

Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Food Quality in Relation to Demographic Characteristics as a Result of Sustainable Practices

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Abstract

Sustainable restaurant practices can be viewed as a response to economic challenge that is facing many restaurants. Offering food quality (well cooked and served food) to customers can mean reduction of food waste from satisfied customers and more saving by avoiding food purchase cost. Food quality has largely been acknowledged as an important component of any restaurant, and therefore it has a main influence on customer satisfaction and future purchase intention leading to more profits. The food quality dimensions measured included food variety, colour, taste, texture, smell, temperature, presentation and selection of condiments. The main objective of this study is therefore to assess the effect of customer satisfaction of food quality in relation to social demographic characteristics as a result of cooking and service practices. The social demographic characteristics of customers assessed included gender, age, education level, monthly income and nationality. A cross sectional survey study was employed in recording the information in the population. The sample size of customers was calculated using Fisher, Storman and Heaton (1998) formula. Simple random sampling method was used in selecting three hundred and forty five (345) customers used in the study. The target population included all customers visiting the star rated restaurants. Structured self administered questionnaire were used in acquiring relevant information from customers. A five point type likert scale was used to measure satisfaction level with food quality. The food quality dimensions were adapted from DINESERV and past related studies. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences version 18. Gender and nationality was analyzed using T- test while age group, monthly income and educational level was analyzed using one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Post hoc test (Lower Significant Difference) was employed to identify the specific social demographic group differing with food quality. The results indicated that there was significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between age group, educational level and monthly income. Significant difference between gender and nationality with food quality was not found. The results imply that satisfaction level of respondents on food quality was influenced by age group, educational level and monthly income. By supporting staff development through training and motivation, the restaurant can save operating costs and reduce the social and environmental impact of doing business while also appealing to a new demographic of customers that are becoming conscious about food quality.

Keywords: satisfaction, demographics, food quality, customers, sustainable practices

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability in restaurant industry is about finding ways of providing food that will last for future generations and have less of an impact on the environment. A sustainable restaurant demonstrates responsible sourcing and best kitchen practice delivered by well-trained staff following good waste management policies. It is only with this holistic approach to the environmental, economic and social impacts of their business that the restaurant can be considered truly sustainable. Food quality is a very important clue (Pettijohn, Pettijohn, & Luke, 1997) and continues to be an influential clue in restaurants with an emphasis on sustainability (Ball, Rowson, & O'Toole, 2008; DiPietro, Cao, & Partlow, 2013).

Environmental impact: Food waste

A restaurateur can prevent food wastage by offering food quality to customers. When customers are dissatisfied with food, they end up wasting it. Food waste from restaurants ends up in landfills which produce a large amount of [methane](#) – a more

powerful greenhouse gas than even CO₂. For the uninitiated, excess amounts of greenhouse gases such as methane, CO₂ and chlorofluorocarbons absorb infrared radiation and heat up the earth's atmosphere, causing global warming and climate change (FAO, 2013).

Economic impact: Economic sustainability can be thought of as progressive economic value, and a sustainable business is one that will continue to prosper into the future as well as one that strengthens the local economy that it is part of. By focusing on a variety of menu selections, food served with correct temperature, good taste and aroma, restaurateurs can incur less waste and significant savings in food costs. Offering of higher quality menu and service on the other hand results in improved customer satisfaction and increased sales (Baldwin, Wilberforce and Kapur, 2011). Seasonal and bulk purchasing helps to decrease unit costs over prepackaged foods and results in more fresh and whole foods.

Social Impact: According to Sustainable Restaurant Association social sustainability encompasses; community engagement, treating people fairly, healthy eating and responsible marketing. Treating people fairly means doing the decent thing by staff, suppliers and customers. To foster healthy eating, restaurants need to offer a diverse menu catering to many nutritional, ethical and health concerns. In terms of responsible marketing restaurants have an obligation to be truthful in their marketing and communications. Sustainable restaurants need to be very careful that what they promise is what they deliver to their customers. A menu is a good way to communicate sustainable values as it is one of the customer's first points of contact and may influence their ordering. Well-trained staff will therefore offer customers with food quality, leading to satisfaction and intention to come back (Turenne, 2009)

