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RED INTERNACIONAL DE
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Customer satisfaction model in the restaurant industry in Guadalajara's metropolitan area

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction is considered as the most researched measurement in marketing (Gupta and Zeithaml, 2005). Many researchers consider it as an important way to measure both, outcomes and quality. It may even be said to have had an impact even in today's competitive environment, since it is a basis for making comparisons among several organizations (Paula, Long, R. and Weiner, 2002). In these terms, the ability to satisfy customers is vital for a number of reasons, especially in the restaurant industry.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Restaurant industry, Quality.

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Introduction

An important factor in the decision to carry out this research is the fact that in recent years the restaurant industry has been considered as a good option for businesses with great potential for success for entrepreneurs and it also generates good profits due to the ascent of it. Large percentage of the family budget goes to eating out, having a great demand in this segment, but even though this type of business covers a basic necessity for the market there is always a high percentage of new restaurants fail in their first months or years of operation.

Research as mentioned above is focused on the customer, who is able to obtain precise answers in order to facilitate the interpretation and analysis of satisfaction. Furthermore, this study is due to the large number of dissatisfied customers whose desires and expectations are not covered in its own way, so it is important to identify the determinants involved in its sole satisfaction perception and thus to be searchable assessment solutions that improve the experience rendered concerning the restaurant industry in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara. It is therefore necessary to consider both perception and customer satisfaction in the industry, as this depends on their performance.

The purpose of this research is to identify some of the determinants of customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry in the Metropolitan Zone of Guadalajara Thus, some determinants of customer satisfaction have been widely discussed in the service quality, expectations, performance, disagreement, desires, affection and action (Churchill and Suprenant 1982, Oliver 1993, Patterson et al. 1997; Spreng, et al 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Quality

Returning to the roots and very classic based on research, satisfaction is also conceived as the result once the characteristics of the product or service to meet customer needs. It is when the company exceeds customer expectations (Juran 1981). On the other hand, and with another approach, Jones and Sesser (1995) suggested that the simple act of providing something unique may be the only reliable way to achieve true customer satisfaction. As described, the companies must realize that dif-

ferent actions make the difference between a neutral and a satisfied customer and a very happy one satisfied.

Food quality

Nowadays, carrying out a good food choice is crucial, especially for those consumers with a healthy lifestyle, seek to consume only products of high nutritional value. Certainly, consumers are looking for quality, value and desirable environment away from the everyday pressures (Soriano, 2002). Having a certain purchasing power and an educated society, today's consumers demand higher food quality.

Thus, factors such as safety, freshness, storage, preparation, consumption, price, packaging, and place of purchase are the ones that can create trends in consumer purchasing behavior. Both the quality and safety are important elements in consumer perception regarding decisions related to food choice (Grunert, 2005, Rohr et al., 2005). As a matter of fact, among the four factors that are taken into consideration in the present study, the price is not the primary factor with respect to the consumer, so it is important to mention that those who are able to serve good quality food always know how to keep a customer satisfied. However, consumers are always looking for a reason to make it worth it (Klara, 2001).

Quality Service

Although it is difficult to define "quality service," marketing theory has recently conceived it as something personal and subjective, where customer perception is essential. Consequently, the most common definition of service quality specified by the customer overall judgment regarding the superiority of the service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988), takes into account the service that the customer expects to receive and the perception of company that offers this service (Grönroos, 1994; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985).

According to the contribution of Cronin and Taylor (1992) the service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction, which in turn, affects the purchase intentions. Consumer satisfaction also increases the value for the restaurant industry (Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryl, 2004). In fact, this applies to any industry. This study focuses primarily on the restaurant industry, which is meant to provide a better service and value (Stevens, Knutson, and Patton, 1995).

At the time the quality of service perceived by the client is reached or even exceeded, dissonance happens, or rather, a confusion regarding the use of the term "satisfaction" due to the similarity in the meaning of these two elements. Both are highly interconnected (Cronin, Brady, and Hult, 2000; Spreng and Mackoy, 1996), but still differ in some respects (Bansal and Taylor, 1999, Oliver, 1980).

