

Impact of Food and Beverage Service Practices on Customer Satisfaction in the Food Outlets, Chandigarh, India

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Abstract *This study investigates the impact of food & beverage services practices on customer's perception of in the food outlets, Chandigarh, India. The study uses both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. A structured questionnaire was developed using different dimensions of customer's satisfaction from food & beverage service practices from existing literature. The data were collected from 435 customers visited in the food & beverage outlets- Chandigarh, India. The research instrument contained 58 items across five dimensions: Dining environment, Menu, food & beverage, service staff, overall satisfaction etc. From the analysis, it was found that service staff has a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction with a coefficient of determination (R²) of 54.4%. This implies that this factor contributes 64.9% of customer satisfaction while the other factors contribute 45.6%. The results from the study could be helpful to the management of food & beverage outlets in their policy formulation in the context of improving customer satisfaction and food & beverage service practices.*

Keywords: Food, Beverage, Services, Outlets Customer, Satisfaction, India

INTRODUCTION

Today, hospitality industry has emerged a pivotal research field among various researchers and scholars. In fact, this industry has become more lucrative for both developing and develop nations in terms of employment generation, GDP and socio-economic development. According to NRAI-Indian Food Industry Report (2016) 5.56 million jobs were created by the food service market by the year 2016 and it is expected that this number shall increase to 8.5-9 million jobs by the year 2021. The amount of tax collected from the service industry has also increased, the chain and standalone restaurants together contributed to Rs. 22,000-22,400 crore of tax income in the year 2016 and it is projected that this figure will increase to Rs. 42,000-45,000 crore by the year 2021.

The service sector has seen a phenomenal growth in the recent years, the night life in cities has increased and there is a sudden shift in the trend of eating out rather than cooking

at home. The restaurant managers are focusing on providing the best service delivery systems to its customers. In this competitive era the customer is the king in the hospitality industry and he has got options to choose from different restaurants where he wants to dine in and only those restaurants which are giving the best of the services are surviving. The service industry being a volatile industry every day focuses on understanding and exceeding the customer expectations. The increased trend of eating out, tough competition and knowledge of food has forced the restaurant industry to improve its services. Therefore it becomes necessary to study the various service practices which are helping the restaurants to satisfy their customers. Moreover, a growing number of hospitality organizations are adopting and implementing various innovative methods to engage in food & beverage services practices viz-a-viz customer satisfaction.

During last two decades many studies (Abhishek and Mohinder 2013, Hanson, et. al., 2007; Mariani & John,

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2005; Ryu & Jang, 2007) have opined that the hospitality industry has seen a tremendous change in the service delivery system. Ninemeier and Hayes, 2006 expressed their views there might be many reasons for the guest to visit a restaurant whatever these reasons may be for going out, the customer expects that his dining experience will be good. The only way to attract customers to a restaurant is by delivering high end eating experience to a customer (Rong and Jun, 2012; Sandström et al, 2008). Due to the tough competition among restaurants and because of growing customer demands the organisations are forced to improve their service process (Mascio, 2007).

The customer of the modern era is more demanding and well educated which forces the restaurants to keep on upgrading themselves regularly, the business strategies of outlets nowadays focus on adopting the best service practices according to the kind of establishment they are running and according to the needs of the guest, however, due to constant change in the service sector these strategies have not yielded the specific results, therefore, the researchers have developed a keen interest in understanding the importance of food and beverage service practices in F&B outlets. This paper aims to explore the perception of customers towards various food and beverage practices being followed in F & B outlets in Chandigarh and to find out whether the food & beverage service practices have some significant demeanour on overall customer satisfaction in the study area.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Recent years have witnessed numerous studies in the field of food and beverage management have been undertaken by researchers in the recent years (Erkan Saglik et. al. 2014, Abhishek and Mohinder 2013, Mohinder and Bharat, 2010; Hanson, Bjorn, Wood, 2007; Mariani, John, 1998; 2005; Fauchald, 1997; Gary and Tom, 1996; Jones, 1995 and Juliette, 1997). These studies focused upon the significance of food and beverage service practices worldwide in various food and beverage service outlets. Kalra (2001) opined that eating out is a part and parcel of the customer's lifestyle. He suggested that a customer expects to have a good quality meal, a-class service, clean cutlery, good interiors and finally value for money. Similarly, some studies revealed that low price, quality of food, location of the service outlet, and value for money is some of the attributes that lead to customer expectation and service quality perceptions (Pettijohn et al., 1997; and Johns & Howard, 1990).