Social Demographic Characteristics and Customer Satisfaction

Social demographic characteristics play a major role in influencing customer's satisfaction in food quality. Support came from Tinne (2012) who asserted that demographic variables are one of the major factors which determines consumer experiences and subsequent behaviors. Various authors have contradicted in their findings related to customer satisfaction and social demographic characteristics, for instance Ozimek and Zakowska- Biemans (2011) argued that customers' level of education influenced their expectation on satisfaction. Huang, Ho and Lee (2003) however found out that customers' expectation for food quality satisfaction was influenced by their gender. Rahman (2012) on the other hand posit that satisfaction of customers on food quality is influenced by their age groups. Kristanti, Thio, Jokum and Kartika (2012) however found out that age group influenced customer satisfaction more than other demographic characteristics.

He found out that the younger customers (16-34 years) were very concerned with idealism and insisted that everything should be perfect while older customers (47-65 years) did not give much attention to detail anymore and did not dispute in small things thus had a tendency of getting satisfied with food quality compared to younger customers. Customers of different income level rate their satisfaction of food differently (Kivela, Imbakavan and Reece, 1999). Customers of higher income have more disposable income and thus will have higher expectations in relation to food quality.

Main Objective: To assess the effect of customer satisfaction on food quality in relation to social demographic characteristics as a result of cooking and service practices.

Specific Objectives

- Determine if there is any significant difference between customers' satisfaction and food quality based on gender.
- Assess any significant difference between customers' satisfaction and food quality in relation to age group.
- Find out if there is significant difference between customers' satisfaction and food quality based on their level of education.
- Determine any significant difference between customers' satisfaction and food quality based on Nationality.
- Assess if there is a significant difference between customers' satisfaction and food quality in relation to monthly income.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study was conducted in Kenyan star rated restaurants. Customers of various social demographic characteristics were assessed in relation to food quality offered. Permission to conduct the study was sort from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Consent was also sort from the management of the sampled restaurants. All respondents were informed about the confidentiality of the information gathered from them, as the questionnaire did not require participants to identify themselves. To ensure this, a consent letter was provided addressing issues of confidentiality.

A cross sectional survey study was adopted. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents. The sample size of the customers was calculated according to Fisher *et al.*, (1998) formula which is used in social sciences studies in determining the sample size (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2} \quad (1)$$

Where n= the desired sample size (if the target population is greater than 10,000)

z = the standard normal deviate at required confidence level.

p = the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristic being measured.

q= 1- p and d = the level of statistical significance

50% was used as the estimate of the proportion in the target population, as recommended by Fisher *et al.*, (1998). The proportion of the target population was therefore 0.50; the z statistics was 1.96.

The desired accuracy was 0.05 level, the sample size was as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (.50) (.50)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Questionnaire Administration

The study employed self administered closed ended, five point Likert scale questionnaire comprising of two sections. The first section had five (5) questions which sought to establish the customer demographic and social economic status. Social demographic characteristics included gender, age group, educational level, nationality and monthly income. The second section had ten (10) questions which sought to establish the level of satisfaction in relation to food quality as a result of cooking and service practices. The questionnaire was developed from DINESERV scale (Stevens, Knutson and Patton, 1995), and related studies of Soriano (2002).

To be able to measure the level of satisfaction with food quality, a five point Likert type scale (Geoff, 2010) was used. The scale ranged from very dissatisfied-1, dissatisfied-2, unsure-3, satisfied-4 to very satisfied-5. Customers were requested to rate their level of satisfaction in relation to food quality dimensions namely: food presentation, colour, smell, taste, texture, temperature of food and beverage, variety of food, beverage and condiments. The questionnaires which had been completed successfully by the respondents were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18. One way ANOVA test was used in determining

significance difference between demographic characteristics (age group, level of education and monthly income) and customer level of satisfaction. A $p < 0.05$ was considered significant. Post Hoc tests were later done to show the significant difference between specific groups since ANOVA test just showed the overall difference between groups and not specific groups. An independent T- test was done to test significant differences between two means of demographic characteristics (gender and nationality) in relation to food quality. Pretesting of the instrument was done to familiarize the researcher with field work arrangement and time constraints while executing survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to thirty existing star rated restaurants. Three hundred and forty five (345) questionnaires were returned dully filled indicating a response rate of 89.8% which is above 60% use as a threshold in social sciences (Johnson and Wislar, 2012). The unfilled questionnaires were 25(6.5%) while the incomplete questionnaires were 14 (3.7%) adding to a total of 39 (10.2%) questionnaires which were considered unsuitable for analysis.