Environment

In marketing, Kotler (1973, p. 50) defines "atmosphere" as "... design media buying to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhances a purchase probability". Arnould (1998, p. 90) defines it as "consciously designed places, calculated to produce commercially significant actions". Added to the definition, Babin and Attaway (2000, p. 93), the setting "evokes emotions that help to determine the value and this value motivates customers to patronize a choice repeatedly."

The setting has been defined as "the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhances a purchase probability" (Kotler, 1973, p. 50).

The main sensory channels for the environment are sight, sound, smell and touch (Kotler, 1973, p. 51). In a review of the literature on the environment, Turley and Milliman (2000) designed a "whole interior" that includes music, sound, lighting, odor, color, temperature (often referred to as "environmental cues"), and visual design elements. It is generally accepted that the terms "atmospheric environment" was coined by Kotler (1973) was the first to document the influence of the environment in the process of customer perception (cf. Turley and Milliman, 2000, p. 193-211), which leads to the buying / not buying decisions.

Based on early research in environmental psychology, Kotler (1973) took a narrower approach on consumer behavior and the impact that the physical environment has on it. He said that customers perceive the environment through a combination of visual (color, lighting, proximity and the number of visual elements), hearing (kind of music, sound level), tactile (cleaning) and olfactory (smell), the signals present in the service environment.

Ezeh and Harris (., 2007, p 59), noted that there was a disconnection between the use of nonverbal cues.

Price

We all make purchasing decisions on a daily basis. These consumption decisions, which often include the choice of the brand, are often influenced by a variety of internal and external stimuli such as a dreadful reaction to the amount of advertising efforts that we are exposed to (Bawa, Srinivasan and Srivastava, 1997), and the answer to this kind of advertising (Soman, 1998; McCall, Eckrich, and Bruneau, 2007).

Due to all these dynamics, traders have always been interested in how consumers react to changes (large and small) in the marketing environment. Raymond Corey from Harvard Business School, once proclaimed that all marketing efforts are focused on reaching the pricing decision (Nagle and Holden, 2002). Given the importance of price, this part of the study examines the role of perceived value, quality, price and knowledge applied to price sensitivity.

Nowadays, restaurants are increasingly turning to a variety of marketing strategies to remain viable, including brand extensions in frozen foods, among others. The price sensitivity has been an important issue for marketers and it is a particularly important factor in the restaurant business industry. As the opening quote suggests, casual dining, including restaurants in general, depend on consumer choice. Moreover, the opening quote also offers a major reason for concern among restaurateurs. Casual dining is often an option hedonistic compliance driven by the needs and desires of consumers (Wakefield & Inman, 2003).

Methodology

The current study took into account random customers from restaurants in certain areas of the GMA, Jalisco. Such information is about perceived quality food (freshness, doneness, color, aroma, texture, flavor, to the type of furniture, comfort, space between the tables, design, decoration and others.

Research techniques that were conducted are: Documentary, which was necessary theoretical information collectedto carry the study out: Secondary sources (Databases) articles, journals and books. Systemic observation, interviews and questionnaires, which were obtained to carry out an accurate assessment. Quantitative research provides the alternative to generalize results, providing control and magnitudes.

Measuring Instrument

To incorporate validity, the questionnaire was developed based on the structure of this study having been adequately adapted from som other used ones in previous studies by scholars in this field (Dube et al, 1994; Lee and Hing, 1995; Stevens et al, 1995; Oh, 2000; Choi and Chu, 2001; Yüksel and Yüksel, 200). To measure satisfaction regarding food quality, service, price and atmosphere, Likert scale of 5 degrees in the questionnaire in 8 different sections was primarily used (Table 1).

Table 1
Measurement Instrument Struscture

Section	Ítem	Measurement concept
Section A	Ítems 1 - 4	Demographics
Section B	Ítem 5	Reason to choose a Restaurant
Section C	Ítems 6 - 23	Food quality
Section	Ítems 4 – 49	Service
Section	Ítems 50 – 72	Environment
Section F	Ítems 73 - 75	Price
Section G	Ítems 76 - 78	Importance regarding offers
Sección H	Ítems 79 - 85	Overall satisfaction

Source: Based on survey data.

For data collection, we used a questionnaire based on Likert scale with five listed alternatives ranging from 1 to 5, being 1 the lowest satisfaction and 5 the highest.