Draganska & Klapper, (2007) emphasised that the food & beverage service establishments should focus on better pricing strategies to gain more profits. They further suggested that organisations can adopt any kind of service practices but

these practices should be performance oriented. In similar vein, Sulek & Hensley (2004) suggested that food quality, physical layout and service quality are important factors of customer satisfaction in full service restaurants. Namkung & Jang (2007) examined that individual traits of food quality and discovered that food presentation, flavour and correct serving temperatures are directly related to customer satisfaction. The physical environment of a restaurant is easily noticeable to the guest; in-fact studies have revealed that one of the factors which influence a guest to select a restaurant is the environment of the restaurant.

Yüksel & Yüksel (2002) suggested that dining environment such as seating arrangements, music and décor are important factors in determining customer's behaviour for a restaurant. Similarly, Chow et al. (2007) pointed out that the physical environment and interaction with the staff are important attributes which define what kind of services a customer can expect from an outlet. Likewise, Ryu & Jang (2007) discovered the joint effect of atmospheric variables on behavioural intentions in upscale restaurants. The study revealed that the restaurants ambience, employee grooming had an impact on guests emotionally, which further affected the guests post dining behaviour.

Han and Ryu (2009) suggested that the restaurants should design their physical environment in such a way that the customer could easily predict the kind of pricing he will be offered. They further pointed out that the artistic design of a restaurant will help the organisation in achieving specific marketing objectives like positive attitude of a customer towards an establishment, optimistic customer insight of quality and positive assessment of experience.

Namkung & Jang (2008) examined the quality of food in connection to satisfaction and behavioural intentions in mid-to upscale eateries. They opined that the generally the quality of food affects customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. They further revealed that the relationship between food quality and customer behavioural intentions was arbitrated by satisfaction. Ladhari *et al.* (2008) studied the factors which result in satisfaction of the guest while dining and he also studied the post dining behavioural intentions of customer. He revealed that perceived service quality via positive and negative emotions affects the customer's satisfaction.

Kevin, et. al. (2000), revealed that there was a significant difference between three tourist groups' satisfaction perceptions for value of money, number of food items, quality of foodstuff, Service standards, choices of dishes, food presentation and speediness of service in general; and of bread, coffee, meat and soup in particular. They further pointed out that food quality; value for money, choices of dishes; pleasant environment and presentation of food were the reasons that affected the overall food service experience.

Dutta, et. al., (2007) examined the cause of service failure in the service industry of developed and developing nations. They suggested the behavioural aspects of customer's insight towards these failures and their reactions to the same. They further suggested service recovery strategies of these eateries and the perception of the customers towards these strategies. Similarly, Walker, (2005) found shortage of skilled manpower in the room service department of a hotel. He revealed that the order takers failed to take orders politely and courteously thus resulting in failure of service delivery in hotels from the tone. He further stated that it's only staff training that will make difference between a normal and an exceptional service in hospitality business.

Mohinder and Bharat (2010) suggested that when the food to the guest is served on time, the guest is delighted, the way the food is presented and served to the guest will create an impact on guest mind, quality is more important than quantity, well trained professional should be acquired to serve complicated dishes for which staff training is of utmost importance and if the guest is not satisfied by the food or service offering complimentary food to the guest may be some of the food service practices followed in Indian hotels. They further revealed that there is a positive relationship between food service practice variables and category and type of sample hotels, but there is no relationship between food service practices variables and age, number of employee and size of capital.

Mohinder and Abhishek (2013) revealed the set of bar practices that are followed in Indian Hospitality Industry. they explored that 'when the guest is served on the Bar counter, it makes the guest more satisfied', Standard operating procedure ensures that the product and service is consistent, Innovative cocktails on the online menu attracts the guest, Flaring attracts the guest and gets repeat orders, Use of chilled glasses for cocktails makes a guest delight, Mechanical pourers helps in fast pouring and reduce the spillage, Beverage served in a sequence and to the correct guest makes a customer more satisfied'.

