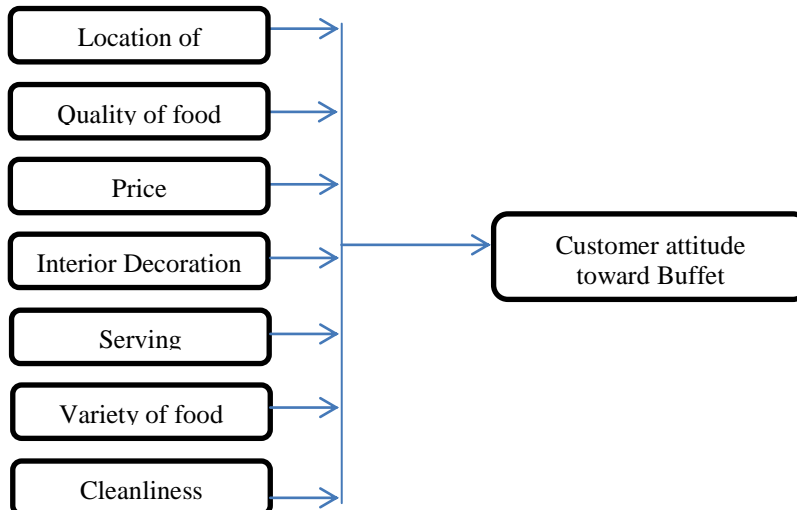
(2017) opined that four attributes are important for buffet restaurants. These are cleanliness, quality of food, type of food and price. He further stated that buffet restaurant owners and managers should focus on cleanliness as this is the utmost consideration of the junior professionals and senior professionals. He also proclaimed that senior professionals seek for excellent array of quality food. Therefore restaurants owners and managers should focus on creating and promoting a range of quality foods.

However sometimes people consider the health hazard associated with the consumption of food. Barbieri et al. (2012) argued about providing valuable nutritional information to help boost the knowledge of consumers regarding the meal choices. Thus, restaurants should offer healthier foods to meet the expectation of customers.

On the context of Bangladesh, it can easily be said that a considerable portion of population in Dhaka city like to eat out at different restaurants. They sometimes prefer to have buffet in few of the selected restaurants.

Conceptual Model

After studying various literature and conducting a focus group interview, few underlying factors have been identified which are responsible for forming the customer attitude toward buffet restaurants in Dhaka city. Finally conceptual model gets the shape of the following.



(Source: Developed by the researcher from secondary data)

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Research Gap

A good number of researches have been conducted on customer attitude toward restaurants in Dhaka city. Besides, few researches have been conducted on customer

attitude toward fast food. But no major study has been conducted on customer attitude toward Buffet restaurants in Dhaka city. In this study, attitude of customer toward buffet restaurants in Dhaka city have been identified and analysed.

Objective of the study

The broad objective of the study is to find out the factors primarily responsible in forming the customer attitude toward buffet restaurants in Dhaka city. The following objectives will also be fulfilled while attaining the broad objective.

- To appraise correlations among different factors responsible for forming attitude toward buffet restaurants.
- To evaluate importance of each possible factors.

Research methodology

This study has been conducted by adopting Descriptive research technique. Descriptive research assists us to have a clear understanding over an issue. Firstly, various fundamentally responsible factors in forming attitude toward buffet restaurants have been identified by studying various literatures. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Secondary data has been gathered from different internet sources, journals, newspapers and web-sites. Secondary data helped to identify the research gap and to determine the variables of the study. Primary data were collected by providing a structured questionnaire to the respondents who have the desire and ability to afford a buffet because taking a buffet meal requires mental and financial strength. Thus, judgment sampling technique has been used in this study to find out the actual respondents. Total 120 respondents were surveyed in this study. The respondents were requested to respond against the statements given with 5 point likert scale. This research has been conducted in five buffet restaurants located in Dhanmondi and Gulshan of Dhaka City. Therefore further research can be conducted in some other major divisional cities in Bangladesh.

