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Exploring the Connection Between Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in Casual Dining Restaurants: An Examination of Recent Research

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ABSTRACT
The casual dining restaurant sector is a burgeoning field in today's landscape, appealing to families and friends across various income groups. This industry significantly contributes to the economy and holds a notable market share. In this context, numerous studies have explored the effects of different factors on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This research reviews recent literature to investigate how customer satisfaction influences behavioral intentions—such as repeat visits, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth—within the casual dining sector. The current study examines various attributes of dining—specifically food, service, and environment—and their impact on customer satisfaction, which in turn drives behavioral outcomes. The findings offer valuable insights into the role of customer satisfaction in shaping behaviors in the global casual dining industry, such as enhancing reputation, reducing customer churn risk, and fostering revisit intentions. Key drivers of satisfaction identified include food quality, service excellence, restaurant ambiance, and, notably, trust. While food quality serves as a fundamental requirement, it is often the service and physical environment that serve as key differentiators, converting a single visit into long-term loyalty and brand advocacy. Additionally, trust emerges as a mediator of the relationship between restaurant reputation and customer satisfaction by translating immediate customer satisfaction into enduring loyalty. Consequently, customer satisfaction is not merely an end goal but a crucial precursor to behavioral intentions.
Keywords: Customer Satisfaction; Behavioral Intentions; Casual Dining; Service Quality; Food quality; Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Casual dining restaurants are a familiar term in routine life, where one expects a comfortable atmosphere, along with moderately priced items on the menu. In the current era, to thrive in this industry, a lot of factors are necessary, such as customer satisfaction, word-of-mouth, loyalty, revisit intention, service quality, competition, etc. Among these, customer satisfaction leading to a positive word-of-mouth is key for survival, and an optimistic word-of-mouth is only possible if the customer is happy with the quality of service, food, cleanliness, behavior of the staff, perceived value, environment, etc. (Kaewmahaphinyo et al. 2020; Rathnasiri et al. 2025). These drivers of customer satisfaction are illustrated in Figure 1. Therefore, in such an environment, where customer satisfaction acts as the bridge between the dining experience and enduring profitability, retaining customers is a substantial task.

Generally, satisfaction is a psychological term yielded from the contrast between expectations and reality. Understanding the specific mechanics of this relationship helps in improving the factors that improve customer experiences and ensure more chances of revisit, which in turn leads to positive word-of-mouth and customer acquisition. Additionally, macroeconomic shifts, geographical context, technological advancements, personal preferences, and marketing strategy also affect the players in this industry. Regarding the blooming casual dining industry in India, this sector currently contributes 1.9% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is projected to grow to ₹7.76 trillion by 2028 **(IBEF 2024)**. Moreover, despite the hindrances during the pandemic, casual dining restaurants hold 48% of the market share (Desk 2024).