Kit and Ka, (2001) suggested that efficiency and good quality are the main factors of business strategies. They opined that efficiency and quality together help the establishments to achieve service efficiency and fineness. They further suggested that the establishments need to continuously need to upgrade and improve their quality and efficiency so that they can meet the customer's expectations.

Prabha Ramseook-Munhurrin, (2012) suggested that during service the quality of food and reliability which are in sync with speed and accuracy are perceived as one dimension by the customers whereas "Responsiveness, assurance and empathy", are concerned as other dimension. The results of the study showed that quality of food and reliability are

important factors which lead to customer satisfaction, a repeat customer and willingness to recommend.

Today, many scholars have been turned towards service marketing and revealed that this service marketing is pivotal aspect to satisfy a customer, because a satisfied customer will give repeat business viz-a-viz profitability (Oliver, 1994; Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1997). Similarly, Batislam, et. al. (2007 & 2008) demonstrated that the main focus of restaurants is to satisfy their target markets which help the restaurant to gain more profits. Heskett, et al. (1994) stated that the organisations which practice a healthy relationship among their employees lead to greater customer satisfaction and further getting customer loyalty. Susskind and Chan (2000) analysed that in a restaurant three factors high quality service, first class service and comfortable seating will lead to overall customer satisfaction.

Ironically, Nick and Ray, (2002) reviewed the past studies in the area of food service. They recognised that the food service industry has gaps and shortcomings in relation to the knowledge of customer behaviour in hospitality industry. They further, suggested that new researches should be taken in food and beverage area so that this grey area can be explored.

Considering the above, more research is needed to fill this gap and to further examine the existence of the impact of food & beverage service practices on customer satisfaction in the food & beverage outlets, Chandigarh, India, it is important to conduct research in the context of customer's perceptions of food & beverage services. The available literature on food and beverage services practices reveals that some studies have been carried out by researchers in context to food and beverage service practices, but very less work has been done in relation to food and beverage service practices and its impact on customer satisfaction. The aim of this research is to investigate various food & beverage service practice dimensions; and to investigate whether the dimensions of the food & beverage service practices had an impact on overall customer satisfaction.

This study provides two hypotheses in order to by assess the perceptions of customers' on food & beverage service practice, and by providing empirical findings that highlight the importance of customer's perceptions food & beverage service practice for improvement in food & beverage service outlets.

Hypothesis 1. There is a set of food & beverage service practice dimensions that is of most importance among the customers in service outlets in Chandigarh.

Hypothesis 2. The food & beverage service practices factors had a significant impact on overall customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Data Collection

Sample food & beverage service outlets were identified from the highly respected list of the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India that serves as a resource centre for licensing and registration for food & beverage outlets. To initiate the sample 650 customers were contacted and out of the total sample only 435 (66.92%) responded and agreed to participate in the survey. A survey methodology was chosen because it was deemed to be the most efficient way of reaching a large number of respondents'.

Research Instruments

The research used existence of 58 customer satisfaction on food & beverage service practices variables measured on a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5= strongly disagree for usages. The scale includes the various attributes of customer satisfaction as discussed in the literature. Respondents were asked to give their level of agreement that mostly and closely relates to their experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Findings

Table 1 presents the distribution of sample food and beverage outlet customers with respect to the demographics used in the study. In terms of respondents gender 62.11 percent (n =264) of the respondents were male compared to 37.88 per cent (n = 161) female and 242 (56.94) are married and 183 (43.05) are unmarried. In terms of age, 85 (20%) of the respondents lies between 25-31 years, 105 (24.70%) are between 32 to 38 years, 90 (21.17%) are between 39 to 45 years, 65 (15.29%) are between 46 to 52 years, 45 (10.58%) are between 53 to 59 years and another 35 (08.23%) are more than 60 years. In terms of income level 47.76 per cent of the respondents were having an income of less than 100,000 (n = 203) and 42.82 percent were having an income level between 1-2 lakhs (n = 182) and there are very less respondents which are having the income level of 2 lakhs or more than that. Further the level of education was analyzed and the results shows that most of the respondents are having masters degree holder (53.41%) N = 227. The frequency of visits by customer to the food and beverage outlets is also shown that 21.17 percent (n = 90) use to dine out once a week, followed by 8.94 percent (n = 38) around twice a week, 28.94 per cent (n = 123) dine out once a month and 40.94 per cent (n=174) dine out twice a month.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample According to Respondents Specific Characteristics