Table 1 Social demographic characteristic of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	187	54.2%
Female	158	45.8 %
Nationality		
Kenyan	275	79.7 %
Non Kenyan	70	20.3 %
Age Group		
18-25 Years	30	8.7%
26-35 years	90	26.1%
36-45 Years	129	37.4%
46 Years and above	96	27.8%
Educational Level		
Primary	2	0.6 %
Secondary	34	9.9 %
Diploma	137	39.7 %
Degree	172	49.9 %
Monthly Income		
10,000- 20,000 Ksh	10	2.9%
20,001- 30,000 Ksh	130	37.7%
More than 30,000	205	59.4%
Total	345	100%

Gender of Respondents

Table 1 reveals that 54.2% respondents were male and 45.8% were female. Male respondents were found to be the majority. The implication could be that men are adventurous and like traveling. (Burusnukul, Binkley and Sukalakamala, 2011). Another reason could be most men prefer to

meet in restaurants when having business discussions with their business counterparts. On the other hand female respondents who are household oriented prefer cooking at home. Majority of working women prefer eating lunches than dinners in restaurants. A report by Varjonen and Makela (2012) revealed that women labor time outside home correlates with an

increase in lunch eaten outside home, meaning that more men were likely to visit the restaurants than women. This is in support of the findings of several authors (Aziz, Siti Nurafifah and Eikkoon, 2014) who found out that more men than women prefer eating in restaurants.

Table 2 T- Test for the difference in means in gender and food quality

Group Statistics					
Variable	Gender of the respondent	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Food Quality	Female (N= 158)	21.974	6.476	0.515	0.087
	Male (N=187)	23.167	6.396	0.468	

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

The results in Table 2 indicate that there was no statistical significance difference between gender and food quality ($p > 0.05$). This implies that the gender of the respondents hardly contributes towards difference in food quality in star rated restaurant. This results tone with the findings of Soriano (2002) who found no significant difference between gender and food quality.

Age Group of Respondents

Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents were aged between 36- 45 years (37.4%) followed by respondents aged between 46 years and above (27.8%), 26-35 years (26.1%) and 18-25 years (8.7%) respectively. This implies that the age group of 36 - 45 years is likely to be the majority because they eat out often and many a times take their families out. Increasing number of families at this stage has dual income and spends more money eating out. The age group of 46 and above which includes older (41- 50) and senior (51 and above) customers (Reynold and

Hwang, 2006), followed the age group of 36-45 years (Table 1). The senior age group visits the restaurants for two main reasons; for convenience and companionship. According to Mattila, Karjaluo and Pento, (2003) this group is wealthier and have more disposable income.

This findings are similar with the study by Makovic, Raspor and Segaric (2010) which revealed that majority of customers who patronized restaurants were customers between 36- 45 years followed by 46 years and above, 26- 35 years and 16-25 respectively. The findings of Reynold and Hwang, (2006) was however different. The age group of 21-30 years was the majority (43%) followed by 31-40 years (17%), 18-20 years (16%), 41-50 years (15%) and finally 51 years and above (9%). The age group of 21-30 years could have been the majority because at this age, most people are working and possibly having a high disposable income. On the other hand the age group of 51 years and above could have been the minority, since at this age this group may be very particular on what they are eating, as most of them would prefer healthy foods (Harrington, Ottenbacher and Kendall, 2013).

