

A Content Analysis on TripAdvisor Reviews of Customer Satisfaction in a Buffet Restaurant

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Abstract. This study aimed to assess customer satisfaction through TripAdvisor reviews of a buffet restaurant in Pasay City, focusing on positive and negative feedback from 2022-2023 to enhance future dining experiences and pinpoint areas for improvement. Employing a qualitative, descriptive method, the study analyzed 660 reviews, categorizing them by food quality, service quality, price, and location. The findings indicated a predominance of positive feedback while highlighting specific areas needing improvement.

Keywords: Customer experience; Customer satisfaction; Restaurant industry; TripAdvisor.

1.0 Introduction

The restaurant industry is one of the most in-demand businesses in today's global economy. Fast food chains, casual dining, and buffet restaurants are registered food service establishments serving customers a wide range of food and beverages. In today's fast-paced economic environment, the hospitality sector, particularly the restaurant industry, is going through significant shifts due to rivalry (Rhou & Singal, 2020). This competition would require the managers and owners of restaurant businesses to make strategic offerings that customers would most likely appreciate in order to strengthen their business and boost customer satisfaction, which is one crucial criterion that a restaurant industry must meet, hence retaining customers. Additionally, the sense of fulfilment of the experience depends on the adoration and food preferences of the patrons, particularly the food-loving Filipinos.

Like any other country, the Philippines' food business has significantly prospered. Noting that Filipinos enjoy eating a lot, entrepreneurs started restaurant businesses nationwide. For example, the birth of many buffet-style food service establishments became popular because they provided a large selection of dishes and catered to Filipino tastes. For example, a buffet service offers a self-service dining experience in which guests can choose from a diverse range of dishes being served. This type of dining arrangement is popular in various contexts, from casual get-togethers to more formal and sophisticated events. Many Filipino families enjoy celebrating special occasions like birthdays or a simple get-together. Moreover, the allure of such establishments is heightened by the enticing promos they frequently offer, such as complimentary birthday or graduation offers, which draw Filipino customers to dine and experience this kind of service.

One popular buffet style restaurant in the Philippines is inspired by a French artist's studio, Spiral, the flagship restaurant of the Sofitel Manila, features 21 dining ateliers. Every palate can find something they enjoy, from the cheese area at L'Epicerie to the many cuisines offered, including Indian, Japanese, and Filipino. Savor salads, pasta

and French dishes, Asian cuisine, and sweets like gelato, pastries, and chocolate fountain desserts. Spiral also offers complimentary tea and coffee. However guests may enhance their experience by choosing their preferred beverages or adding free-flowing alcoholic drinks while enjoying the vast array of food choices (Spiral Manila, n.d.). Customers particulary Filipinos are a bit cautious of the foods that they eat, some would prefer one over the other and some is just enough as it is but restaurant industry should adjust to meet the expectations of their patrons and satisfy their dining experience.

To measure the degree to which a business satisfies or exceeds its clients' expectations with its goods and services is called customer satisfaction (Predilla & Junio, 2017). Providing quality customer service is essential for companies since it is the first point of contact between them and their clients. Customers are vital to any business, and their opinions significantly impact the company's success. Customers' opinions are essential components that drive the success and expansion of any given firm (Marquez et al., 2019). In the restaurant business, customers consider the level of service and the standards and quality of the food offerings. A study conducted by Adriatico et al., 2022 concluded that clients who are pleased with the caliber of the products and services are more inclined to suggest and support a restaurant. Moreover, a study revealed that satisfied clients are more likely to make subsequent purchases and significantly influence customer loyalty (Rabo & Ang, n.d.). Evaluating the quality of services is essential since it helps them to strengthen and enhance their business, which eventually results in higher revenue (Omar et al., 2016).