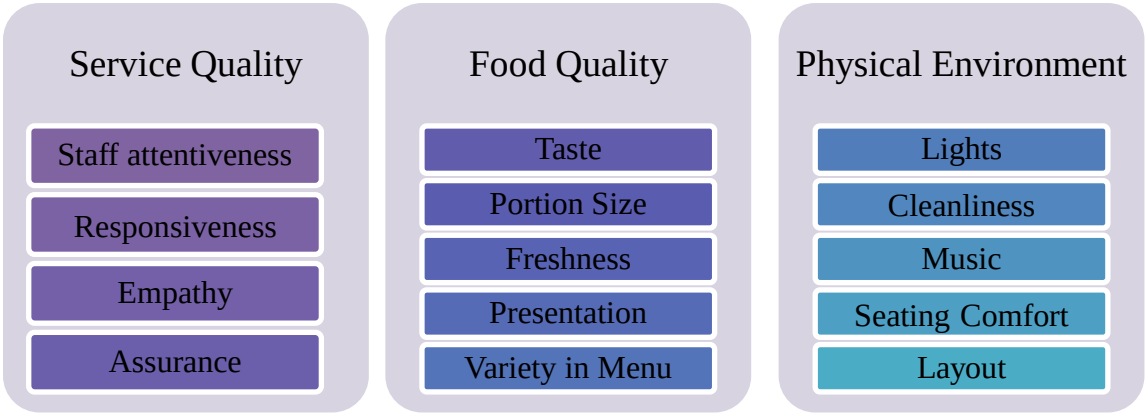

Figure 1. Renowned drivers of Customer Satisfaction

This resilience and growth highlight the potential for ongoing innovation and adaptation within the industry, as businesses seek to meet evolving customer needs and preferences in an ever-changing environment. The current literature comprises research that explored the impact of different restaurant attributes on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The present work provides valuable insights into recent studies on how customer satisfaction drives behavioral intentions in the casual dining industry across the globe. The work emphasizes key factors, including food quality, perceived value, service quality, and physical environment, and examines how these factors translate into consumer behavioral intentions.

The remaining paper is organized into four further sections, where Section 2 describes the literature review. Section 3 discusses major outcomes and limitations of the study, followed by the conclusion in Section 4.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kaewmahaphinyo, Nuangjamnong, and Dowpiset examined the relationship between the perceived value, food, service, and physical environment qualities, satisfaction, and behavioral intention from 400 customers of fast-casual restaurants in Bangkok (Thailand) (Kaewmahaphinyo et al. 2020). The data collection was questionnaire-based, on which descriptive statistical analysis was carried out, and the hypothesis was tested at a significance level of 0.05 with multiple linear regressors. Results suggested perceived value as the highest factor influencing customer satisfaction and behavior, followed by service quality, physical environment, and lastly, food quality. Additionally, fast, attentive, and polite behavior of staff, variety of menu, and serving temperature played significant roles in increasing satisfaction levels of customers, especially graduated women, 21-30 years old, and with an income of 15K-30K. However, the study did not consider the impact of restaurant branding on the customer satisfaction rate. Rathnasiri et al. studied how restaurant features affect customer satisfaction and behavior in India, using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory (Rathnasiri et al. 2025). The results suggest focusing on creating a pleasant atmosphere, good sanitation, and providing high-quality service to boost satisfaction. Additionally, thoughtful incorporation of music that creates a relaxing atmosphere without disrupting conversation and gathering customer feedback can help identify which attributes are most appreciated and can be improved. While the study presents valuable findings, it does not address the role of staff in customer satisfaction or consider cultural differences in perceptions of casual dining.

Senachai, Julagasigorn, and Chumwichan conducted a mixed-methods study to investigate how various restaurant attributes influence customer behavior using Generalized Structured Component Analysis (GSCA) (Senachai et al. 2023). The study identified different restaurant attributes in three steps: first, from the literature, second, from a field study, and finally, by GSCA. From step 1, ten attributes were identified: food and drink, services, value for money, pricing, reputation, facilities, convenience of location, environment, hygiene, and attraction(advertising). In the second step, based on the interviews of the customers of Quick Service Restaurants of Khon, Kaen and Udon Thani provinces, seven attributes were identified. These were cleanliness, location, atmosphere, food, services, price, and facilities. In the final thematic step, food, price, services, atmosphere, facilities, cleanliness, location, and trust were identified as prime attributes of a restaurant. Further, the GSCA model suggested that satisfaction affects trust, and they both impact behavioral intentions. Other factors influencing the trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intention were the availability of free Wi-Fi and parking lots. The dynamic behavior of the trust parameter and the limited region of interviews were some drawbacks of the study.