Results and Discussion

Demographic profile of the respondents is given below

Table 1: Demographic profiling of respondents by Occupation

Occupation of the respondents	Number	In percentage
Business	38	31.67%
Service (Government)	12	10.00%
Service (Non-government)	45	37.50%
Student	20	16.67%
Housewife	5	4.17%
Total	120	100.00%

Table 2: Demographic profiling of respondents by Age

Age of the respondents	Number	In percentage
21 to 25	18	15.00%
26 to 30	25	20.83%
31 to 35	31	25.83%
36 to 40	21	17.50%
41 to 45	12	10.00%
46 to 50	9	7.50%
51 and above	4	3.33%
Total	120	100.00%

From table 1, it is clear that majority of the respondents are service holder in private organization whereas housewives have the least majority. From table 2, it is observed that majority of the respondents are between 26 to 35 years of age whereas only 3.33% are of 51 and above years of age.

Multiple regression analysis gives emphasize on Model Summary, ANOVA, and coefficient which are interpreted below:

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.734	.588	.437	.90305

The result of R ($R = 0.734$ or 73.4%) indicates a moderate degree of correlation among the identified variables. R^2 suggest the strength of association between dependent variable and independent variables. The result of the R^2 ($R^2 = 0.588$ or 58.80%) shows that 58.80% variation in dependent variable have been described by the recognised independent variables. In other way, 58.80% variation in dependent variable has been described by independent variables. Adjusted R^2 43.70% indicates that this percentage of variation have been explained by independent variables which actually have impact on dependent variable.

Table 4: ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.098	7	4.730	6.707	.001
	Residual	75.644	112	.806		
	Total	107.742	119			

The ANOVA table shows that the applied model is good enough to predict the outcome variable because the value of significance is 0.000. The value of F ($F = 6.707$) is significant at .05 level where the degree of freedom is in between 7 to 112 that agrees that

the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, independent variables do not affect the dependent variable is rejected.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.613	.462		12.491	.001
Location of the Restaurants	.434	.486	.453	.319	.000
Quality of Food	.593	.116	.633	2.528	.013
Price	.423	.088	.524	1.394	.006
Interior Decoration	.307	.088	.341	3.480	.081
Serving	-.023	.105	-.022	-.220	.826
Variety of Food	.542	.116	.585	1.790	.001
Cleanliness	.471	.123	.505	1.388	.004

From the above table, it can be understood that a positive correlation exists between independent variables and dependent variable. The standard coefficient in beta column for independent variables like Quality of Food, Variety of Food, Price, Cleanliness and location are .633, .585, .524, .505 and .453 respectively. All these values are significant at .05 level. So these factors are important determinants of customer attitude toward buffet restaurants.

Factor analysis

Table 6: Correlations Matrix

	Location of the Restaurants	Quality of Food	Price	Interior Decoration	Serving	Variety of Food	Cleanliness
Location of the Restaurants	1.000	0.298	-0.037	0.303	0.447	0.305	0.320
Quality of Food	0.298	1.000	-0.039	0.208	0.128	0.239	0.302
Price	-0.037	-0.039	1.000	0.040	0.146	0.139	-0.050
Interior Decoration	0.303	0.208	0.040	1.000	0.400	0.172	0.347
Serving	0.447	0.128	0.146	0.400	1.000	0.204	0.247
Variety of Food	0.305	0.239	0.139	0.172	0.204	1.000	0.562
Cleanliness	0.320	0.302	-0.050	0.347	0.247	0.562	1.000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.671
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	646.565
	df	21
	Sig.	.000

The result of Approx. Chi-square is 646.565 which are significant at 0.05 level with 21 degrees of freedom. The value of KMO is .671 which is larger than 0.5. Therefore, factor analysis is an appropriate technique.

Table 8: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.518	35.971	35.971	2.518	35.971	35.971
2	1.113	15.902	51.873	1.113	15.902	51.873
3	1.022	14.593	66.466	1.022	14.593	66.466
4	.788	11.256	77.722			
5	.721	10.296	88.018			
6	.468	6.680	94.699			
7	.371	5.301	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The above table named total variance explained indicates the extracted number of common factors with their related eigenvalues. This table also shows the proportions of variance caused from each factors as well as the cumulative percentage of variance caused from the factors. As per the criteria of retaining factor, Factors which have eigenvalues more than one (1) can be taken. However three factors have been taken in our study as they have met the criteria of retaining factor. The eigenvalues of first and second and the third factors are 2.518, 1.113 and 1.022 respectively with variance of 35.97%, 15.90% and 14.59% respectively. The all three factors accounted for 66.46% of variation.