In the past, plenty of research has been done on customer satisfaction, but more needs to be done on customer satisfaction in the buffet restaurant industry. The research gap emphasized the necessity of a more thorough investigation of the constantly changing relationship between shifts in customer satisfaction and several internal and external factors affecting this industry. Neglecting plausible impacts such as shifts in management, menu options, marketing tactics, and outside environmental variables increases the likelihood of missing out on significant knowledge about what influences pivots in consumer satisfaction. By filling this gap, managers and other stakeholders seeking the best possible dining experience at Buffet restaurant could make more informed decisions by having a more sophisticated awareness of the nuances underlying customer satisfaction dynamics.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative, descriptive research methodology mainly because the current study aims to describe and analyze the factors associated with customer satisfaction. Moreover, the data available is purely observational, and the variables cannot be manipulated or controlled. Also, the data needed to gauge customer satisfaction was accessible online in the form of Tripadvisor guest reviews.

2.2 Research Participants

The participants in the research were restaurant guests who visited between 2022 and 2023 and submitted their Tripadvisor reviews regardless of whether they were positive or negative. The researcher based the data collection on a reliable travel review website, Tripadvisor, to make the research more legitimate and trustworthy.

2.3 Research Instrument

The researcher intended to use evaluations and ratings from 2022 to 2023 obtained from the widely recognized travel website Tripadvisor. Regarding experience ratings, a 5-star rating denoted excellence—the maximum degree of quality or satisfaction. A 4-star rating came second, indicating a very good experience. A three-star rating indicated an average experience—neither excellent nor very terrible. A 2-star rating denoted a poor experience. Lastly, a rating of one star denoted a terrible experience and the lowest possible degree of quality or satisfaction.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher identified fixed themes on Tripadvisor, including food, service, atmosphere, value for money, and overall dining experience. By identifying these key elements, the study sought to offer a deeper understanding of the factors that positively or negatively impacted customer satisfaction. To obtain comprehensive information from participants regarding their dining experiences and satisfaction, browsing reviews on online resources, specifically Tripadvisor, was one of the most crucial things to prepare to begin the study. By looking through these reviews, the researcher gained further insight into the guests' views and opinions deemed particularly

noteworthy. The reviews were compiled and systematically organized in a spreadsheet based on their content. First, reviews about Buffet restaurant in Pasay City from 2022 to 2023 were collected. After reading through the evaluations, the researcher immersed more profoundly in the material to become familiar with the concepts and feelings that customers had stated. The reviews are then categorized using a coding system based on content associated with customer satisfaction, such as food, service, price, and location. The coded data were next subjected to content analysis, which was used to find patterns and trends. The continuous process of content refinement resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of customer satisfaction. By going through this procedure, the research gathered the real voices and experiences of the participants, offering insightful information about Buffet restaurant's customer satisfaction. The limitations of this study are the lack of control over the sample as the reviews are already available online, the year of reviews collected was from 2022 to 2023 only, and the study's data is only collected on the Tripadvisor website alone.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The participants from TripAdvisor remained anonymous.

3.0 Results and Discussion

In the pursuit of understanding customer experiences and satisfaction levels, this study concentrated on analyzing ratings provided by guests who visited Buffet restaurant in Pasay City from 2022 to 2023. Customer feedback served as a valuable lens for evaluating various aspects of the dining establishment, shedding light on food quality, service quality, price, and location.

Table L	Distribution	n Ot	reviews

Year	Number of Reviews	Percentage
2022	57	8.60
2023	603	91.4

A total of 660 participants posted reviews of their experiences at Buffet restaurant on TripAdvisor throughout the years 2022 and 2023. In 2022, 57 guests posted their reviews, constituting 8.6% of the total reviews collected, but by 2023, the number had climbed dramatically to 603, or 91.4% of the total reviews. This phenomenal increase in involvement highlights the establishment's persistent allure and the increasing inclination of customers who participated in online discussions, thus increasing the amount of data examined and assessed. Moreover, one factor contributing to the increased number of reviews in 2023 is the restaurant industry's return to normal operations after the pandemic began in 2020. During the pandemic, the government enforced strict health guidelines to protect public health, but by 2023, customers could dine out and enjoy a pre-pandemic lifestyle more freely. In contrast, in 2022, people were still cautious about the risk of contracting the disease.