Tuncer, Unusan, and Cobanoglu examined the impact of service quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions by suggesting an integrated structural model implemented on the data collected from 309 customers (Tuncer et al. 2021). It incorporates timeliness, aesthetics, employee service quality, facility comfort, food quality, and cleanliness as key attributes to be analyzed on the service-quality scale. The findings indicate that service quality positively influences customer satisfaction, while satisfaction and perceived value affect behavioral intentions. Notably, food quality, facility, comfort, and cleanliness emerged as critical dimensions, whereas timeliness had the least impact. However, a trivial relationship between personnel service quality and perceived value was identified. The study reaffirmed that service quality significantly contributes to customer satisfaction, excluding aesthetics. Further, the

study emphasized the significance of a comfortable environment, cleanliness, and fresh food in enhancing customer experiences. Additionally, limited data that was collected from only 10 dining restaurants in Konya, Turkey, is one of the limitations of the study. Another limitation was not considering the role of culture on service quality and customer satisfaction.

In order to assess the factors affecting customer loyalty, Weti and Osorno performed a quantitative descriptive analysis on a hundred volunteers in selective casual dining restaurants in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines, specifically, those who dine at least thrice a month (Weti and Osorno 2025). Findings suggest food and service quality as the key drivers of customer loyalty, where loyalty was determined by positive word-of-mouth, higher spending, brand advocacy, and repeat purchases. Besides these, hygiene, price, ambiance, and location were also acknowledged as the high-impact attributes affecting loyalty. Moreover, statistical analysis revealed that demographics like age, education, and civil status also affected loyalty behaviors, while gender had minimal impact. Study, however confined to a demographic region, suggests several ways to improve customer loyalty. Trung et al. conducted a quantitative study examining the impact of five attributes of quick-service restaurants on behavioral intention, utilizing a questionnaire for data collection and SPSS25 for analysis (Trung et al.). The findings revealed that customer intentions to revisit were significantly influenced by trust, service disclosure, commitment, service quality, restaurant image, and perceived value. However, positive ambiance and reasonable pricing also aid in enhancing customer experience. Additionally, the regression analysis underscored the strong correlation between the aforementioned independent variables and behavioral intention. The study contributes to the understanding of customer behavior in the Malaysian restaurant sector only, emphasizing the critical role of service quality and employee responsiveness.

Kumar and Aggarwal highlighted the limited adoption of green practices in India's restaurant industry and their significance for customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Kumar and Aggarwal 2022). The authors implemented structural equation modeling and revealed a strong correlation between such practices (green food, services, and energy efficiency) and consumer loyalty. The study indicates that implementing green practices enhances customer satisfaction and influences their future choices. Indian restaurateurs should incorporate these practices into their marketing, shifting their focus from just food quality to environmental consciousness, including organic, seasonal offerings and energy-efficient operations. Attention to water conservation and minimizing food waste is also crucial. The findings suggest that adopting green services can boost customer traffic by enhancing their dining experience. However, the small sample size and not considering demographic influences were the limitations. Overall, embracing green practices could enhance customer experiences and encourage repeat patronage, benefiting both restaurants and society. Adesina et al. investigated the impact of fine-dining experiences on customer satisfaction and loyalty in dining restaurants in Abeokuta, Nigeria (Adesina et al. 2022). A sample of 200 customers from 10 selected restaurants was analyzed using structured questionnaires. Findings indicated that food quality ($p = 0.031$) and service quality ($p = 0.003$) significantly influenced patronage, while the physical environment ($p = 0.824$) did not show a significant relationship. The study suggested that the quality of food and service was crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, these areas can be prioritized along with the physical environment.

