

Vegetarian Restaurant and Consumer Satisfaction in Taiwan

-A preliminary study

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ABSTRACT

In order to live healthily and eat healthily, people started to explore the benefits of vegetarian. This leads to the increased popularity of vegetarian restaurants in Taiwan. In order to understand the relationship between vegetarian restaurants and customer satisfaction, the study conducted a preliminary quantitative study to investigate the respondents' attitude toward the phenomenon. The results and suggestions are provided.

Key Words: Vegetarian, Vegetarian Restaurant, Consumer satisfaction

1. Introduction

In order to live healthily and eat healthily, people started to explore the benefits of vegetarian. This makes the more and more popularity in vegetarian restaurant in Taiwan. Therefore, we would like to understand the consumer satisfaction of vegetarian restaurant so that it would be referential for the related practitioners to make marketing strategy in the future.

2. Theory

2.1 Definition of satisfaction

The initial concept of satisfaction was proposed by Cardozo (1965), saying that satisfaction refers to customer's cognition after buying goods in terms of product

feedback, if consumer value the product higher than the cost, then satisfaction forms. On the other side, Liljander and Strandvik (1993) argued that the factors that impact on consumer satisfaction in restaurant including the following three aspects: 1. the taste and appearance of the foods; 2. the combination and diversification of the menu; 3. personal service. Therefore, satisfaction turned to be the research focus of many practitioners and researchers. It is because customer consumption dominates corporate existence, in short, if the customer satisfaction is low, no one goes to the company to consume, then the company would not be able to survive under the intensive competition. Kotler (1997) pointed that satisfaction refers to the judgment before and after purchasing about the product quality. Singh (1991) reported that in the related research, satisfaction has to be evaluated from multi-dimensional indicators of a product, customer satisfaction would also be varied subject to different products or objects. Therefore, Oliver (1981) argued that customer satisfaction refers to the evaluation after obtaining the product or the surprise after consuming the product. Wu and Liang (2009) found that the environment and service or other interaction among consumers in a restaurant would have impacts on consumer experiential value. Meanwhile, the process of interaction with waiters would have more positive influence in customer satisfaction.

Based on the above, if managers would aggressively increase customer satisfaction and make them fully satisfied with the service after purchasing, it would be highly beneficial to customer repurchasing so that a win-win situation could be carried out.

2.2 The constructs of satisfaction

Churchill and Surprenant (1982) classified satisfaction into the following four

constructs:

2.2.1 Customer expectation: Before customer consumption, the psychological expected benefit brought by service or products.

2.2.2 Product performance: After performing consumption, customers would make evaluation after their actual contacting the product or service and make a comparison with the expectation before consuming.

2.2.3 Disconfirmation: The degree between consumer's self-expectation about service or product and actual experiences is the point to impact on their satisfaction.

2.2.4 Satisfaction: When consumers evaluate the differences between the product performance and expectation before purchasing, the similarity between the above two and the overall evaluation about the product or service would decide their satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is regarded as a kind of specific feeling before purchasing, when the products perform better than their pre-expectation, consumers feel satisfied; on the contrary, they feel unsatisfied.

Based on Westbrook (1980), the store satisfaction evaluation constructs mainly covered three points, which including practitioner satisfaction, store internal environment satisfaction, and product satisfaction. Wiley (1991) classified satisfaction into the following ten points: 1. Product quality; 2. Product delivery rate; 3. Salesman's professional knowledge; 4. Price competition; 5. Friendly service; 6. After-sales service; 7. Value of service; 8. Instant service; 9. Satisfaction; 10. Repurchase tendency.

Based on the above, Kotler (1997) induced varied researchers' opinion and concluded that customer satisfaction refers to the response in order to satisfy consumer's psychology and psychiatry.

3. Instrument

3.1 Questionnaire

The study employed questionnaire to collect data. There are five constructs in the questionnaire, which including demographics and satisfaction. The demographics construct covers gender, age, occupation, monthly income, and education. Meanwhile, in the satisfaction construct, there are four sub-constructs, which contain price, promotion, environment, and the foods. This makes a total of 34 items in the questionnaire.

The study also utilized five-point Likert-type scale to evaluate the participants' attitude to the item (5= very satisfied; 1= very unsatisfied)

3.2 Pilot study

In order to confirm the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher went to two famous vegetarian restaurants and sent out 70 questionnaires to collect the initial opinions of the consumers.

4. Results

The results indicated that the coefficients of the four constructs are all higher than 0.7, which implies that the internal consistency of the items is all acceptable.

In other words, the respondents mostly replied that their satisfaction, restaurant service, and repurchase willingness are all satisfactory, which indicated that it is worthy to go further to explore the relationship customer satisfaction and vegetarian restaurants.

5. Conclusion

It is anticipated that eating healthier and live healthier would be the common objective of modern people. However, it is the common tendency that consumers not only want to pay less but also tend to eat better. This advised us that the related

practitioners need to always put consumers rights at the first important location so that they could hold on their own position.

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