During the analysis, which covered the years 2022 and 2023, the researchers saw that Spiral Buffet consistently received the highest rating possible—"Excellent." Nevertheless, besides these commendations, the researcher noted that some customers gave the restaurant poor reviews. During the analysis of Spiral Buffet's performance in 2022, the predominant rating trend was "Excellent," indicating high guest satisfaction. However, this positive trend was offset by critical reviews that pointed out flaws within the establishment. Conversely, in 2023, while "Excellent" ratings continued to dominate, there was a noticeable decrease in poor to terrible reviews. This implied that Spiral Buffet made a concerted effort to address earlier issues, which enhanced overall guest satisfaction. These findings demonstrated Spiral Buffet's dedication to constant growth and refining the dining experience for its customers. According to (Ivkov et al., 2016), innovations helped businesses remain afloat in the competitive environment. In the highly competitive and ever-evolving restaurant industry, management's proactive approach and ability to personalize an experience was significant.

Table 2, 2022 reviews

Rating	Number of Reviews
Excellent	38
Very Good	6
Average	2
Poor	6
Terrible	5
Total	57

In 2022, Spiral Restaurant garnered feedback from 57 reviewers. Among them, 38 expressed their experience as "Excellent," indicating high satisfaction. Additionally, six reviews classified their experience as "Very Good." However, two reviews were marked as "Average," 6 as "Poor," and 5 as "Terrible," suggesting varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the dining experience.

Table 3. 2023 reviews

Rating	Number of Reviews
Excellent	530
Very Good	53
Average	13
Poor	5
Terrible	2
Total	603

In 2023, Spiral Restaurant continued to attract a significant amount of feedback, with a total of 603 reviews received throughout the year. Impressively, most of these reviews, specifically 530, rated the dining experience as "Excellent," Additionally, 53 reviews categorized the experience as "Very Good," However, there were 13 reviews marked as "Average," Moreover, a small number of reviews, comprising five labeled as "Poor" and two as "Terrible,"

Theme 1: Food

5 Star Rating

"The buffet experience exceeded expectations with impeccable service and a diverse array of delicious dishes. The staff's attentiveness and the flavorful food created a delightful dining experience. Highly recommended!" (Review, 2023)

"So many different stations of food including Filipino, Indian, Chinese, salads, Japanese, cheese room, juices, bread, waffles, Filipino sweets, and I'm sure I have forgotten a few. Choices continue to change and are always fresh." (Review, 2023)

3 Star Rating:

"I have been to Spiral several times in the past, and I have to say I found the food mediocre this time. It was not as delicious as before. I found other buffets in Manila to be more delicious." (Review, 2022)

2 Star Rating:

"So many items are out of stock or coming soon. Most foods were dry and overcooked." (Review, 2022)

Analysis of the reviews indicated that most visitors had expressed satisfaction with the food offerings at Spiral Manila. However, a subset of reviews has noted a perceived decline in food quality compared to previous experiences. These insights presented valuable feedback for management to consider when identifying areas for enhancement. By acknowledging positive and critical feedback, the management can strategize improvements to maintain and elevate overall guest satisfaction levels. The restaurant needs to concentrate on consistently serving cuisine of the highest quality to every one of its customers. By continuously providing an exceptional dining experience, the restaurant could build a solid reputation and cultivate client loyalty, all of which will eventually lead to long-term success.

According to Vaclavik and Christian (2008), the flavor of the food plays a significant role as it directly influences enjoyment and overall satisfaction with the dish. Moreover, food's appearance was greatly influenced by its presentation, with visually appealing dishes making food more alluring. Lee and Whaley supported this in 2019. Their study revealed that food taste was essential to consumer satisfaction during their dining experience. Still, before customers taste the food, food presentation is generally the first to stimulate consumers' senses.

