

THE EFFECT OF RESTAURANT ATTRIBUTES ON CUSTOMERS' OVERALL PERCEPTION AND RETURN PATRONAGE: A CASE STUDY ON EBONY RESTAURANT, BANGALORE, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to determine the effect of restaurant attributes on customers' overall perception and return patronage, and whether dining occasions affect return patronage in Ebony Restaurant, Bangalore (India). A sample survey method was used, with a structured questionnaire as the research instrument, at Ebony restaurant Bangalore, (India). Data from 400 guests, as respondents, was used for statistical analysis.

Findings showed that there is a correlation between restaurant attributes and customers' overall perception. Results also indicated that there is a relationship between return patronage and restaurant attributes and dining occasions. Managerial implications are addressed and discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Dining out in restaurants is a ubiquitous, significant and growing international phenomenon. Everywhere one travels, people from all ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, ages, socioeconomic groups and both genders can be observed eating and drinking out in independent, locally owned and operated establishments or in strongly branded multiunit chain outlets (Powers & Barrows, 2003). Restaurants serve both our social and biological needs. Restaurants can be divided into two categories: those serving predominantly our social needs- the dining market, and those serving our biological needs- the eating market. Because dining is predominantly a social event, service is important. The servers are expected to be friendly, as signified by a warm smile. In relatively expensive restaurants serving the dining market, the operation that falls short on significant measures of service is likely to lose customers quickly (Dittmer, 2002).

There is a movement towards trying out new and exotic foods, increasing interest in vegetarian items, as well as a growing use of spices, herbs, and hot peppers. Asian foods are getting more popular with cuisines from China, Thailand, and Japan in the lead

(Bharath and Prema, 2004). Indian cuisine is hot, spicy, flavored with herbs, and offers many vegetarian options. Eating has long been central to the culture of India, as diet is linked to notions of purity and self-control. The cosmopolitan Indian is now eager to explore new tastes and absorb global trends and is no longer limited by geographical or cultural boundaries. India has several thousand multi-cuisine eateries that dot the cities. (<http://www.bangalorebest.com/cityresource>).

For the last few years, the restaurant industry has experienced changes in Bangalore, a fast developing metropolitan city of India, such as heightened competitive pressures from the new upcoming upscale restaurants and increased consumer expectations, there is a growing need for the management of Ebony Restaurant to better understand to develop and maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, competition is arising from new restaurants that offer food and services, of a similar nature to Ebony. Consequently, the existing customers of Ebony may find a number of alternate options and switch to other restaurants. Therefore, the management of Ebony has to be aware of the customers' overall perception of the restaurant and work on its weak spots to boost the