Dwaikat et al. developed a structural model to determine the factors affecting customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in three pizza restaurants of the West Bank city, Nablus, Palestine (Dwaikat et al. 2019). From the data obtained by 386 volunteers, the results demonstrated that perceived value has the strongest effect on customer satisfaction compared to food, service, and environment qualities. The findings reaffirm that when customers feel satisfied, it significantly boosts their intentions to engage further with a brand. Fang-Chou et al. utilized the SERVQUAL model and the SOR theory on 636 volunteers of hotel fine dining and chain restaurants to determine the variations between perceived service quality and satisfaction (Chou et al. 2025). Findings reveal that co-creation and experiential value were mediators between service quality and satisfaction. Further, customer relationships were identified as a crucial factor in boosting customer experiences. Results further suggest improving item service excellence in experiential attributes of chain restaurants, and controlling item risk in co-creation attributes of fine dining restaurants. Nusairat et al. also implemented the SOR theory to understand how emotional and intellectual conditions of customers influence behavioral intentions (Nusairat et al. 2020). From a sample of 425 responses collected in Jordon, the study identified restaurant design to create a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention, while trivial impact on emotions. Similarly, the environment was identified as an essential feature in understanding customer behavior. Despite the different findings, the study was restricted to a demographic area. Mannan et al. performed a cross-sectional study on 600 volunteers from 30 dining restaurants in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to demonstrate the relation between customer satisfaction and intention to revisit (Mannan et al. 2019). Results of the partial least squares structural equation affirms that restaurant reputation and customer satisfaction positively contribute to revisit intention, whilst the tendency to seek variety negatively affects the same. Further, trust was identified as the mediator between the two.

Another study utilizing partial least squares structural equation modeling analyzed a sample of 278 volunteers from the United States to assess how the dining experience—encompassing food quality, service quality, convenience, and ambiance—affects customers' satisfaction and intentions to revisit quick service restaurants (Richardson et al. 2019). The findings indicate that food and service qualities, and convenience contribute strongly to boosting satisfaction and the intention to revisit such restaurants; however, ambiance exhibits trivial significance. A notable limitation of this study is the self-selection bias associated with participants

opting to complete the online questionnaire. Abdullah, Sufi, and Kumar investigated the relationships among service qualities, satisfaction, and loyalty using data from 300 volunteers in Delhi-NCR, India collected through a non-probability sampling technique (Abdullah, O., Sufi, T. & Kumar, S. 2022). The outcomes affirm that food quality, perceived value, and brand image altogether impact customer satisfaction, thereby boosting positive word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions. The authors further suggested incorporating feedback from customers to improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Being cross-sectional and focused on only specific dimensions of service quality was a few drawbacks of the study. Cha and Borchgrevink explored the connections among perceived value, food safety, and customer satisfaction and loyalty. Their analysis was based on a comprehensive data sample of 334 individuals, providing valuable insights into how these factors interact to influence consumer behavior using structural equation modeling (Cha and Borchgrevink 2019). The proposed model aligned well with existing cognitive–attitudinal–behavioral frameworks. This study also examined the variations in customer satisfaction perceptions based on gender and restaurant type. The results revealed satisfaction as a mediator between customer loyalty and perceived value and food safety

