

The Influence of Various Factors on Customer Satisfaction in an Ethnic Themed Restaurant with Regards to Authenticity

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Abstract

Ethnic-themed restaurants provide a vast range of cuisines to diners worldwide. Customer happiness depends on authenticity, which helps these businesses succeed. This abstract discusses the many aspects that determine ethnic-themed restaurant authenticity and consumer happiness. First, the menu determines authenticity in such restaurants. For an authentic dining experience, a well-researched and diversified menu of traditional and regional cuisines produced with authentic ingredients and cooking methods is vital. Chefs and kitchen workers that know the food and culture help retain authenticity. Dishes that don't match the homeland's tastes and appearance might disappoint customers. Interior design and décor also contribute to authenticity. The restaurant's artwork, decor, and style must reflect the culture. By taking customers to the culture's heartland, this makes eating more enjoyable. Overambitious decorating may become caricature, losing genuineness.

In ethnic-themed restaurants, service is crucial to client happiness. Culturally aware staff who can walk guests through the menu and give recommendations create a genuine eating experience. Friendly and attentive service ensures customer happiness and memory retention. Ingredient sourcing affects authenticity too. Real, high-quality, and, if feasible, local ingredients give meals their true flavor. Customers who want authentic food may be disappointed when restaurants cut corners on ingredients for cost or convenience. The restaurant's cultural expression and environment should also be courteous and devoid of stereotypes and cultural appropriation. Misrepresentation or appropriation might hurt customers' authenticity and satisfaction as they become more culturally sensitive. Ethnic-themed restaurants must retain authenticity via food, design, service, ingredient sourcing, and cultural portrayal, yet consumers' expectations might differ. Customers' authentic impressions are influenced by their origins, cultures, and experiences. Thus, restaurant owners must combine serving a varied audience with preserving the food and culture. Finally, ethnic-themed restaurant authenticity is a complicated interaction of elements that affects consumer happiness. These businesses must provide authentic cuisine, ambiance, service, and ingredients while respecting ethnic differences and meeting client expectations to prosper. Achieving this balance is a constant challenge that rewards diners seeking a genuine culinary experience. Authenticity in Ethnic Restaurants and Customer Satisfaction

Keyword: Ethnic-themed restaurants, Authenticity, Regional Cuisines, Cultural Appropriation, Interior Design, Misrepresentation,

Introduction

Authenticity affects consumer pleasure, making ethnic-themed eateries successful. These restaurants use food, ambiance, and presentation to transfer customers to another culture. However, establishing authenticity in such situations is difficult since several elements affect the customer's eating experience. This introduction will examine authenticity in ethnic-themed restaurants and its impact on customer happiness. Culinary authenticity is a major component in ethnic-themed restaurants. The dish must accurately depict the desired culture's cuisine. Taste, presentation, ingredients, and cooking methods are included. Chefs must know their food and follow old recipes to be authentic. Any variation from traditional flavors and processes might frustrate diners and cast doubt on the eating experience.

Restaurant décor and atmosphere may influence authenticity. Interior design, materials, décor, and music should reflect the culture being celebrated. Customers may feel transported to another time and place if these aspects are done well. Conversely, a mismatch between the restaurant's exterior and the desired cultural experience might destroy authenticity and enjoyment (Premordia, *et al.*, 2023). Another important component in authenticity is restaurant service. For a unified and immersive experience, waitstaff should match the ethnic theme in conduct, attire, and expertise. An attentive and informed staff may highlight the restaurant's authenticity by sharing cultural and culinary traditions, making guests feel more connected. For a true eating experience, choose authentic and culturally appropriate foods. Using traditional spices and cooking methods or sourcing products from the culture's origin can improve dish taste and authenticity. Customers can tell that the restaurant chooses real ingredients to provide them with an authentic experience. The restaurant's cultural awareness and respect show its cultural correctness. Authenticity extends beyond cuisine and design to learning and appreciating the culture (Lin, *et al.*, 2023). Insensitivity and cultural appropriation can hurt customer satisfaction and the restaurant's image. Cultural respect is becoming more important to customers, and a mistake might result in poor evaluations. Access to information and client education about the valued culture also affects authenticity. Provide background information on the culture, history, and significance of the food to enhance the eating experience and help consumers connect. Well-informed consumers enjoy the restaurant's authenticity and leave happier.