Totally unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Totally satisfied

Hypothesis

H1. The higher the personal attention to clients, the better satisfaction experience.
H2. The greater price importance, the higher perceived satisfaction experience.
H3. The greater importance regarding food and drinks, the greater customer satisfaction.

Quantitative analysis

Chi-square test

Testing goodness of fit between the observed distribution and the expected distribution of a variable (Mc Daniel, 2007). This test is designed to compare over X squared statistic, the differences between the observed frequencies in a distribution of a variable and expected because of a hypothesis (Table 2).

Table 2
KMO & Barlett Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.765
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1750.874
	DF	304
	Sig.	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

The reliability test (Table 3) gives a figure of 745 in the questionnaire to be applied, indicating that it explained 74.5% of the research.

Key Drivers Analysis

The previous analysis of Pearson correlations allow a more detailed and comprehensive study. This study is useful to determine the actual satisfaction of respondents with respect to the dependent variable, specifying the accurate location of each variable that occupies in the dispersal graph, which depicts a classification based on their degree of correlation and performance.

Table 3

Key drivers' quadrants

Quadrant	Location	Interpretation
High Influence / High Performance	Upper right	Competitive (key strengths) – desired position. High quality serviceand satisfaction.
High Influence / Low Performance	Upper left	Opportunities (key weaknesses) – Areas of opportunity. Do not perform well in things that most likely impact there purchase
Low Influence / High Performance	Lower right	Hygienic (potential drivers) – They do not increase repurchase, but leave them behind would make a difference.
Low Influence / Low Performance	Lower left	Transparent (low priority) – should remain so given the conditions.

Source: Own elaboration.

Graphic 1 shows the general behavior that every variable occupies in relation to "total satisfaction level regarding the quality of service" (dependent variable). It is necessary to note that the graphic is divided into quadrants.

According to Graphic 1, the level of performance was substantially higher, since mostly scattered points corresponding to each of the variables, are loaded on value 5 (considering that the midpoint of the graphic was set according to the values given).

It is remarkable that most variables mainly agglutinate in two quadrants: transparent and competitive. While hygiene and opportunity show slightly fewer. To make a more objective judgment of the location of such variables, a segmented analysis is performed in order to identify which variables occupy each point on the graphic.

Hygienic variables

As far as it goes to Graphic 2, the hygienic variables are concentrated in a fairly concentrated area so they all maintain a certain correlation degree and similar performance. This quadrant turns out to be quite important as it defines attributes that have a high degree of performance, and in the case of this study, a nearly packed correlation. The higher correlation, the greater impact on service quality is experienced.

Graphic 1
Key drivers
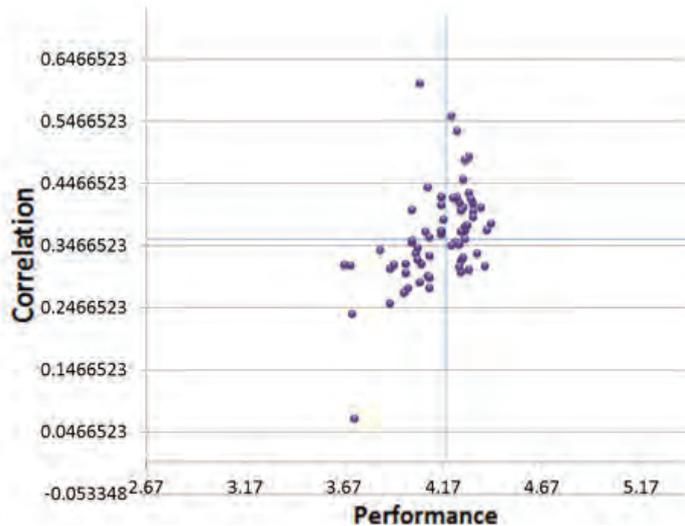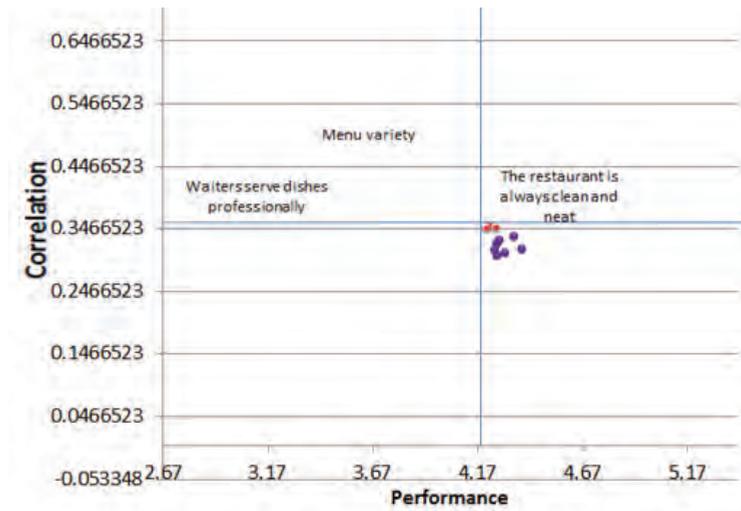

