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A study on consumer perception and choice towards dining out with reference to Coimbatore city

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Abstract

The restaurant industry in India has been growing at a rapid pace over the last decade or so and the growth story is set to continue for the next foreseeable future. India's per capita income has been increasing steadily and this has led to an increase in the disposable income of Indians. Added to that is the concept of double-income households which is the result of more women joining the workforce. All this has led to an increase in the purchasing power of Indians, which is driving the growth of the food service industry. With India projecting itself as a major tourist destination to the world abroad, restaurants in the country have all the opportunities to expand their services and improve the level of their services to cater to a growing international market. Hence the study was undertaken with the objective to study the socio economic profile of consumers dining out, to study the consumer's perception and choice towards dining out and to study the factors influencing consumers to dine out.

Keywords: Dining out, consumer perception, restaurants

1. Introduction

The dining out culture in India has changed drastically, and the changing food habits of the youth have had a major contribution towards this trend. The youth population (people between the ages 18 and 35) make up 65% of India's population. They are the people who are tech-savvy, are constantly exposed to the global trends and lifestyles, are well read, have extensively traveled and have a high spending power. And, they are also the ones who are driving the growth index of the restaurant industry. Over the past few years, India has witnessed a proliferation of fine dining restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars, clubs, lounges, and international fast food joints, which have to come up to cater to the younger generation's changing food habits. These regulars are making fine-dine restaurants popular not only in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru but also in many non metro tier II cities. The restaurant market is expected to grow and it is estimated that restaurants will benefit will benefit over the next decade as more youngsters spend on having fun. The recent report by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) says that the size of the Indian food services industry is estimated to reach INR 408,040 crore by 2018

1.1 Factors driving people to dine out

1.1.1 Increasing per capita income and Disposable income

The per capita income of the Indians has increased and there are more working people/couples per household. With more disposable income at hand, they have higher spending power on food. The work-life imbalance has been also instrumental in people eating out or exploring home food delivery options more frequently.

1.1.2 Increase in travel and access to global trends

Increasing globalisation, growing exposure to international trends and cuisines have led to India's food and beverage segment going through a transformation in recent years.

Traveling to broader destinations and access to global trends has given a greater exposure to other cultures and a willingness to embrace them including their food. Additionally, people are addicted to food channels on TV and food boards on Pinterest or websites, and usually, want to consume what they see and crave.

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1.1.3 Dining out is an experience

What makes people step out of home to consume food is the reward of a truly authentic experience that they receive while dining out. The hospitable service, rich décor, warm ambiance, live performances or music, innovative menu, and little elements of surprise make their dining experience rewarding and unforgettable.

1.1.4 Increase in stress level

Overworked and stressed out consumers consider dining out as a way to unwind themselves. The high-paced lifestyle is a major trigger behind the changing food habits. In addition, restaurants are also the place where people bond with family and connect with friends.

1.1.5 Experiment with different and exotic cuisines

While earlier people preferred sticking to a few tried and tested cuisines like South Indian or North Indian, today people's food habits are more adventurous and they prefer to experiment with different cuisines on the domestic and international level. People are turning to more experimental and exotic cuisines such as Korean, Burmese, and Mexican.

2. Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, there is an increasing trend in Indian consumers eating out not only in metro cities, but also in tier -2 cities. There is also an increase in the number and frequency of middle class and upper middle class consumers eating out. The marketers should understand the factors driving them to eat out and their needs and preferences to frame a suitable strategy and cater to the needs of the target segment. Hence, the study "A study on consumers perception and choice towards dining out with reference to Coimbatore city" is undertaken.

3. Objectives

1. To study the socio economic profile of consumers dining out.
2. To study the consumer's perception and choice towards dining out.
3. To study the factors influencing consumers to dine out.

4. Research Methodology

- A. Area of study: Study is conducted in Coimbatore City.
- B. Sample size: Sample size is 200.
- C. Research Instrument : Questionnaire method
- D. Sample Design: Convenient sampling method.
- E. Sources of Data: Primary data were collected from respondents living in Coimbatore city. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, internet and magazines.

F. Statistical Tools used: percentage analysis.

5. Review of Literature

Kim, Bergman & Raab (2010) ^[1] has stated in their study that the foodservice industry needs to understand the purchasing behavior of mature consumer market as it continues to grow in importance. The study was undertaken to identify the restaurant attributes that are important to mature restaurant customers specifically in three restaurant sectors namely fine dining, buffet, and family/casual dining restaurants in the city of Las Vegas. The results were analyzed using descriptive analysis and exploratory factor analysis and the study concluded that the respondents highly valued the quality of food and service as well as comfortable restaurant facilities. The price promotions and nutritional menu information were found to be of secondary importance to mature customers.

Ali & Nath (2013) ^[2] has investigated the factors influencing consumers' preferences of eating out and restaurant foodservices through a primary survey of 618 urban respondents who were interviewed personally through a structured questionnaire. The survey was undertaken in six districts of Uttar Pradesh in India. The majority of the respondents reported eating out once in a month and they primarily dined out with friends or family members on holidays or special occasions. The preference for eating out is significantly more prominent among those who are younger, more educated, employed, and having more than one income earners in their family and belonging to higher income groups of households.

Njite, Dunn Hyunjung Kim (2008) ^[3] The focus of this study was to investigate the non-food attributes that are associated with fine dining restaurants. The study also examines the extent to which these restaurant attributes are prioritized during the selection and preference of fine dining restaurants. The results of the study indicated that in fine dining restaurants customer relations is the most important attribute and price is the least important attribute.