Demographic Variables		Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	264	62.11
	Female	161	37.88
Marital Status	Married	242	56.94
	Unmarried	183	43.05
Age	25 – 31	85	20
	32-38	105	24.70
	39-45	90	21.17
	46-52	65	15.29
	53-59	45	10.58
	More than 60	35	8.23
Income per month	Less than 1 lakh	203	47.76
	1 – 2 lakh	182	42.82
	2 – 3 lakh	25	5.88
	3 – 4 lakh	10	2.35
	More than 4 lakh	5	1.17
Level of Education	Upto high school	6	1.31
	Bachelors	128	30.11
	Masters	227	53.41
	Doctorate	64	15.05

Demographic Variables		Total	Percentage
Frequency of visit in restaurant	Once a week	90	21.17
	Twice a week	38	8.94
	Once a month	123	28.94
	Twice a month	174	40.94

Table 2 presents the principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation on the 58 individual food and beverage service practices items. According to Kaiser's (1974) criterion, factor dimension with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 would be reported in the final factor structure, and only items with factor loading greater than 0.4 would be retained for each factor grouping. Moreover, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy were used to determine the factorability of the data. The values of the Bartlett's Test are indicative that the sample inter correlation matrix is an identity matrix and The value of KMO suggests that degree of common variance is middling. The kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Spherically has been executed to test the validity of data for factor analysis. High values (between 0.40 to 1.00) indicate factor analysis is appropriate (Kaiser, 1974). Thus, the requirements followed in this study were the following: Eigen values > 1, cut-off points > 0.50, cross-loadings > 0.10, and Cronbach's alpha > 0.80. The food and beverage service practices items were factored into five factors as follows:

Factor 1, labelled as "*Dining Environment*" comprises of I was satisfied by the hygienic environment (factor loading .746), The dining area was visually attractive (factor loading .707), The seats of dining area were comfortable (factor loading .673), Public areas were thoroughly clean (factor loading .624), Ease of parking near the restaurant (factor loading .576), It was easy to find the restaurant (factor loading .778), The security of the parking area (factor loading .725), The overall interior decoration of the restaurant was pleasing (factor loading .652), The layout of the tables makes it easy to move (factor loading .623), The restaurant maintains well air conditioned environment (factor loading .575), The noise level in the restaurant was pleasing to me (factor loading .700). Further it was observed that the highest factor loading for the Dining environment Dimension was for the item It was easy to find the restaurant (.778).

Factor 2, labelled as "*Menu*" consists of The design of the menu was attractive (factor loading .749), It was easy to read from the menu (factor loading .702), The images of the dishes were appealing (factor loading .615), The Menu was clean and in good condition (factor loading .572), The menu offers a wide verity of choices (factor loading .557), The prices of the menu were reasonable (factor loading .485), Description of each dish was provided in the menu (factor loading .769), The restaurant introduces new food items in

the menu (factor loading .753), Further it was observed that the highest factor loading for the Menu Dimension was for the item Description of each dish was provided in the menu (.769).

Factor 3, labelled as "*Food and Beverage*" encompasses of The food was properly garnished (factor loading .730), The food and drinks were fresh (factor loading .663), The food was presented in an artistic manner (factor loading .516), The aroma of the food was enticing (factor loading .632), Correct accompaniments were served with the dishes (factor loading .570), The food was served at appropriate temperature (factor loading .533), The taste of the food was balanced (factor loading .493), The food was flavourful (factor loading .483), The texture of the food was correct (factor loading .545), The portion size was satisfying in (factor loading .505), The quality of food was excellent (factor loading .525), Further it was observed that the highest factor loading for the Food and Beverage was for the item The food was properly garnished (.730).

