Analysis of Effective Factors on the Behavioral Tendencies of Customers of Fast Food Restaurants

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Abstract

In this research, the effective factors on the behavioral tendencies of the customers of fast food restaurants are studied. Also, factors such as food quality, service quality, mental pictures, perceived value, behavioral tendency, faithfulness and satisfaction are considered. The research method with regard to data collection is descriptive survey and it is an applied research. In order to collect the required information and data for research hypotheses, questionnaires (primary resource) as well as books, articles, theses and data bases are used as secondary resources. The collected data from questionnaire were entered into SPSS software for descriptive research and Lisrel software was used for inferential statistics and also extracting and confirmatory factor analysis model and structural model was used. Statistical population of the present research includes all customers of Super Star chain restaurants in Tehran and the sample population regarding facilities and spatial limitations are 384 samples. This study aimed at analysis of the effect of parameters of mental picture and perceived value on customer satisfaction and then this research examines the effect of customer satisfaction on his behavior intentions in Buff chain restaurants. The results of this research show that all factors mentioned greatly affects customers' behavior intention; as a result managers of Buff chain restaurants should take into account customers' satisfaction on customers' behavioral intentions for the positive effect of factors such as service quality, food quality, mental picture of restaurant, the perceived value by the customer.

Keywords: food quality, service quality, mental picture, perceived value, behavioral tendencies, faithfulness, consumer satisfaction.

Introduction

Attracting customer has always been the center of attention of different firms and businesses. With the development of competitive markets, improvement of customer service processes is on the agenda of any business and increasing competitors highlights the role of customer service management and had a serious effect on saving costs. In the process of different businesses, providing services for customers is considered as a vital issue and they should benefit faithful customers for making profit. If companies and businesses cannot recognize inefficiencies, attracting customer would be a costly work. When customers decide to change their service provider, they increase the cost of customer attraction for the company. If companies are interested in attracting potential customers, they should strengthen trust, adherence and desired values of the company. Thus, strengthening the relationship between service provider and customer is necessary. Faithfulness and customer's adherence makes the company and business to act beyond his duties to meet customers' needs. One should try to strengthen what causes trustful relations and avoid confusion that prevents trustful relations.

Statement of the problem

Nowadays, the secret of organizations' survival is in maintaining and preserving customers and only the organizations make out to survive and to achieve remarkable success that attract enough customers and preserve them and in most experts' point of view the safest way to achieve success is to remain in the mind of customers and this is achieved only in light of high quality products or services. Unlike products that have certain

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scales for assessing quality, the function of services is not tangible in the way that each customer's experience is different from another (Parasuraman & Zeithaml, 1998:125).

In the era that products are increasingly homogeneous, the quality of services is one of the most important distinct and unique resources. Organization managers should know that the service quality is a profitable strategy for organization. Desired service is the essence of customer-oriented activities.

Numerous evidences and documents show that, in the present competitive world, investigation of needs and desires of customers and fulfilling them before competitors is the fundamental condition for the success of companies. Thus, commercial organizations and institutes try to achieve a prominent position compared to other competitors by achieving unique advantages. The quality of services perceived by customers can be referred to as one of the most important factors that is vital for organization since it has direct relation with customer satisfaction and his behavioral intentions (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 234).

Customers' perception of service quality is more important for international organizations because these organizations are more confronted with differences and changes in cultural tastes (Furreret et al., 2000, 138). Customers in different countries may have different perceptions of quality service because of cultural and environmental differences. Organizations' attempt is to provide better services and also higher level of satisfaction for customer so that it leads to optimal oral propaganda for the organization.

Customers' satisfaction is considered as a key factor in forming inclination to future purchase. Also, satisfied customers will more likely talk about their good experience with others; also this fact is more important in eastern cultures that social life is formed in a way to improve the social relations with other members of the society (Seyed Javadin, 2005:19).

The impact of organizations' mental picture on consumer's behavior in the current history has been much discussed especially this impact is taken into account regarding consumers' faith in service sectors (Andreassen & Indestad, 1998:48).

Some previous studies show that the perceived quality of the physical environment or quality can significantly influence the organizations' mental picture and consequently influence the perceived value and customers' satisfaction that they

in turn, affect the customers' faith (Lai and Chen, 2009:252).