Table 3 ANOVA test for age group and food quality

ANOVA

FOOD QUALITY					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	358.491	3	119.497	2.920	.034
Within Groups	13955.669	341	40.926		
Total	14314.161	344			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 Post- hoc test for age group and food quality

Dependent Variable: Food Quality		Multiple Comparisons		
(I) Age group	(J) Age group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
18-25 years	26-35 years	2.62564	1.34867	.052
	36-45 years	3.77717*	1.29671	.004
	46 years and above	2.95516*	1.33810	.028
26-35 years	18-25 years	-2.62564	1.34867	.052
	36-45 years	1.15154	.87863	.191
	46 years and above	.32952	.93864	.726
36-45 years	18-25 years	-3.77717*	1.29671	.004
	26-35 years	-1.15154	.87863	.191
	46 years and above	-.82202	.86230	.341
46 years and above	18-25 years	-2.95516*	1.33810	.028
	26-35 years	-.32952	.93864	.726
	36-45 years	.82202	.86230	.341

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 indicates that there was a statistical significance difference between age group of respondents and food quality. The post hoc done (Table 4) indicated that the significant difference in Table 3, was with respondents of 18 -25 years with respondents of 36-45 years; and 46 years and above ($p < 0.05$). This implies that the age group of 18-25 years was likely to be satisfied with the food quality compared to the age groups of 36- 45 years and 46 years and above. The significant difference could have been attributed to the fact that the age group of 18-25 years are mostly in college and do not have high disposable income, this may lead to them not having high expectations on food quality.

The results are contrary to the findings of Kristanti *et al*, (2012) who in their study on ‘consumer satisfaction towards restaurants’ service quality in Surabaya’ revealed that there was significant difference between customers of younger age group

(16-34 years) and other age groups in relation to food quality. The highest level of satisfaction was the age group of 47-65 years. Kristanti *et al*, (2012) explains that the significance difference is attributed to the fact that older customers (47-65 years) do not give much attention to detail anymore and do not dispute on small things. Younger customers (16-34 years) on the other hand are very concerned to idealism and insist that everything should be perfect

Educational Level of the Respondents

Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents were of degree level with a response rate of 49.9% almost half of the entire respondents. The diploma level followed with 39.7%, secondary with 9.9% and primary level with 0.6% respectively. The reason why the highly educated customers (degree) dominated in rated restaurants could be that they have high expectations in terms of food quality.

Table 5 ANOVA test for educational level and food quality

ANOVA

FOOD QUALITY					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	229.148	3	76.383	1.849	.038
Within Groups	14085.013	341	41.305		
Total	14314.161	344			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 Post- hoc test for educational level and food quality

Dependent Variable: Food Quality

Multiple Comparisons

(I) Level of education	(J) Level of education	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Primary	Secondary	-1.06916	4.67626	.819
	Diploma	1.38712	4.57755	.762
	Degree	.03230	4.57085	.994
Secondary	Primary	1.06916	4.67626	.819
	Diploma	2.45628*	1.23140	.047
	Degree	1.10146	1.20623	.362
Diploma	Primary	-1.38712	4.57755	.762
	Secondary	-2.45628*	1.23140	.047
	Degree	-1.35482	.73596	.067
Degree	Primary	-.03230	4.57085	.994
	Secondary	-1.10146	1.20623	.362
	Diploma	1.35482	.73596	.067

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

This is in agreement with the study by Chow *et al*. (2007) who found out that those with higher educational level had higher expectations of food quality compared to other customers with different educational level and are likely to go to full service restaurant and not fast food restaurants Table 5 depicts that there was statistical significant difference between educational level and diploma level of

education ($p < 0.05$) in relation to food quality. The significant difference is found between secondary and diploma level of education with food quality (Table 6). The implication is that the secondary level of education were more likely to be satisfied with food quality compared with the diploma level of education. The significance difference could have been attributed to the fact that the secondary level respondents could have been satisfied with all

dimensions of food quality (food presentation, colour, taste, smell, texture, temperature and variety) compared to diploma level of education. The diploma level of education on the other hand could have had a higher expectation on some of the food quality dimensions. The results are in line with studies by Mhlanga (2015) who found significant difference of food quality with different level of education. People with different educational levels have different mentalities and needs that will match with different intellectual thinking (Haddad, Al-Dmour and Al Zub'bi, 2012) hence the significance difference between secondary and diploma level of education.

Nationality of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondent who visited the star rated restaurants were Kenyans with a response rate of 79.7% compared with non Kenyans who had a response rate of 20.3%. The implication could be that Kenyans are changing their lifestyles and prefer to eat out rather than prepare food at home. In Coastal region however, the managers pointed out that the travel advisory given by countries like America to its citizen, warning them against travelling to Kenya, had affected the high turnout of customers who happen to patronize their restaurants more compared to local Kenyans.