Factor 4, labelled as "*Service Staff*" comprises of The staff greets and escorts me when I visit the restaurant (factor loading .720), The Staff of the restaurant were well dressed (factor loading .670), The restaurant staff follows highest grooming standards (factor loading .624), The staff is always willing to help (factor loading .576), The staff was able to solve my queries (factor loading .708), The service was prompt and quick (factor loading .725), The staff understands the specific needs (factor loading .602), The service staff made me feel special (factor loading .620), The service staff was well trained and experienced (factor loading .505), The staff is able to give prompt service even during busy hours (factor loading .702), The menu was presented to me with its first page opened (factor loading .649), The order was taken on a writing pad (factor loading .653), The order was repeated by the service staff to reconfirm (factor loading .729), I was informed to try the specialities (factor loading .712), Silver service makes me more satisfied than pre-plated service (factor loading .618), The expected service time was informed (factor loading .572), Served the food exactly as it was ordered (factor loading .557), The sequence of food service was follows (factor loading .485), The food bill was accurate and in order (factor loading .769), The soiled (used) utensils were replenished (factor loading .753), The feedback form was provided to me (factor loading .730), I was offered complimentary mouth freshener (factor loading .663), Further it was observed that the highest factor loading

for the Service Staff Dimension was for the item The food bill was accurate and in order (.769).

Factor 5, labelled as “Overall Satisfaction” contains of Overall I am satisfied by the food served to me (factor loading .576), I am satisfied by the overall service of the restaurant (factor loading .788), I will recommend this restaurant to others (factor loading .765), I would like to come back to this restaurant in future (factor loading .672), I will say positive words about this restaurant (factor loading .643), Further it was observed that the highest factor loading for the Overall Satisfaction Dimension was for the item I am satisfied by the overall service of the restaurant (.788).

The overall correlation is significant $p < 0.01$. Both tests indicated that exploratory factor analysis could be conducted and the data were appropriate for factor analysis. A principal component analysis with varimax rotation

was conducted in order to simplify the factor matrix and produce a conceptually pure factor. This criterion is based on Eigen value. Only the factors with Eigen value equal to or greater than 1 were regarded as important. The principal component analysis started with 58 items using SPSS 15. After performing the principal component analysis with varimax rotation, the results revealed that the 58 item scale fell into 5 groups that had an Eigen value of more than 1. All 58 items had loadings greater than 0.4, so, there was no item which should be removed. Table 2 shows that the five dimensions account for 73.90 % of the total variation. The factor analysis produced dimensions that were different from the original food and beverage service practices. This made the researchers to give new names for the dimensions. The naming of the new dimensions was connected to the literature in order to choose appropriate names. These results support hypothesis 1.

Table 2: Result of Factor Analysis of Food and Beverage Service Practices

Selected Food & Beverage service practices items	Factor loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha
Dining Environment (DE)		8.551	9.938	0.880
• I was satisfied by the hygienic environment	.746			
• The dining area was visually attractive	.707			
• The seats of dining area were comfortable	.673			
• Public areas were thoroughly clean	.624			
• Ease of parking near the restaurant	.576			
• It was easy to find the restaurant	.778			
• The security of the parking area	.725			
• The overall interior decoration of the restaurant was pleasing	.652			
• The layout of the tables makes it easy to move	.623			
• The restaurant maintains well air conditioned environment	.575			
• The noise level in the restaurant was pleasing to me	.700			
• There was adequate Lighting in the restaurant	.669			
Menu		2.882	5.270	0.863
• The design of the menu was attractive	.749			
• It was easy to read from the menu	.702			
• The images of the dishes were appealing	.615			
• The Menu was clean and in good condition	.572			
• The menu offers a wide verity of choices	.557			
• The prices of the menu were reasonable	.485			
• Description of each dish was provided in the menu	.769			
• The restaurant introduces new food items in the menu	.753			
Food & Beverage (FB)		2.201	7.591	0.80
• The food was properly garnished	.730			
• The food and drinks were fresh	.663			
• The food was presented in an artistic manner	.516			
• The aroma of the food was enticing	.632			