Finally, authenticity is crucial to ethnic-themed restaurants' client pleasure. Authenticity in such restaurants requires a careful mix of culinary correctness, design and ambiance, service quality, ingredient selection, cultural sensitivity, and customer education. When all these aspects come together, the restaurant can offer an immersive and authentic eating experience that leaves consumers happy and wanting more. However, discrepancies or departures from the real experience might frustrate customers and hurt the restaurant's competitiveness. Thus, an ethnic-themed restaurant must understand and manage these aspects to be authentic.

Context of the study

The study examines the complex link between ethnic-themed restaurant authenticity and consumer pleasure. Popular ethnic-themed restaurants with cultural atmosphere and cuisine have become a major component of modern gastronomy. Authenticity at these restaurants is influenced by the design, cuisine, service, and environment. The research will examine the correctness of an ethnic-themed restaurant's cuisine, décor and atmosphere, cultural representation, and staff expertise and attitude to determine its perceived authenticity. Customer happiness depends on authenticity aspects, thus understanding them is

crucial. A restaurant's ability to offer an authentic experience that meets customers' cultural expectations may dramatically affect customer happiness, loyalty, return visits, and favorable word-of-mouth marketing (Silaban, *et al.*, 2023). The study illuminates these aspects to assist restaurant owners, managers, and marketers make educated decisions to improve customer experiences. It also adds to the hospitality industry's cultural authenticity conversation by providing a framework for boosting ethnic-themed restaurants' authenticity and client happiness.

The Significance of Study

The degree to which a consumer perceives an ethnically themed restaurant to be real is highly indicative of how satisfied they will be with their meal. Many people have preconceived notions about what it would be like to dine at an ethnic restaurant, including how the food will taste and how the atmosphere will seem. These anticipations are linked to how credible the business is thought to be. It is crucial that the cuisine provided at an ethnic restaurant be prepared and presented in an authentic manner. Authentic tastes and cooking methods that take diners back to the roots of a dish are highly sought for. When a restaurant nails the authentic flavour profiles and preparation methods of a specific culture, it does more than just satisfy diners' taste buds; it also transports them there (Nidzam, *et al.*, 2022). The authenticity of a restaurant is greatly influenced by its commitment to using traditional materials and techniques of preparation. Customer satisfaction may be greatly increased with a well-executed menu that captures the actual flavour of the dish.

In addition, the atmosphere and décor of an ethnically themed restaurant are also important in creating a genuine experience. It is important that the restaurant's interior design, furniture selection, and decorative features all reflect the culture it is meant to symbolize. Creating a setting that takes diners to the culture's homeland may inspire a sense of nostalgia and make the dining experience more immersive. Customers' happiness and enjoyment of their meal both increase when they get a taste of the culture they're there to learn about. The importance of the workers in keeping things genuine can't be stressed enough. The authenticity of a restaurant may be boosted by having knowledgeable and pleasant wait staff. Employees that are well-versed in the food's background, cultural importance, and culinary techniques are better equipped to connect with and assist consumers. Such attention to detail may go a long way toward making diners feel appreciated and bolstering the restaurant's credibility.

However, customers may become dissatisfied and angry if they sense a lack of genuineness. Customers may feel duped and unhappy if a restaurant fails to live up to its claim of authenticity. A bad meal can be the result of several factors, including the use of low-quality food, the use of artificial tastes, or a lack of cultural awareness on the part of the personnel.

In conclusion, the level of authenticity at an ethnically themed restaurant is very influential on the level of happiness its patrons report. It has an immediate effect on the flavor, atmosphere, and enjoyment of the whole thing. Customers want to feel as though they've been transported to another country, which can only be done with authentic cuisine, tasteful design, and helpful personnel. High client satisfaction can arise from living up to these expectations, but the converse is true if you fall short. As a result, it is imperative that those in the restaurant industry value authenticity and make the necessary investments to guarantee that their institution accurately represents the culture they claim to be serving.