In the services marketing literature, there are various methods for evaluating service quality, some of which are the result of conceptual models to understand the evaluation process and some other empirical analysis and experiments. Experts presented different methods and models to assess the quality in service organizations, the most famous among them are SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and SERVIMPREF. SERVQUAL models are divided into two kinds of simple and weight. Service quality evaluation in SERVQUAL simple and weight models are based on the customers' real perception of the quality of services provided compared to the ideal status. Because of the difficulty of determining the desired ideal, SERVPERF models are satisfied with evaluation of service quality based on the customers' real perception of the quality of services provided.

Parasoraman et al. in their researches emphasize the point that the tool for measuring service quality is a stable and valid measurement of quality and is applicable in a wide range of service areas and in fact, one of the advantages of this model is its reliability and validity in a wide range of service areas. But, in spite of widespread use of service quality measures, there are some criticisms against it, one of them is about Crolin and Tailor that represents SERVPERF against SERVQUAL and believe that service quality evaluation is only based on function which is a better method compared to other evaluation methods (Heidar Zadeh & Hajiha, 2008:35). The positive aspect of this model is its easy implication and also the validity of its evaluation is higher than SERQUAL. With regard to the defined conceptual model, this study aims at studying the impact of parameters of mental picture and perceived value on the customers' satisfaction and following that the impact of consumer satisfaction on his behavior intentions.

The necessity and significance of the study

In recent years, the fast food industry has significantly grown. With the change in lifestyle, the growing population of middle class and also more attention has paid to time than the past as well as the increase in women's employment are other reasons for the growth of this industry in Iran's population. Regarding this trend, the present study seeks to represent suggestions in presenting high quality services
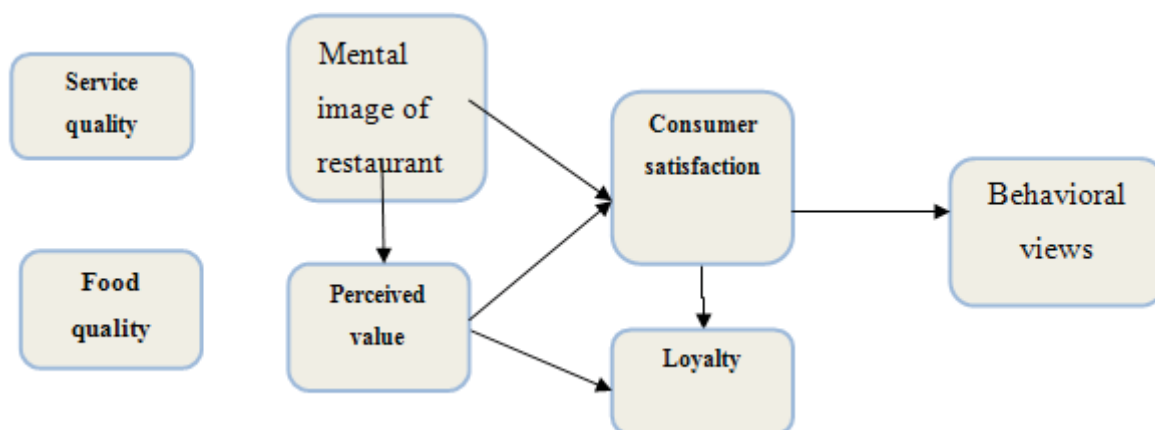
by analyzing effective factors.

Nowadays, competition for improving service quality is raised as a strategic and key issue. In the era that products turned into homogeneous processes, the quality of services as one of the most important resources of distinction and uniqueness and desired services is the essence of customer-oriented activities.

Undoubtedly, satisfaction of customers and even delighting them by service quality firstly needs identifying their needs and desires and then transferring these desires to a situation in which products and services are produced. With regard to the fact that change in needs and expectations of customers is an undeniable fact, it should be first specified what the customer wants and then tries to search for realizing it. Most of companies found out that continuously providing products and services with higher quality compared to competitors can bring about a strong competitive advantage.

In this regard, this research aims to identify the effective factors in increasing and promoting the service quality through analysis and evaluation of customer satisfaction and his behavior tendency in the fast food industry.