Furthermore, customers of buffet restaurants prefer a menu with a wide range of options, which supported Oyewole's (2013) research, which shows that customers of buffet restaurants seek a menu with an extensive range of choices. Customers had expectations about food quality. Every food business creates and implements an efficient quality control program to satisfy this consumer need. Reduced product sales and profitability might

result from a failure to meet consumer demand. A significant product failure could completely fail a company (Hurst et al., 2010). Moreover, a study conducted by Al-Tit in 2015 showed that food quality significantly impacted customer satisfaction. Their analysis showed that it is one of the most essential variables contributing to increased customer satisfaction.

Theme 2: Service

5 Star Rating

"Staff was amiable, accommodating and attended to our every request quickly and precisely." (Review, 2023)

"Very attentive to our needs. Perfect example of excellent customer service. Will return" (Review, 2023)

1 Star Rating

"Very disappointed on how they have handled the unfortunate event that happened to their restaurant that resulted to the cancellation of the Lunch Buffet w/c has shown how they lack the sense of Customer Service & operational strategy for unforeseen events like this to ensure customer satisfaction." (Review, 2022)

"We were seated at a table under direct sunlight. It felt like Sauna in there. We requested to be transferred several times and were finally transferred after an hour and 40 minutes when we were all drenched in sweat. We requested the bill at 2 PM as our doctor's appointment was at 3:45 PM. Our bill was handed down to us at 3:30 PM, and only after we waited at the cashier for our bill to be processed." (Review, 2022)

Analysis of the reviews revealed that visitors had lauded the staff at Spiral Manila for their commendable attributes, including friendliness, accommodation, and attentiveness to customer needs. However, a subset of guests has expressed discontent regarding the restaurant's management of an unforeseen event, highlighting areas for improvement in customer service and operational strategy during such occurrences. The management must develop the confidence to deal with challenging circumstances while upholding professionalism and fairness.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), exceptional customer service positively impacted satisfaction. Consumers' favorable opinions of a company's level of service are essential as they increase the possibility that expectations will be fulfilled, which raises customer satisfaction. A 2015 study by Al-Tit discovered a strong correlation between customer satisfaction and service quality. Additionally, good service had a favorable effect on retaining customers. Studies have indicated that enhancing the standard of service in the hospitality industry across every aspect affects customer satisfaction, customer retention, and loyalty (Rauch et al., 2015; Jeon & Jeong, 2017). It helped to improve sustainability and overall corporate performance. A 2015 Murad and Muhammad Ali study further supported this, showing a substantial correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction positively correlates with high service quality (Chan & Castro, 2021).

Theme 3: Price

5 Star Rating

"Moreover, the food did not disappoint. worth the price. Overall, we had such a great time in Spiral and will come back here." (Review, 2023)

"I do not mind paying more for quality. I would return here again." (Review, 2023)

3 Star Rating

"Prices are very high compared to other buffet meals in Manila." (Review, 2023)

2 Star Rating

"The exceptionally high price paid was nowhere near the value of what we received. Appears most were there under the "coupon" crowd. Even at half price, it would be barely" (Review, 2023)

Analysis of the reviews indicated that guests have predominantly praised the quality of food and perceived value for money. Guests have expressed satisfaction with their dining experiences, emphasizing that the food justified

the price paid and expressing intentions to return. However, some reviews highlighted concerns regarding the perceived mismatch between the high price and the value received, suggesting potential areas for improvement in aligning pricing with customer expectations.