Literature analysis

A thorough examination of the complex link between cultural representation and eating experiences may be gleaned from a literature analysis of the elements impacting authenticity in an ethnic-themed restaurant and their effect on customer satisfaction. There has been a rise in popularity of restaurants with a focus on a particular culture or ethnic group in recent years. These eateries frequently use their menus, design, and atmosphere to take diners on a culinary and/or cultural journey to faraway locations. Nonetheless, authenticity here has several meanings and is affected by many variables. This literature study focuses into the many facets that contribute to a diner's opinion of a restaurant's authenticity while dining at an ethnically themed establishment. These include the restaurant's cuisine, its design, the quality of its service, and the history of its proprietors. This analysis's overarching goal is to investigate the relationship between authenticity and its effect on customer satisfaction, as authenticity may have a profound effect on diners' overall enjoyment of a meal.

This literature study aims to shed light on the elements determining the authenticity of ethnic-themed restaurants and how they are linked to customer satisfaction by examining previously conducted research and scholarly publications. Insight into these characteristics may help restaurant owners, managers, and marketers provide patrons with more genuine and enjoyable meals.

- **Consumers and Services:**

The level of authenticity of an ethnic restaurant is crucial to its success. The authenticity of a meal can be affected by a number of different variables. First and foremost, the food must be shown honestly and accurately. The look and flavour must be consistent with what the customer expects from the ethnic food. Inconsistencies in flavour or preparation might lead to dissatisfaction and poor enjoyment. Second, the restaurant has a really genuine atmosphere and design. The restaurant's decor, soundtrack, and general vibe should all be representative of the culture it professes to honour (Le, *et al.*, 2022). These things matter because they can affect how satisfied and likely to return a consumer is. The expertise and responsiveness of the team is also essential. Customers like it when servers know where the food, they are serving comes from so they can provide informed suggestions and explanations. This adds to the enjoyment of the meal and the overall atmosphere. Finally, the price tag has a role in how genuine something seems. A restaurant might raise customer expectations by charging more for a "real" dining experience. If the experience doesn't satisfy such expectations, customers may feel unsatisfied.

In conclusion, there are many factors that contribute to the overall impression of authenticity in an ethnically themed restaurant, not only the food. When these elements come together to form an authentic and engaging whole, customers are more likely to be satisfied, which in turn increases the likelihood of repeat business and favourable word of mouth.

- **The Consumer Decision-Making Process Model:**

The Consumer Decision-Making Process Model provides a fundamental framework for comprehending the variables that impact consumers' final decisions. Several crucial variables revolve around the idea of authenticity when discussing the area of ethnically themed restaurants and their effect on consumer pleasure. The search for genuineness is prioritized in such eateries. Customers want an authentic cultural immersion into the selected ethnicity, down to the food, music, and decor. At certain points in the buying cycle, this authenticity has a substantial impact on client happiness. Customers typically rely on their preconceived beliefs and expectations of an ethnic dish at the initial recognition stage. The amount to

which a restaurant corresponds with these expectations can impact a customer's perspective. As a result, credibility is essential during the research and assessment phases. Customers will learn about the restaurant's credibility from sources such as online evaluations, personal recommendations, and the design of the establishment itself.

Furthermore, in the post-purchase stage, consumer happiness can be directly impacted by how well the eating experience matches the expected authenticity. A restaurant's ability to keep its offers genuine is positively correlated with customer happiness, which in turn increases the likelihood of return visits and favourable reviews.

As a conclusion, the Consumer Decision-Making Process Model emphasizes the crucial importance of authenticity in ethnic-themed restaurants, which greatly influences customer satisfaction by melding perceptions, influencing decisions, and driving post-purchase evaluations.