Selected Food & Beverage service practices items	Factor loading	Eigen-value	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha
• Correct accompaniments were served with the dishes	.570			
• The food was served at appropriate temperature	.533			
• The taste of the food was balanced	.493			
• The food was flavourful	.483			
• The texture of the food was correct	.545			
• The portion size was satisfying in	.505			
• The quality of food was excellent	.525			
Service Staff (SS)		6.104	17.900	0.854
• The staff greets and escorts me when I visit the restaurant	.720			
• The Staff of the restaurant were well dressed	.670			
• The restaurant staff follows highest grooming standards	.624			
• The staff is always willing to help	.576			
• The staff was able to solve my queries	.708			
• The service was prompt and quick	.725			
• The staff understands the specific needs	.602			
• The service staff made me feel special	.620			
• The service staff was well trained and experienced	.505			
• The staff is able to give prompt service even during busy hours	.702			
• The menu was presented to me with its first page opened	.649			
• The order was taken on a writing pad	.653			
• The order was repeated by the service staff to reconfirm	.729			
• I was informed to try the specialities	.712			
• Silver service makes me more satisfied than pre-plated service	.618			
• The expected service time was informed	.572			
• Served the food exactly as it was ordered	.557			
• The sequence of food service was follows	.485			
• The food bill was accurate and in order	.769			
• The soiled (used) utensils were replenished	.753			
• The feedback form was provided to me	.730			
• I was offered complimentary mouth freshener	.663			
Overall Satisfaction (OS)		5.607	14.250	0.835
• Overall I am satisfied by the food served to me	.576			
• I am satisfied by the overall service of the restaurant	.788			
• I will recommend this restaurant to others	.765			
• I would like to come back to this restaurant in future	.672			
• I will say positive words about this restaurant	.643			
Total variance extracted (%)		73.90		

Impact of Food & Beverage Service Practices on Customer Satisfaction

To test the hypothesis 2 Regression Coefficient was employed on food & beverage service practices variables.

In order to investigate whether the dimension of the food & beverage service practices had an impact on overall

customer satisfaction, the customer satisfaction score was regressed against the summated scale of the five dimensions from the factor analysis.

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis with the five dimensions as independent variables and the customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. R square is used as an indicator of the consistency of a relationship in the regression

analysis. An adjusted R square of 0.517, indicated that 51.1 % of the overall customer satisfaction was explained by the food & beverage service practices dimensions. The results indicate that food & beverage service practices factors had positive impact on overall customer satisfaction. The

findings were in line with commonly found in the literature (Mohinder and Bharat 2010, Abhishek and Mohinder 2013, Namkung and Jung 2008, Prabha Ramseook-Munhurrun 2012) that improving food & beverage service practices is helpful in enhancing customer satisfaction in the context Food Outlets, Chandigarh, India.

Table 3: The Impact of the Five Food & Beverage Service Practices Factors on Customer Satisfaction

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	df	F	Sig.
.712(a)	.524	.517	.452	6	32.341	.000
Regression Coefficients						
Variables	Beta		t	Sig.		
Dining Environment	.473		9.563	.000*		
Menu	.323		6.293	.000*		
Food & Beverage	.354		7.640	.000*		
Service Staff	.420		9.210	.000*		
Overall Satisfaction	.429		9.370	.000*		

* p<0.01

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated various food & beverage service practice dimensions; and to investigate whether the dimensions of the food & beverage service practices had an impact on overall customer satisfaction in the food outlets, Chandigarh, India. The results show that food & beverage outlets management should focus more on these five factors dining environment, menu, food & beverage, service staff and overall satisfaction if they think customer satisfaction as part of their marketing strategy yet among all these five variables they should take service staff as the most important tool of customer satisfaction. It was found that service staff has a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction with a coefficient of determination (R²) of 54.4%. This implies that this factor contributes 64.9% of customer satisfaction while the other factors contribute 45.6%. The results from the study could be helpful to the management of food & beverage outlets in their policy formulation in the context of improving customer satisfaction and food & beverage service practices.

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