Table 7 T- test for the difference in means in nationality Group Statistics

Variable	Nationality of the respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig.
Food Quality	Kenyan (N=275)	22.299	6.345	0.383	0.066
	Non-Kenyan(N=70)	23.885	6.749	0.807	

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7 indicates that there was no statistical significance between food quality and respondents' nationality. This implies that the Kenyans and non Kenyans were equally satisfied with food quality. Nationality of the respondents did not have significant effect on food quality. These findings are contrary to the findings of Aziz *et al*, (2014) who found out on their study on international and domestic tourist satisfaction in Malaysia, that both the local and international respondents were disappointed with the food quality. A possible explanation for negative disconfirmation could be the respondents may have had very high expectation compared to their subsequent perception or experiences.

Monthly Income of Respondents

Table 1 indicates that most respondents that patronized rated restaurants were customer with a monthly income of more than 30,000 Ksh (59.4%) followed by 20, 001- 30,000 Ksh (37.7%) and finally 10,000- 20,000 Ksh (2.9%). This implies that most respondents that patronized the restaurants had higher income. Only a small percentage (2.9%) of low income respondents managed to visit the rated restaurants. Mhlanga and Machingambi (2016) asserts that higher income groups are more inclined to dine out more in full service restaurant because of quality, comfort, prestige and personalized service. This could have been the reason why customers with higher income were more than the other income groups.

Table 8 ANOVA test for respondents' monthly income and food quality

ANOVA

FOOD QUALITY	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	484.047	2	242.023	5.985	.003
Within Groups	13830.114	342	40.439		
Total	14314.161	344			

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8 shows that there was a statistical significant difference between food quality and monthly Income groups.

Table 9 Post- Hoc test for respondents' monthly income and food quality
Dependent Variable: food quality **Multiple Comparisons**

(I) Monthly income	(J) Monthly income	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
10000- 20000 Ksh	20001- 30000 Ksh	7.06627*	2.08685	.001
	More than 30000 Ksh	6.06645*	2.05941	.003
20001- 30000 Ksh	10000- 20000 Ksh	-7.06627*	2.08685	.001
	More than 30000 Ksh	-.99983	.71297	.162
More than 30000 Ksh	10000- 20000 Ksh	-6.06645*	2.05941	.003
	20001- 30000 Ksh	.99983	.71297	.162

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Post test in Table 9 shows that the statistical significant difference was between respondents of the monthly income of 10,000- 20,000 Ksh with respondents of the income of 20,000-30,000 Ksh and more than 30,000 Ksh. ($p < 0.05$). This implies that the respondents who had a monthly income of 10,000- 20,000 Ksh were more satisfied with food quality compared to the respondents of the monthly income of 20,001- 30,000 Ksh and more than 30,000 Ksh groups. People with lower income tend to have lower expectations in relation to food quality compared to people with higher income (Mhlanga, 2015). These findings are in line with the findings of Liu and Jang, (2009) who found that customers with higher income expected high levels of quality food compared to other customers of lower income.

CONCLUSIONS

The study investigated the effect of satisfaction on food quality customers visiting rated restaurants. Cooking and service sustainable practices were noted to have affected the food quality resulting significant differences among various demographic characteristics. Customer dissatisfaction on food quality results to food wastage leading to environmental pollution. The results suggested that satisfaction on food quality had much effect on age group, educational level and monthly income in which the restaurateurs should focus more in order to gain a competitive edge. Based on food quality dimensions studied which includes food taste, colour, texture, smell, temperature, variety and presentation, need for more training of food and beverage personnel is evident. Trained personnel will contribute to environmental (reduction of food wastage), economical (reduction of food waste which saves procurement and production costs) and social sustainability (which contributes to good relationship with food suppliers and customers).

The results of this study are not without limitation. One limitation was that most star rated restaurants

had closed down thus reducing the target sample. Secondly the study focused on the effect of customer satisfaction on food quality as a result of sustainable practices. Service quality which is a social aspect in sustainable practices in restaurants was not covered, thus inspiring further research that could be undertaken in extending wider study on restaurants best sustainable practices.

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