According to Karki & Panthi (2018), price is an essential factor in consumers' decision-making when purchasing a product. Thus, for a company to succeed in the market, it is necessary to ensure that the cost of its products or services is in line with what customers are willing to pay. Pricing that aligns with customers' perceptions of value is essential for attracting new customers while keeping existing ones, which fuels expansion and profitability. Furthermore, Albari and Kartikasari (2019) provided compelling evidence that customer satisfaction increases when food prices appropriately correspond to the value consumers perceive of the products. Customers are satisfied when they believe that the cost accurately corresponds with the quality they receive. This frequently results in recurrent purchases and recommendations to others based on their perception of reasonable pricing. Perceived price fairness is one of the primary criteria for evaluating customer satisfaction in the restaurant business. In reality, before or after making a purchase, customers frequently compare several brands to understand the perceived value better and evaluate their degree of satisfaction. (Hanaysha, 2016). However, according to Abdullah et al. (2019), using various pricing techniques to boost sales and foster a sense of price fairness is feasible.

Theme 4: Location

5 Star Rating

"We have been patrons of Spiral for years now as this restaurant is a great place for celebrating special occasions with loved ones." (Review, 2023)

"We enjoyed our breakfast, and we love the restaurant's ambiance. Very classy and elegant. Service is also top notch!" (Review, 2023)

3 Star Rating

"3/5 stars because the dining room was deafening and extremely hot. Very uncomfortable place to spend 2+ hours." (Review, 2023)

"Way too crowded and standing in line (over 100 guests waiting) was not what we expected for this price. We have had way better meals in the Philippines." (Review, 2023)

Analysis of the reviews indicated that guests of Spiral Manila depict a mixed sentiment among guests. While some patrons have expressed long-standing loyalty to the restaurant, citing it as an ideal venue for special occasions, others have raised concerns about the dining experience. Complaints include discomfort due to noise and temperature levels, dissatisfaction with overcrowding, and lengthy wait times. These reviews suggest areas for improvement in ambiance, comfort, and crowd management to enhance overall guest satisfaction.

According to Hanaysha (2016), a restaurant's physical environment, which includes both tangible and intangible elements, is mainly composed of temperature, lighting, smell, noise, mood, and music. Meanwhile, Zhong and Moon (2020) stated that a restaurant's well-kept outdoor environment would assist in drawing in new customers while retaining existing customers. According to a 2020 study by Dhyani, the significance of location in running a successful food outlet must be considered since it is critical to drawing consumers, ensuring profitability, and determining the establishment's endurance. Dhyani mentioned three essential elements of his study. The first vital elements included visibility and accessibility, with conveniently accessible places attracting more prospective clients. Second, the area's demographic makeup is significant, necessitating knowledge of the wants and preferences of the target market, including financial brackets, cultural preferences, and lifestyle trends. Last but not least, the milieu and mood of the area, including its aesthetics and neighboring attractions, significantly affect customer satisfaction and experience, encouraging returning customers, favorable evaluations, and a solid reputation for the company.

4.0 Conclusion

The study evaluated customer satisfaction reviews in online consumer feedback for Buffet restaurants in Pasay City from TripAdvisor between 2022 and 2023. The analysis of 660 reviews posted during this period reveals several significant findings, including a dramatic review increase from 57 in 2022 to 603 in 2023. This suggests that increasing numbers of customers were sharing their dining experiences online. Furthermore, this study showed that most consumers who posted their experiences online evaluated their dining experiences as excellent to very good, indicating satisfaction. The researchers discovered that quality, service, price, and location are significant factors in customer satisfaction. Positive reviews emphasized the staff's cordial behavior and the quality of the cuisine. Price and value reviews held differently, with some visitors believing that the cost was justified while others noticed an inequality. The restaurant's location and ambiance were also prominently highlighted in the reviews. Buffet restaurant may consider changes to sustain and improve customer satisfaction by giving positive and negative feedback. To guarantee that the restaurant remains among the top places to dine, proactive management and ongoing monitoring of customer feedback are essential in addressing the areas identified for improvement.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The author did the entire study while the adviser guided the main author in finishing this study.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflicts of interest

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