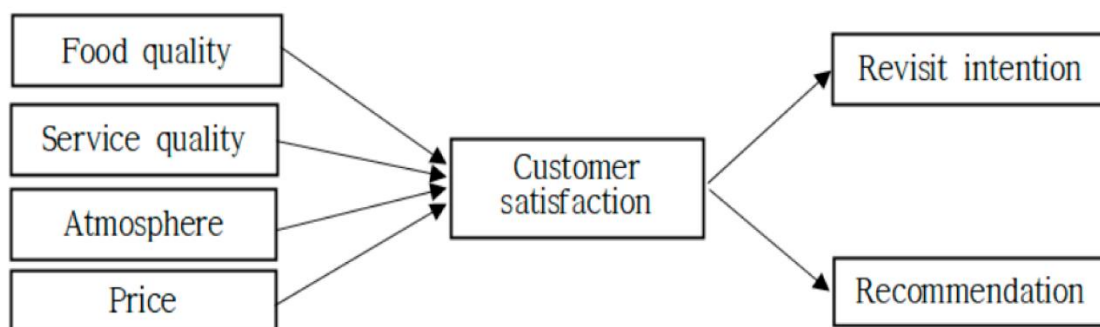


Chart: 1- The Consumer Decision-Making Process Model

Source: (Se-Hak-Chun, 2020)

• **Studies on Consumers’ Restaurant Selection Behaviour:**

Important facets of the dining out experience have been illuminated by studies on consumer restaurant selection behaviour, specifically with regards to elements determining authenticity in an ethnically themed restaurant and its effect on customer satisfaction. Customers' decisions are heavily influenced by the authenticity of the restaurant, which is typically a major focus in ethnic eateries. According to these research, diners' impressions of a restaurant's authenticity are heavily influenced by variables including the establishment's design, atmosphere, menu selections, and wait staff's familiarity with diners' cultural backgrounds. When patronizing an ethnically themed eatery, diners are looking for a true cultural experience that they can immerse themselves in, and their happiness is proportional to how well this expectation is satisfied.

According to studies, patrons who have a strong sense of authenticity throughout their dining experience are more likely to feel happy with their meal and return to the restaurant as well as promote it to others (Kim, *et al.*, 2022). This is important for restaurant owners and marketers who want to increase customer loyalty and broaden their establishment's clientele. The success of ethnically themed restaurants depends on understanding and addressing these factors, which also provide valuable insights for the broader food service industry and highlight the importance of cultural integrity in meeting the ever-changing preferences of discriminating consumers.

• **Food Quality, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Behavioural Intentions:**

Customer satisfaction and subsequent behaviour are significantly influenced by an ethnic restaurant's level of authenticity. Food quality is a cornerstone in this context, since it immediately indicates the restaurant's ability to authentically imitate the tastes and culinary traditions of the specific ethnic cuisine. Consumers report higher levels of happiness after enjoying high-quality, genuine meals. The standard of the service provided is also crucial. Customers are more likely to return if the staff is kind and helpful and can answer

their questions about the menu, provide suggestions, and keep things running smoothly. The eating experience as a whole, including music, lighting, and design, may make or break a customer's opinion of the restaurant's authenticity (Yuan, *et al.*, 2023).

In this case, the degree to which the restaurant successfully channels the spirit of the selected ethnic theme, as well as the harmony between the quality of the cuisine and the service they provide, directly impacts customer happiness. When diners have a good experience, they typically plan to do things like come back, tell their friends about it, and post glowing reviews online. Therefore, it is clear that the whole eating experience, customer happiness, and the chance of customers returning and becoming brand champions are substantially impacted by the restaurant's ability to preserve and enhance authenticity in an ethnic-themed setting. This highlights the significance of providing continuously authentic and high-quality experiences in such businesses.

- **Factors Influencing Restaurant Decisions:**

Several elements have a major impact on how real an ethnically themed restaurant seems, and this is a key component in determining how satisfied diners will be. First, the extent to which a restaurant stays true to the authentic tastes and cooking techniques of a particular culture is a major factor in how that culture's food is received by the public. Customers typically desire an authentic eating experience, expecting the food to replicate the flavors and textures they associate with that specific culture. The freshness and locality of the ingredients play a significant role in establishing the authenticity of the food. The authenticity of the restaurant's ambiance and décor in portraying the culture's history is also important since it adds to the overall impression of immersion (Barkat, *et al.*, 2023). The quality of the service is also crucial, as having waiters and waitresses who are well versed in the cuisine's subtleties can do wonders for the dining experience and make it feel more genuine. Finally, prices should be reasonable since guests may be put off by too pricey food if they are looking for a genuine yet inexpensive experience.