Conceptual model of research

With regard to the conceptual model used in

this research and in order to study the hypotheses, the structural equation model was used. According to the studies conducted in the past, a question was designed for the evaluation of six aspects of service quality, food quality, mental picture of restaurant, the perceived value by the consumer, consumer satisfaction and behavior intentions based on 7 Likert scale. In the following, with regard to sub-variables which is considered for the evaluation of each service quality dimensions, the way of service quality impact on the mental picture and perceived value will be studied. Likewise, by analyzing how the food quality impacts mental picture and perceived value will be assessed with regard to the variables of the questionnaire. After that, the impact of mental picture on the perceived value will be analyzed. Then, relying on the conceptual model mentioned in which the mental picture of restaurant and perceived value both leads to consumer satisfaction, and will be studied and tested by sub variables mentioned in the questionnaire and also the impact of the perceived value and consumer satisfaction on the consumer satisfaction is studied. And finally, the relationship between consumer satisfaction and behavioral intentions that are in fact the overall resultant of conceptual model by using questionnaire tool will be tested and evaluated.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

According to the conceptual model of research, the following hypotheses are considered by the researcher:

First hypothesis: The quality of services positively influences the mental picture from restaurant.

Second hypothesis: The quality of food positively influences the mental picture from restaurant.

Third hypothesis: The quality of services posi-

tively influences the perceived value.

Forth hypothesis: The quality of food influences the perceived value positively.

Fifth Hypothesis: The mental picture from restaurant influence positively the perceived value by the consumer.

Sixth hypothesis: The mental picture from restaurant influence consumer satisfaction positively.

Seventh hypothesis: The perceived value by the consumer influence consumer satisfaction positively.

Eighths hypothesis: The perceived value influence the consumer faithfulness positively.

Ninth hypothesis: Consumer satisfaction influence consumer faithfulness positively.

Tenth hypothesis: Consumer satisfaction influence behavioral intentions positively.

Methodology

In order to gather data different tools are required. The criteria for selecting tools depend on several factors, including the nature of the research method (Khaki, 2008, 239).

In this research, two methods of data gathering are used.

Field study: Questionnaire used in field approach is used as a way to gather data.

Library method: In this method, taking notes was used which is the instrument for data collection in library method.

Statistical population and sampling method

In this method, customers of fast food restaurants were selected as sample population. Sample people are chosen from among costumers of Super Star fast food restaurants who answered the questionnaire after eating the food. In the meantime, simple two-stage cluster sampling method was used. In the North East, North West and North areas, some branches of the restaurants were randomly selected and then from the customers of the restaurant the sample members were randomly selected. The sample population based on the maximum variance was calculated using Cochran formula. By considering the maximum variance and Boundary error 0/05, the sample size of the study were 384 customers of fast food restaurants after eating the food.

Research measurement tool

Hypotheses as assumptions, solutions and probable informed answers are aroused about research problem. Researchers should collect required data from society with some tools and by processing, analysis and turning them into dat test the hypotheses. The type of these tools depends on different factors   including nature and research method (Khaki, 2005:129).

In order to gather research literature, secondary resources including book, magazine, articles, physical and digital resources were used that by using them we could access suitable data for awareness of research topic and its literature and also the library method for data collection was note-taking.

For statistical data collection, the method was field study in which questionnaires were used. In order to obtain information, Likert scale was used by response to or evaluation of the participants' idea, behavior, belief, etc. based on tangible or mental criteria in a responsive range from agree to disagree. In this research, standard questionnaire was used.

Methods and tools for data analysis

For data analysis, parametric and non-parametric statistical methods were used. Data description was done by frequency distribution table; and regression methods of multiple variables was used in order to prepare variables to be used in structural equation model and finally using Lisrel software and T-values test, research hypotheses were studied.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1. Demographic information of customer

No			Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	236	61.3
		Female	146	37.9
2	Age	Below 22 years	47	12.1
		Between 23-26	81	21.0
		Between 27-31	131	33.9
		More than 32	105	27.4
3	Education	Lower than diploma	15	4.0
		Diploma	102	26.6
		BA	177	46.0
		MA and higher	68	17.7

Structural model

The following figure shows the structural equation model of research in t- value form. This mod-