Table 1. Summary of the recent studies

References	Demographic Area	Sample Size	Significant Factor	Factors not considered/Limitations
(Kaewmahaphinyo et al. 2020)	Fast-casual restaurant in Bangkok, Thailand	400	Perceived value	Restaurant branding
(Rathnasiri et al. 2025)	Casual-dining restaurants in India	440	Ambience, Sanitation, Service, and thoughtful music	Role of staff and cultural differences
(Senachai et al. 2023)	Quick Service Restaurants in Khon, Kaen, and Udon Thani provinces of Thailand	450	Food, price, trust, cleanliness, services, facilities, location, and atmosphere	Dynamic behavior of trust
(Tuncer et al. 2021)	10 fine-dining restaurants in Konya city, Turkey	309	Service quality, perceived value, and environment	Restricted scope to fine-dining restaurants in Turkey
(Weti and Osorno 2025)	Restaurants in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines	100	Food and Service qualities	small sample size and limited demographic scope
(Trung et al.)	Malaysian quick service restaurants	362	Trust, Service disclosure, quality, commitment, and perceived value, restaurant reputation	Specifically focused on service quality
(Kumar and Aggarwal 2022)	Full-service restaurants in Gurugram, Faridabad, Panchkula, Karnal, and Ambala districts, Haryana, India.	436	Green services (Organic food, seasonal servings, and energy-efficient)	Demographic influences
(Adesina et al. 2022)	10 restaurants in Abeokuta, Nigeria	200	Food and Service qualities	Limited demographic exploration and cultural relevance
(Dwaikat et al. 2019)	3 pizza restaurants of West Bank city, Nablus, Palestine	386	Perceived value	Limited demographic exploration
(Chou et al. 2025)	Fine dining and Chain restaurants	636	Co-creation and Experiential value	Item risk in the co-creation attribute
(Nusairat et al. 2020)	Restaurants in Jordon	425	Restaurant design and environment	Limited demographic exploration
(Mannan et al. 2019)	30 dining restaurants in Dhaka, Bangladesh	600	Restaurant reputation and trust	Limited demographic exploration
(Richardson et al. 2019)	United States	278	Food and Service Qualities	Self-selection bias associated with participants
(Abdullah, O., Sufi, T. & Kumar, S. 2022)	Delhi-NCR, India	300	Food quality, perceived value, and brand image	Considers specific dimensions of service quality only
(Cha and Borchgrevink 2019)	Online survey among college students from different ethnic backgrounds	334	Perceived value	Impact of food safety on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the recent studies in a tabular format, illustrating demographic area, important restaurant attributes, their limitations, and sample size used. As far as the significant factors considered, food and service qualities, and perceived value emerged as key terms driving customer satisfaction, loyalty, revisit intentions, and word-of-mouth. Among these core determinants of customer satisfaction, superior food quality appeared to be directly correlated with high revisit intentions. Secondly, positive service quality, such as polite staff behavior, reliability, and worthwhile interactions, seemed to boost positive word-of-mouth and even safeguard against occasional kitchen delays. If price matches the quality, i.e., perceived quality along with pleasant atmosphere, it adds to more chances of revisit, improved brand loyalty, and impulse spending too. Concerning the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, it appeared that high satisfaction yields strong brand loyalty and increases the probability of revisits. Besides this, satisfied customers act as advocates or marketers via positive word-of-mouth, and such customers remain resilient in the case of economic inflation.

Additionally, trust that actively translates immediate customer satisfaction into long-term loyalty appeared as another attribute and a mediator between restaurant reputation and customer satisfaction, and also between the other factors affecting behavioral intentions. In the SOR model, trust is always considered as a dynamic factor because of its evolving trait, which changes as per expectations, moment-to-moment interactions, and any new information (Rindfuss et al. 2025). As a mediator, trust is generated with each positive experience, which in turn strengthens reputation and reduces the risk of customer churn (Agarwal and Sharma 2025). Thereby, increase the revisit intentions; however, the dynamic nature of trust is not considered in the reviewed studies. A study took the experience in dining restaurants to another dimension by implementing green practices and services in Indian restaurants (Kumar and Aggarwal 2022), which is definitely a better and more eco-friendly suggestion. However, a lower profit margin, high cost of eco-friendly appliances, an unorganized supply chain, and a lack of recycling facilities would need a solution.

Besides limited demographic exploration, another neglected factor is the impact of cultural influences on cuisines, choices, and customers. Notably, for a long time, food has been tied to identity and looked upon as a connection to ancestors and our roots. The cultural factors, such as tradition, social norms, religion, heritage, etc., play a significant role in shaping customer behavior. Within a single country like India, cultural differences and legacy are exhibited in foods, such as Rajasthani cuisine, Pahadi cuisine, Gujrati cuisine, Hyderabadi cuisine, Jammu cuisine, etc., which significantly appear in consumption patterns and taste preferences of consumers. Urbanization and the adoption of quick and convenient foods have already affected the trade-off between legacy and the modern era. Further, failure in providing the authentic cultural tastes of a region having its unique taste and texture can directly influence customer satisfaction, and thereby decrease the chances of revisit, and brand advocacy. Considering the cultural heritage and seasonal offerings in the menu of casual-dining restaurants would help convert the variety-seeking customers into regular customers. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate factors contributing to customer satisfaction and factors enhanced with customer satisfaction (Behavioral intentions), respectively