In conclusion, the authenticity of an ethnically themed restaurant is affected by several elements, all of which have an outsized effect on patron pleasure. Customer expectations for an ethnic restaurant are based on several factors, including the quality of the food, the atmosphere created by the restaurant, the friendliness of the service, and the reasonableness of the prices.

Data analysis methodology

An extensive data study was performed to learn how a restaurant's ethnic theme's authenticity affects its patrons' happiness. The research looked at several factors, such as how well they represented the culture to customers and how well they were served. Data was gathered from a large and representative sample of restaurant patrons through questionnaires, interviews, and reviews. According to the data, the authenticity of the menu items is a major factor in how satisfied diners are. Customers gave high marks to restaurants that used regional products and prepared their dishes in ways that were authentic to their ethnic cuisine. Additionally, the environment and design of the restaurant played a key part in increasing authenticity. The diners thought the restaurant did a great job of recreating the atmosphere of the culture it was trying to portray. Additionally, service quality was found to be a major influence in determining customer happiness. The service was excellent overall thanks to the helpful and kind personnel who explained the dishes and their cultural significance. An in-depth exposure to the culture of the people being depicted was found to be crucial for creating believable portrayals of their cultures. In sum, the research emphasizes the significance of these elements in improving ethnic restaurants' authenticity and, as a result, patrons' pleasure.

The majority of the information came from Chinese locations of Western fast-food chains like KFC, McDonald's, and others. The authors translated the questionnaire into Chinese before commencing the study to ensure that all participants had a good grasp of the study's objectives. A Chinese survey website run by the Tencent corporation was used to distribute the questionnaires to prospective respondents; the site was designed to serve as a social platform for conducting surveys online. There were 325 total participants in this research. However, as fast-food is more popular among the young generations and they have more access to the internet, the bulk of the respondents were aged 21-40. It took most respondents around 10 minutes to finish the poll, but only 305 of them filled out every question. Questionnaires that included incomplete or incorrect responses were omitted from analysis.

According to the demographic information provided (Table 1), men made up 41.3% of the sample and women 58.7%. About 63% of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30, followed by 20.3% aged 31 to 40, 13.1% aged 20 or younger, 3.3% aged 41 to 50, and only 0.3% were older than 50. There was a wide range of ages and educational levels among responders, although the vast majority were college graduates (50.8%) or postgraduates (22%). Twenty-six percent of the participants dined at fast food establishments between one and six times per year, and thirteen percent did so between two and three times each month. Most respondents ate at fast food restaurants often, with 19% eating there once a month, 26.2% twice a month, 16.1% once to three times a week, and 4.9% more than three times a week. Most had monthly incomes of above 3000 RMB; 24.3% made between 5001 and 8000 RMB, followed by 23.6% who made between 3001 and 5000 RMB, and 15.4% who made over 8 000 RMB.

| Variable | Frequency | Percent % |
|---|--|-----------|
| Gender | Male | 41.3 |
| | Female | 58.7 |
| Age | 20 and under | 13.1 |
| | 21-30 | 63.0 |
| | 31-40 | 20.3 |
| | 41-50 | 3.3 |
| | above 50 | 0.3 |
| Education | below high school | 4.3 |
| | high school/vocational school/technical school | 10.2 |
| | junior college | 12.8 |
| | undergraduate | 50.8 |
| | graduate and above | 22.0 |
| Frequency of Visiting Fast-Food Restaurants | 1-2 times every 6 months | 20.6 |
| | 2 times every 3 months | 13.1 |
| | once a month | 19.0 |
| | 2-3 times a month | 26.2 |
| | 1-3 times a week | 16.1 |
| | more than 3 times a week | 4.9 |
| Monthly Income | less or equal to 1000 RMB | 9.5 |
| | 1001-1500 RMB | 10.5 |
| | 1501-2000 RMB | 9.8 |
| | 2001-3000 RMB | 6.9 |
| | 3001-5000 RMB | 23.6 |
| | 5001-8000 RMB | 24.3 |
| | more than 8000 RMB | 15.4 |
| total | 305 | 100.0 |