Source: Based on survey data.

In fact, the attributes are actually considered basically expected. This means that although their presence is not crucial in the rendering of the service, the absence of them could negatively affect the level of satisfaction.

As shown in Graphic 2, there are three attributes that were marked in red and slightly line the limit of the quadrant which corresponds to the competitive attributes, and turns out quite interesting because with a little effort they could become competitive ones.

- The restaurant is always clean and neat
- Variety of drinks on the menu
- Waiters serve food professionally

As for the other attributes, since they maintain high enough correlation degrees and performance, as well as their location, they provide a considerable level of satisfaction. Graphic 3 defines the variables considered "transparent," which are slightly broader than the others. It should also be noted that this is just the quadrant that has a greater number of variables, since 23 of them are located right there.

Graphic 2
Hygienic variables

Source: Based on survey data.

Transparent variables

Meanwhile, graphic 4 defines the variables considered as "opportunities", which are dispersed in a very small area, as well as hygienic. Unlike the quadrant corresponding to the transparent, which only has 10. However, not being a minority means that they have less value, in fact, such variables are found to be of great interest, as those that can work in order to provide better customer satisfaction, due to their high correlation degree. Hence, attributes marked in red (bordering the competitive limit) are those with a small improvement in performance that could be considered "competitive."

• The service is fast
• Settlement of inputs and outputs
• Variety of food on the menu
• All food and drinks are in stock
• Odor

This will increase the reasons that a customer will have to experience a high satisfaction level. Five attributes are expressed in red in the Graphic 4 in descending order for a better understanding.

*Graphic 3*
Transparent variables
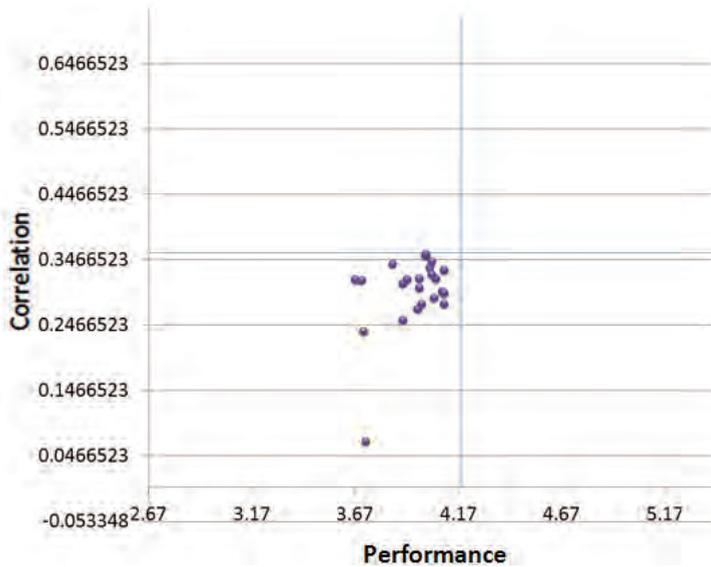
Source: Based on survey data.

Opportunity variables

These variables represent all the potential the industry has to enhance with a slight effort. It means that they can easily switch from opportunity to competitive by adding a bit more importance, since they considerably satisfy customers. As a matter of fact, 5 of these items nearly touch the borderline between such quadrants, hence, they are about to be competitive ones (Graphic 4). By taking a closer look at this graphic, it is easy to realize how close these items are from being reasons to visit a restaurant.