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Figure 2. Factors contributing to Customer Satisfaction

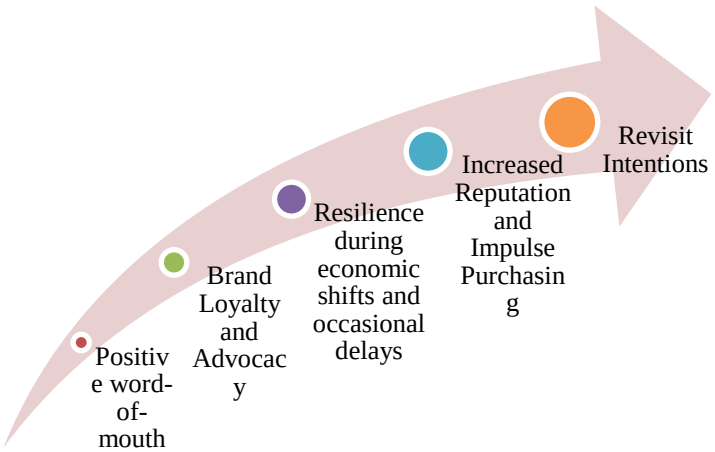

Figure 3. Factors affected by Customer Satisfaction (Behavioral Intentions)

Considering the regional differences, where one region prioritizes perceived value, and the other ambiance, and the very next focuses on food and service quality. It suggests that customer satisfaction varies as per the regions, perceptions, and culture. Furthermore, as the studies suggest, firstly, every positive intention increases the probability of revisit, positive word-of-mouth, and brand advocacy. Secondly, dissatisfied customers can switch to competitors and cause negative word-of-mouth. Also, regularly maintaining the restaurant's cleanliness and atmosphere leaves a positive impact on perceived value, ensuring satisfaction. Finally, brand loyalty and resilience to price changes and competition would be gained by providing customers with consistent over-the-top services and ensuring excellent food quality, cleanliness, and a calm environment. Additionally, to overcome the lacunae in the recent studies, some suggestions can be incorporated in the restaurant sector to boost customer satisfaction and gain outcomes:

Utilizing data-driven customer services to provide dynamic menus based on the customers' historical dining preferences and to offer tailored and targeted rewards. It makes customers feel more valued and helps in increasing loyalty, brand advocacy, positive word-of-mouth, and revisits.

Restaurant management should also invest in staff training and aesthetics of the location, such as a parking facility, free Wi-Fi, and the interior of the restaurant. As these will affect the emotional satisfaction of the customer, which in turn ensures loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

Customers often enjoy a variety of items at an affordable cost on their palette. Thus, restaurants can include smaller portions of varied menu items in a single serving to enhance customer satisfaction. This will also help in restricting the kitchen food wastage.

Concerning today's health and environmentally conscious customers, restaurants should incorporate gluten-free, vegan, and plant-based substitutes for meat and milk, respectively.

4. CONCLUSION

The current study aims to identify gaps in the existing literature regarding the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. It is well-established that customer satisfaction in casual dining restaurants serves as a prerequisite for fostering positive behavioral intentions. The factors that influence customer satisfaction are complex and diverse, encompassing macroeconomic trends, geographical landscapes, rapid technological advancements, individual preferences, and strategic marketing initiatives. By enhancing food quality, service, and atmosphere, restaurants can elevate satisfaction levels, which subsequently drives loyal, long-term patronage. Consequently, each of these elements plays a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and choices. Focusing on the dynamic casual dining sector in India, it is important to note that this industry significantly contributes to the national economy. However, the contemporary casual dining landscape introduces new variables, particularly trust. Additionally, future research could investigate the impact of third-party delivery services on satisfaction levels, the effect of digital ordering on perceptions of service quality, and how sustainability practices—such as food waste reduction—affect consumer intentions.

5.DECLARATIONS

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