Basil & Basil (2009) ^[4] has stated that Ultra-fine dining is a growing phenomenon and this study considers 352 online reviews of upscale dining experiences at Michelin three-star restaurants to investigate assessments of these luxury purchases. The reviews are primarily positive and considers aesthetics of the food to be important followed by service quality. Whether the restaurant meets expectations provides the most important criterion for interpreting the experience. The results suggest that the aesthetic and hedonic aspects of food are more important than service quality in an ultra-fine dining context.

6. Results & Discussions

Social Profile		No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 20 Years	5	2.5
	21 to 30 Years	76	38
	31 to 40 Years	92	46
	41 to 50 Years	17	8.5
	Above 50 Years	10	5
	Total	200	100
Gender	Male	114	57
	Female	86	43
	Total	200	100
Education	Under Graduate	95	47.5
	Post Graduate	73	36.5
	Professionally Qualified	32	16

	Total	200	100
Occupation	Agriculture	5	2.5
	Business	32	16
	Employed	78	39
	Professional	32	16
	House Wife	38	19
	Retired	7	3.5
	Student	8	4
	Total	200	100
No. of Members in the family	2	15	7.5
	3	57	28.5
	4	94	47
	5	25	12.5
	More than 5	9	4.5
	Total	200	100
Family Earnings Per Month	Less than 40,000	26	13
	40,001 to 80,000	83	41.5
	80,001 to 1,20,000	45	22.5
	1,20,001 to 1,60,000	23	11.5
	1,60,001 to 2,00,000	15	7.5
	Above 2,00,000	8	4
	Total	200	100

Perception And Choice Towards Dining Out			
Perception And Choice		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Dine out frequently	Yes	124	62
	No	76	38
	Total	200	100
Accompanying persons	Family	86	43
	Friends	48	24
	Business associates	9	4.5
	Alone	2	1
	All the above	55	27.5
	Total	200	100
Preferable time of visit	Week days	21	10.5
	Week ends	51	25.5
	On special occasions	32	16
	Both week ends and on special occasions	96	48
	Total	200	100
Woman in the family is Working	Yes	128	64
	No	72	36
	Total	200	100
Type of Family	Nuclear Family	136	68
	Joint Family	64	32
	Total	200	100
Amount Spent for dining out per month	Less than Rs.3000	51	25.5
	Rs.3000 – Rs.6000	56	28
	Rs.6001 – Rs.9000	72	36
	Above Rs.9000	21	10.5
	Total	200	100
Factors Influencing Consumers To Dine Out			
Reasons for Dining out	Don't have time to cook	53	26.5
	Just to go out	74	37
	Informal business meet	19	9.5
	Relieve stress and relax	22	11
	Entertainment and recreation	32	16
	Total	200	100
Factors considered when dining out	Location of the restaurant	28	14
	Quality of food	46	23
	Taste of food	76	38
	Décor and ambience	30	15
	Parking & other facilities	20	10
	Total	200	100
Dine in Different Restaurants	Yes	129	64.5
	No	71	35.5
	Total	200	100
Reason for Dining in different Restaurants	Variety of taste	99	49.5
	Variety of food	61	30.5

	Different ambience	40	20
	Total	200	100
Areas to improve for restaurants in Coimbatore	Better service	53	26.5
	Quality of food	42	21
	Ambience	28	14
	Pricing	29	14.5
	Variety of cuisine	48	24
	Total	200	100
Respondents interest to dine out more often in future	Yes	116	58
	No	84	42
	Total	200	100

7. Findings of the Study

1. Majority of the respondents (46%) are in the age group of 31 to 40 years.
2. Most of the respondents (57%) are male.
3. Majority of the respondents (47.5%) are under graduates.
4. Majority of the respondents (39%) are employed.
5. Most of the respondents (47%) have 4 members in their family.
6. Most of the respondents (41.5%) family earnings is between Rs.40,001 and Rs.80,000.
7. Majority of the respondents (69%) dine out frequently.
8. Most of the respondents (43%) dine out with family members.
9. Majority of the respondents (48%) preferable time of visit is both weekends and on special occasions.
10. Majority of the respondents (64%) women in the family is working.
11. Most of the respondents (68%) live in nuclear family.
12. Majority of the respondents (36%) spend Rs.6001 to Rs.9000 on dining out per month.
13. Majority of the respondents (37%) dine out because they "just want to go out".
14. Majority of the respondents (38%) have stated that "taste of food" is an important factor considered while dining out.
15. Most of the respondents (64.5%) have stated that they dine in different restaurants.
16. Majority of the respondents (49.5%) have stated that "variety of taste" is the reason for dining in different restaurants.
17. Most of the respondents (26.5%) have stated that the area to improve in restaurants in Coimbatore is "Better service".
18. Majority of the respondents (58%) have stated that they would dine out more frequently in future.

8. Suggestions

1. Restaurants should develop a high quality of food and service.
2. Restaurants can pay more attention to training and empowering their service staff to look for ways to make the dining experience a memorable one for their customers.
3. Restaurateurs should be more conscious of the customer's need of privacy in the design and layout of their restaurants.
4. Chefs can be more imaginative, creative and innovative in creating new dishes that will attract the customers.
5. Health-based food can be offered.
6. Technology can be used for generating a customer feedback system

7. Home delivery, cashback, reward points and heavy discounts can be offered to attract customers.

9. Conclusion

Food industry is a rapidly growing sector and contributes significantly to the growth of the Indian economy. There is a tremendous rise in the number of restaurants both in metros and in non-metros in recent years. People dine out not just to consume food but for various other experiences associated with it. By understanding the preferences of the customers and the changing lifestyle of the present generation, the restaurateurs can be successful in the market.

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