el, in fact, tests all structural equations using t statistics. According to this model, the relations between manifest and latent variables are significant at the 95% significance level if the t-statistic values range from -1/96 to +1/96. Thus, the alignment of question in the questionnaire for measuring the concepts are shown valid in this stage. In fact, the results of the above table shows that what the researcher intends to evaluate by the questions was realized by this tool. Thus, the relation between these constructs or latent variables is attributable. In order to show the amounts achieved match with the facts in this model, the fit indices should be studied.
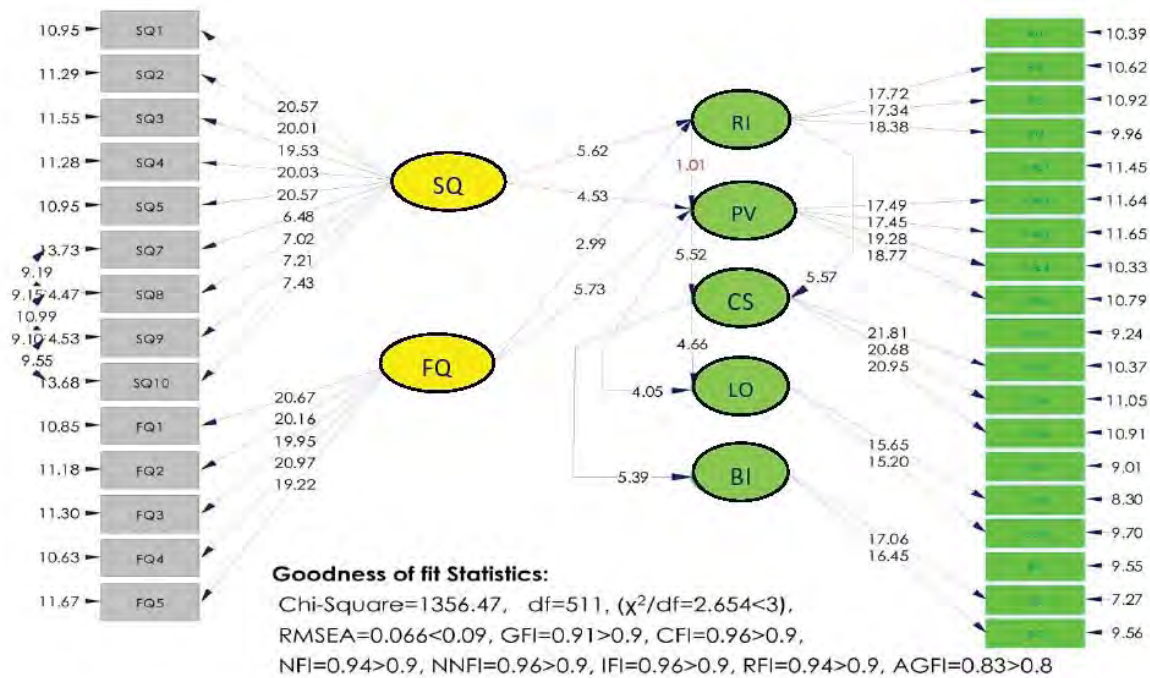

Goodness of fit Statistics:
Chi-Square=1356.47, df=511, (χ²/df=2.654<3),
RMSEA=0.066<0.09, GFI=0.91>0.9, CFI=0.96>0.9,
NFI=0.94>0.9, NNFI=0.96>0.9, IFI=0.96>0.9, RFI=0.94>0.9, AGFI=0.83>0.8

Figure 2. Structural equation model of research

Table 2. Results of hypotheses testing

Result	P	Determination coefficient	t	Direction co-efficient (β)	Research hypotheses	
+	0.05		5.62	0.35	Service quality→ restaurant mental picture	H1
+	0.05	0.22	2.99	0.18	Food quality → restaurant mental picture	H2
+	0.05		4.53	0.28	Service quality → perceived value	H3
+	0.05	0.32	5.73	0.34	Food quality → perceived value	H4
-	0.05		1.01	0.06	Restaurant metal value → perceived value	H5
+	0.05	0.24	5.57	0.31	Restaurant metal value → consumer satisfaction	H6
+	0.05		5.52	0.30	Perceived value → consumer satisfaction	H7
+	0.05	0.19	4.05	0.24	Perceived value → faithfulness	H8
+	0.05		4.66	0.28	Consumer satisfaction → faithfulness	H9
+	0.05	0.098	5.39	0.31	Consumer satisfaction → behaviour intentions	H10

Results of data analysis

Sub-hypothesis 1: The service quality positively affects the mental picture of restaurant.