Table 9: Component Matrix^a

	Component		
	1	2	3
Location of the Restaurants	.396	.901	-.300
Quality of Food	.722	-.379	.026
Price	.782	.390	.495
Interior Decoration	.421	.893	-.352
Serving	.229	.464	.661
Variety of Food	.757	-.108	.488
Cleanliness	.335	-.284	.591
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
a. 3 components extracted.			

From the above table, it is apparent that Quality of the food, Price and Variety of food are correlated with factor 1, Location of the restaurants and Interior Decoration are correlated with factor 2, Serving and cleanliness are correlated with factor 3. Here, the factor 1 can be labelled as Food price and intrinsic value. Factor 2 can be labelled as Location and tangibles. Factor 3 can be labelled as Serving in a Healthy ambience.

Findings

The city Dhaka never sleeps as People are so busy in their own profession. Life is expensive here which force both male and female of the family to engage in working. Therefore, People of Dhaka city have limited time in their hand to have refreshment. However, Number of recreational park is too limited in this city. Thus, people prefer to spend their limited time with quality in different restaurants in Dhaka city as these restaurants give them opportunity to sit for hours and spend some time with friends and family. Gathering for hours in buffet restaurants is also common to a portion of the city dwellers who can afford a buffet. Therefore it might be interesting to know how people form their perception about buffet restaurants.

The standard coefficient table have revealed quality of food, variety of food, price, cleanliness and location of the restaurants are vital factors in forming customer attitude toward buffet restaurants. While consumers take a decision regarding having a buffet in a restaurant, the first thing that come to consumer's mind is quality of the food. Thereafter, consumer emphasise on variety of food served by a particular buffet restaurant. The main focus here is to count the number of items offered by the buffet restaurant. Thirdly, consumer thinks about the price of taking the buffet meal. In the next stage, consumer focuses on the cleanliness of the restaurants. Finally consumer considers the location of the restaurants before going to have a buffet meal in a restaurant.

From the factor analysis, three factors have been identified. The first factor has been termed as price and the intrinsic value. The second factor has been named as location and tangibles and finally the third one has been labelled as serving in a healthy ambience.

Recommendations

Standard coefficient table have uncovered few independent variables as significant. Based on that significance, few recommendations are given below.

Quality of food is always a prime concern of consumers who eat at restaurants quite a lot. So is the case for consumers who like to have a buffet. Consumers, who visit buffet restaurants quite randomly, always prioritize restaurants that serve quality food. Therefore, food quality should not be compromised in any way. Marketer of buffet restaurants has to make a continuous effort to maintain quality of food consistently.

Variety of food is another important issue which is considered while making decision about having buffet. Buffet lover prefers to have variety of food. Taste of consumers is ever changing. To cope with the ever changing nature of taste of the consumers, Buffet restaurants should cater food with variation. This variation in food should be communicated properly with consumers.

Price is always a concern for majority of the people. Therefore, price should be adjusted with the other available buffet meal offer in the market. However adding an extra item in the buffet meal will cost more to the buffet provider. This issue should also be considered in pricing a buffet and communicated to the consumers.

Cleanliness is a concern of every consumer who visits buffet restaurants. Cleanliness includes a well-polished environment of the place. A well-polished environment should have enough supporting tangibles of providing buffet with a clean and healthy outlook. Marketer of buffet restaurants might focus on maintaining a clean and healthy outlook of their restaurants.

Conclusion

The food service industry in Bangladesh is so competitive with an upsurge of number of restaurant in the recent past. One of the important sectors of food service industry consists of buffet restaurants. Right now the Dhaka city has a good number of buffet restaurants. In a highly competitive environment, restaurants, that provide quality and variety of food at a reasonable price while ensuring cleanliness, are more likely to run profitably. The result of the research shows that buffet restaurants that maintain quality and variety of food at a reasonable price with cleanliness image are far more advanced in gaining consumer loyalty that in turn make these consumers to revisit the all you can eat (buffet) restaurants. Therefore it is suggested that marketer of buffet restaurants should take these issues into account. This might help them in conducting business profitably. Besides, this study will help in formulating strategy in operating buffet restaurants in Dhaka city.

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