Table: 1- Sample profile
Source: (Dr. Hee-cheol Moon, 2020)

Findings & Discussion

Findings:

The level of authenticity of an ethnic restaurant is crucial to its success. This genuineness is affected by several elements, some of which have direct bearing on the eating experience. It all starts with how true and authentic the restaurant's food is to the authentic, traditional recipes and Flavors of the selected ethnicity. Diners want for authentic, expertly prepared foods that capture the spirit of the culture they're supposed to be representing. Second, the restaurant's ambiance and design are crucial in establishing credibility. Customers can be transported to a different culture via the use of culturally relevant interior design, music, and artwork. Discord between these factors might damage your brand's reputation among customers. In addition, it's crucial that the personnel have a solid grasp of the local food and culture. Customers have a better time in general when they are given helpful suggestions and explanations. Customers are more likely to be satisfied with a business whose employees are both pleasant and competent.

Finally, pricing is an element that can affect credibility and the level of happiness among buyers. Customers may feel cheated if the restaurant charges high costs for food that isn't what they expected. In sum, an authentic ethnic restaurant will have authentic food, an authentic cultural atmosphere, a competent staff, and fair prices. When these aspects combine to produce an authentic and immersive experience, it favourably influences consumer satisfaction, driving repeat business and excellent word-of-mouth evaluations.

Discussion:

The level of authenticity of an ethnic restaurant is a major factor in diners' overall experiences there. There are a number of causes for this occurrence. The first and most important need is a faithful depiction of the food. Authenticity in taste and presentation to the regional cuisine is expected by diners. Disappointment and discontent may follow any departure from this. The restaurant's atmosphere and design should complement the cultural theme, too, for a more satisfying dining experience. Inconsistent or clichéd décor might distract from the perceived authenticity and consequently effect consumer happiness. Furthermore, as representatives of the restaurant, the staff's cultural competence is essential. Staff members who can share the cultural importance of the dishes on the menu, provide suggestions, and initiate cross-cultural conversations are invaluable. The importance of using real ingredients and traditional methods of preparation cannot be overstated. Diners can tell if dishes are rushed through or treated with reverence for their cultural roots and culinary traditions (Malota, *et al.*, 2023). In conclusion, a customer's overall experience and propensity to return to an ethnically themed restaurant are affected by the business's commitment to authenticity across all of its touchpoints.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the level of authenticity at an ethnically themed restaurant is critically important to the success of the business. It is apparent that various elements affect this authenticity and, consequently, the whole eating experience. Primarily, it is crucial that the food stays true to its historic recipes and techniques. Diners choose restaurants that use ingredients and methods that are traditional to the food being served. In addition, the restaurant's atmosphere, decor, and staff apparel should all reflect the selected ethnicity to provide a realistic and engaging dining experience. The utilization of traditional

techniques and ingredients, as well as the presentation of the food, contribute to the overall impression of genuineness. The degree to which a restaurant succeeds in providing these factors can have a major impact on patron happiness. Staff members' familiarity with the food and its cultural background has a significant impact on customers' perceptions of authenticity. Customers might feel more immersed in the culture they are experiencing when service members take the time to explain the background of the meals they are served.

In conclusion, the success of an ethnically themed restaurant may be enhanced by providing real food, an authentic atmosphere, knowledgeable service, and careful attention to presentation. This is how restaurants may attract guests looking for a genuine cultural experience through their food: by emphasizing these details.

Conflict of Interests

An ethnically themed restaurant's ability to provide a genuine cultural experience might be negatively impacted by conflicts of interest. When business concerns take precedence over the preservation of authentic cultural traditions and the satisfaction of local palates, both suffer. Restaurant owners and managers should resist watering down the food and atmosphere to maximize profits, even if it means compromising on originality. When this happens, customers are less likely to be satisfied since they aren't getting the authentic, immersed experience they were hoping for at an ethnically themed restaurant. This delicate balancing act is necessary to ensure the restaurant's financial success and the guests' cultural satisfaction.

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