Graphic 4
Opportunity variables
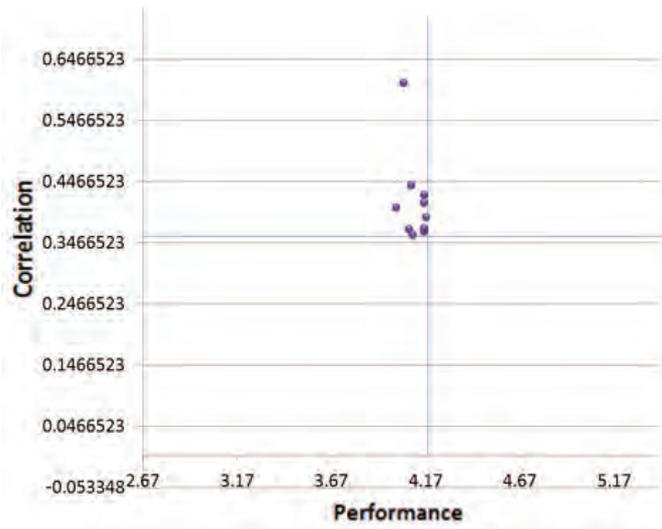
Source: Based on survey data.

Competitive variables

Finally we present the quadrant that defines "competitive" attributes, which according to the degree of correlation, are considerably higher. This quadrant has 21 variables that seem to overlap because of their similar location. The study is quite benign, as it shows that there are 21 variables denoting that if customers are satisfied, is largely due to these attributes. The four attributes marked in red are those with higher degree of correlation and thus, are the ones which exercise more power.
• The staff greets you kindly
• Staff provides accurate billing
• Staff provides change accurately
• The staff is friendly / courteous

On the other hand, attributes marked in green are those whose performance were unmatched, attributes relative to the primary endpoint of

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this study (quality of service), proved to have a very important perfor-mance.

- Their food was properly served
- Food freshness

Graphic 5
Competitive variables
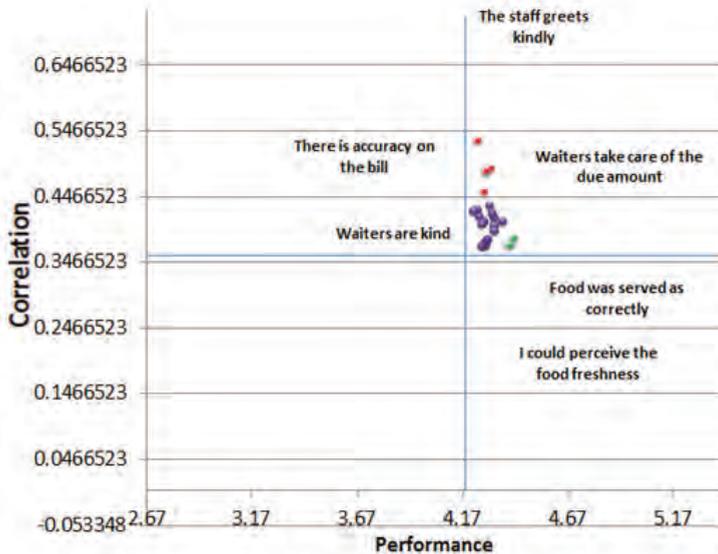
Source: Based on survey data.

Customer satisfaction proposal

Improving the quality of any aspect involves the fact that it exceeds expectations, either by improving product attributes per se, or by provid-ing added value. In any case, it seeks to foster a reason to choose a speci-fied product from the others.

Under this scheme, an idea that comes up as a model of satisfac-tion is displayed. It works as a guide that provides a clear understanding of how to design a better experience when it comes down to enjoying a restaurant in the GMA. Therefore, based on the above analysis, and espe-cially in the "key drivers", the proposal for the current study is outlined as follows:

Graphic 6
Proposed model
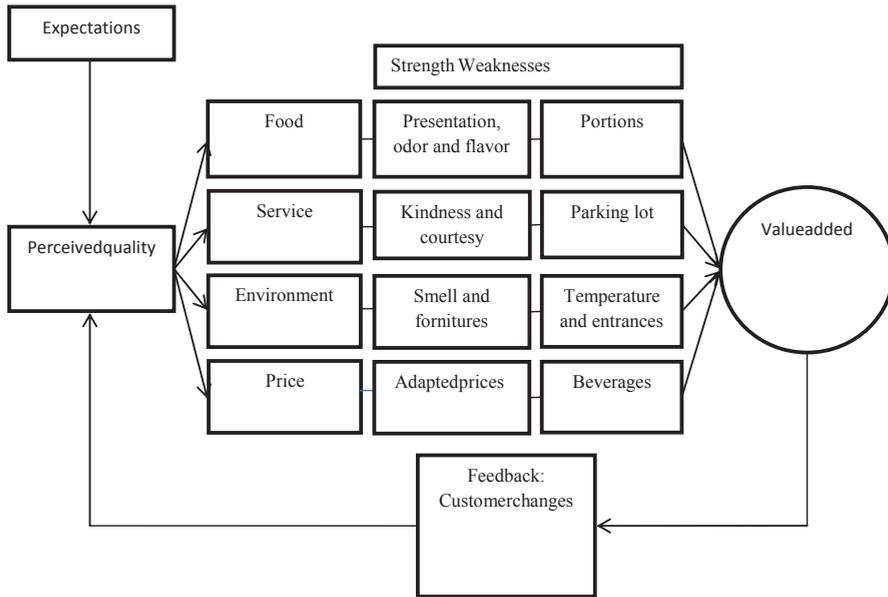
Source: Own elaboration.

Certainly, there are elements that reflect a similarity to the American index model of customer satisfaction; however, there are some other contributions of great validity. Firstly, the model states that everything starts when expectations are formed, which are somehow implicit in any process where customers make a decision. Hence, preformed expectations create a notion of what the customer is to receive and it is right there the point that the perception of quality comes into play. Having gone through that, and particularly in the restaurant industry, the quality of food and service are extremely important variables as well as covering basic customer needs, which seek to provide an added value. Furthermore, the environment also plays an important role, since the atmosphere directly impacts the comfort that is offered. As for the price, one should think that it is right according to the market, since although the industry has not exactly the lowest prices, if it enforces. Altogether, they form value to the customer, which is weighted according to the criteria of the customer, and ultimately validates a general assessment of the aforementioned variables. Such evaluation or full trial pages are different for

each customer, as their expectations and perceptions vary according to several factors in each individual.

It is important to bring up both the strengths and the weaknesses of the variables considered in the present study, given that identifying best and worst aspects can be integrated strategy to potentiate those who do not seem to provide customer value.

First, it is important to mention that these results are interpreted based on the "Key drivers" analysis. Having said that, food factors considered three strengths: presentation, smell and taste. Such factors were properly assessed by the customer, and while there are more, they proved to be the most significant regarding to food. Therefore they are competitive factors. In contrast, it was found that portions are not exactly the best ones, because the study marks a weakness on that factor, so it is assumed that the client is not satisfied or, disapproves the portion of their food. Thus it should be investigated whether the portion was not enough (which is most likely) or if it was too much.

As for service, the model considers both the kindness and courtesy which are key elements. In fact, the model would accept more service-related factors, but unfortunately only considered those that make the difference. This is mentioned because the analysis showed that the predominant factors are the ones which turned out to be competitive and they belong to service. Therefore, it is assumed that presents many of the reasons why the customer experience greater satisfaction. While on the other hand, the service was severely affected by the lack of parking at many of the restaurants, which negatively affects the overall service. That's why it is considered as the main weakness, which undoubtedly is the worst because of their position in the analysis of key drivers.

Meanwhile, the environment has not so salient factors such as service, but if an indirect impact to the customer. It was found that the scent inside contributes positively to overall satisfaction in the environment. Therefore, in this research is considered as a strength in its field. On the other hand, a factor which is apparently difficult to deal with is the temperature, which affects the customer when expecting to enjoy food in a comfortable and relaxed way.

Finally, price has turned out to have its own strength, which frequently affects food. However, customers show dissatisfaction regarding prices assigned to drinks. It can be interpreted as a weakness in the industry. Interestingly it was found that the customer is willing to pay a lot as long as he or she is satisfied, and ironically, rich people tend to care more about

money. Here it is where the next link comes into play, "added value". Thus, the three hypotheses are validated.

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