Based on table 2, the influence of service quality on the mental picture of restaurant has the coefficient of 0.35 (t =5.62). The amount of t for this parameter, according to probability rule α in the area of null hypothesis for the amounts out of the range 1.96 to -1.96 of each parameter model, was calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95% confidence. In other words, the service quality has a significant effect on the mental picture of restaurant statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be said that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of second research hypothesis

Based on table 2, the effect of food quality on perceived value has the coefficient of 0.18 (t=2.99). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α in the area of null hypothesis for the amounts out of the range 1.96 to -1.96 of each parameter model, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95% confidence. In other words, food quality has significant effect on the mental picture statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be said that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of third research hypothesis

According to table 2, the effect of service quality on perceived value has the coefficient of 0.28 (t=4.53). The t level for this parameter, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95%. In other words, service quality has significant effect on the perceived value statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, we can conclude that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of forth hypothesis analysis

As it is clear from table 2, the influence of food quality on perceived value has the coefficient of 0.34 (t= 5.73). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α=0.05 in the area of null hypothesis for the amounts out of the range 1.96 to

-1.96 of each parameter model, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95% confidence. In other words, service quality has a significant effect on the perceived value statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of fifth hypothesis analysis

Based on table 2, the influence of mental picture of restaurant on perceived value has the coefficient of 0.06 (t=1.01). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α=0.05 in the area of null hypothesis for the amounts out of the range -1.96 to 1.96 of each parameter model, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95 percent certainty. In other words, mental picture of restaurant do not have significant effect on the perceived value statistically.

The results of sixth hypothesis analysis

As it is observed from table 2, the influence of mental picture of restaurant on perceived value has the coefficient of 0.31 (t=5.57). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α=0.05 in the area of null hypothesis rejection for the amounts out of the range -1.96 to 1.96 of each parameter model, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95 percent certainty. In other words, mental picture of restaurant do not have significant effect on the perceived value statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be drawn that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of seventh hypothesis analysis

Based on table 2, the influence of perceived value on customer satisfaction has the coefficient of 0.31 (t=5.52). Thus, it can be concluded that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, perceived value has a significant effect on the perceived value statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be said that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of eighth hypothesis analysis

Based on the above table, the influence of perceived value on customer faithfulness has the coef-

ficient of 0.24 (t=4.05). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α=0.05 in the area of null hypothesis rejection for the amounts out of the range -1.96 to 1.96 of each parameter model, calculated higher than 1.96. Thus, we can conclude that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, perceived value has significant effect on the consumer satisfaction statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of ninth hypothesis analysis

By looking at table 2, the influence of perceived value on customer faithfulness has the coefficient of 0.28 (t=4.66). The t level for this parameter is higher than 1.96. Therefore, the researcher hypothesis is confirmed by 95% confidence level. In other words, costumer's satisfaction has a significant effect on the customer faithfulness statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be mentioned that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

The results of tenth hypothesis analysis

Based on table 2, the influence of consumer satisfaction on behavior intentions has the coefficient of 0.31 (t =5.39). The t level for this parameter, according to probability rule α=0.05 in the area of null hypothesis rejection for the amounts out of the range -1.96 to 1.96 of each parameter model, is higher than 1.96. Thus, it can be stated that the researcher hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, consumer satisfaction has significant effect on the behavior intentions statistically and with regard to the positivity of direction coefficient, it can be said that the kind of relation between the two variables is significant and positive.

Recommendations of the study

This study tried to analyze the impact of mental picture parameters and perceived value on consumer satisfaction with regard to the conceptual model defined and then studied the impact of consumer satisfaction on his behavior intentions in Buff chain restaurant.

In recent years, the fast food industry in Iran has significantly developed. With regard to the change in lifestyle of the growing population of middleclass and regarding the interests and lifestyle of the younger generation, this product has a very broad market. Changes in the life of middle class and paying attention to time more than before and also increases in women's employment is another reason for development of this industry in Iran. By considering this procedure and with regard to orthographic results from the research that shows most of statistical population of this research is from younger classes in the society, managers should concentrate on this class and represent marketing plans and foods appropriate for this class.

The research results show that all factors mentioned significantly influence consumer behavior intentions, as a result, the managers of Buff chain restaurants should take into account the consumer satisfaction effect on consumer behavior intentions for the positive effect of factors such as service quality, food quality, mental picture of restaurants and perceived value by the consumer.

Limitations of research

The following limitations can be drawn from this study:
- Not filling questionnaire by statistical population
- Limited branches of this restaurant in Tehran, thus inaccessibility of statistical population in cities
- Not comparing two different brands
- Testing a model that is not designed for Iran and may be not local
- Limited time for gathering data
Suggestions for further research
The following suggestions can be raised for further study:
- Conducting this research in traditional food restaurants
- Conducting this research is recommended in other statistical population
- Analyzing other effective variables on behavioral intentions
- Conducting this research in several time periods is also recommended
- Comparing findings of this research in production areas by little mental involvement and much mental involvement

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