



DEMOGRAPHICS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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-----ABSTRACT-----

Demographic factor plays a critical role in customer satisfaction. When thinking about customer satisfaction, people usually associate with personal preference. Demographics therefore become the valuable issue for practitioners to pay much more attention to. Therefore, in order to understand the link between demographics and customer satisfaction, the objective of the study is to report the relationship between the two factors, and vegetarian restaurant is the case. The study conducted a brief interview to understand the vegetarian restaurant customers' attitude about the satisfaction. Suggestion and conclusion are also provided for the related authorities' references.

KEYWORDS: Customer satisfaction, Demographics, Vegetarian, -----

1. INTRODUCTION

The four factors that impact on consumer decision including culture, demographic, social, and psychological (Kotler, 1998). Of which, demographic factor plays a critical role. It is generally acknowledged that demographic factors covering age, occupation, income, life style, personality, and self-thought. When thinking about customer satisfaction, people usually associate with personal preference. Demographics therefore become the valuable issue for practitioners to pay much more attention to. In addition, vegetarian has become a very popular phenomenon in Taiwan in the recent decades, vegetarian population has contributed a tremendous in food service. Therefore, in order to understand the link between demographics and customer satisfaction, the objective of the study is to report the relationship between the two factors, and vegetarian restaurant is the case.

2. THEORY

2.1 Demographics and satisfaction

Demographic is the most documented referential variable when segmenting consumer group (Huang, 1997). Berman and Evans (2001) even pointed that “demographics” is the most critical factor that impacts on consumer decision process. In terms of the issues that related to consumer behavior, demographics could have been documented the most. It is mainly because no matter in consumer internal/external preference, material necessity fulfilling and satisfaction, all of which are highly related to demographics. Kotler (1996) classified consumers based on the variables like demographics, psychology, geographic and behavior, who also explored the relationship about each variable on product demand and purchasing attitude that impact on behavior. The following table (Table 1) describes the results of satisfaction from the standpoints of various researchers.

Table 1 Demographics and satisfaction

Author (Year)	Issue	Findings
Chiou (2009)	A Study of the Relationship among the Consumer Motivation of Expense, Satisfaction and Loyalty	In terms of demographics, the variables like age, education, and income would have impacts on ‘consumption motivation’, ‘satisfaction’, and ‘loyalty’; while among the demographic factors such as gender, marriage, and income, the group with income between 20,001- 40,000 presented the highest consumption motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty toward vegetarian restaurants.
Liao (2011)	Research on Consumer Food and	Findings about demographics and satisfaction are as the following:



	Beverage Consumption Behavior Outside of the Controlled Ares of Taoyuan International Airport	<p>1. Gender: There existed significant difference in “employees will consider customer needs in advance”, specifically, female respondents show significantly higher than male respondents.</p> <p>2. Age: There existed significant difference in the factors of employee cleaning dress and tidy. Findings of Sheffe test reveal that in terms of employee cleaning dress and tidy, the satisfaction of group under 20 years old presented significant higher satisfaction than that of the group of aged between 41-50.</p> <p>3. Education: the factors like food price, employee cleaning dress, tidy, sanitation and hygiene in dining area do exist significant difference in consumer satisfaction. After Sheffe test, in terms of food price, the respondents of elementary school have higher satisfaction than that of high school/vocational school. As to employee cleaning dress, the respondents of junior middle school presented higher satisfaction than that of graduate school or above.</p> <p>4. Occupation: There existed significant differences in the factors like food taste, employees will consider customer needs in advance, the degree of noise, sanitation and hygiene of dining areas, clear price indication, and flight schedule information in dining areas. As to the satisfaction of sanitation and tidy in dining areas, the group of military personnel showed higher degree than that of the industry group. In terms of flight schedule information, the group of students showed greater than that of the industry group.</p> <p>5. Monthly Income: There is no significant difference in respondents’ monthly income in terms of restaurant satisfaction.</p>
Huang, Liu, Lu, and Lin (2014)	The Relationship among Visitor Satisfaction and Behavior Intention in Forest Paradise	The findings of demographics indicated the following points: 1. There existed no significant difference between gender and satisfaction; the factors such as “age”, “residence area”, “marriage”, “education”, “occupation”, and “average monthly income” do present significant difference when comparing with satisfaction. After conducting Sheffe test, the results indicated that there existed significant differences between various demographic factors and satisfaction.
Wu (2012)	A study of consumer satisfaction and re-consumption willingness on	<p>1. Male customers showed higher satisfaction than female customers; male customers also have higher repurchasing willingness than female customers.</p> <p>2. The group aged above 46 have significant higher</p>



chained hot pot restaurant satisfaction than the group aged under 45; the group aged above 46 also have higher significant repurchasing willingness than the group aged under 45.

3. The group of under junior middle school showed significant lower satisfaction than the group of above senior high school; the group of under junior middle school also presented significant lower repurchasing willingness than the group of above senior high school.

4. The group with monthly income between NT\$1 to NT\$ 50,000 showed significant higher satisfaction than the group with no income; the group with monthly income between NT\$25,001 to NT\$ 50,000 also presented significant higher re-consumption willingness than the group with no income.

2.2 Satisfaction

The earliest concept of satisfaction was proposed by Cardozo (1965), who argued that customer satisfaction refers to the perception of customer purchasing about the product reciprocation. If customer think the product value is higher than what s/he paid, then there occurs satisfaction, otherwise, unsatisfaction. Liljander and Strandvik (1993) argued that the following factors would have impacts on restaurant satisfaction: 1) food taste and appearance; 2) menu combination and alteration; 3) layout of the restaurant; 4) individual service.

In the recent years, customer satisfaction has become one of the most valuable issues of the related practitioners and managers. It is because customer consumption is the very first resource for the practitioners to go on managing the business. In short, if satisfaction is not well managed, no one goes to the store to consume and there naturally has no successful company.

Kotler (1997) argued that customer satisfaction is the expectation before purchasing and a judgment toward the product quality after purchasing. Singh (1991) reported that customer satisfaction is multi-dimensional, it is the evaluation of product efficiency from multiple indicators, in addition, the results of customer evaluation would be varied when the product or object is different. Therefore, Oliver (1981) argued that customer satisfaction is the judgment after experiencing the surprise of using products or consumption experiences. Meanwhile, when a product or service can meet consumer needs, it is a judgment toward the service or product feature. Wu & Liang (2009) found that the environment of a restaurant and employee interaction with customers would have impacts on customer experiential value. Moreover, the interaction between customer and employee would have more positive influences on customer satisfaction, while the interaction between restaurant layout and customer would indirectly impact on customer satisfaction.

Based on the above, if managers could aggressively increase customer satisfaction and make consumers internally full understand practitioners' kind service after purchasing, it would be favorably impact on customer satisfaction and eventually create a win-win result. For the definition of customer satisfaction, please refer to Table 2.

Table 2 Definition of customer satisfaction

Researcher	Year	Definition
Oliver	1980	Attitude is the prerequisite of satisfaction, that is, consumer attitude is grounded on expectation, then consumers would adjust their attitude based on whether they are satisfied.
Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard	1995	Satisfaction refers that after consuming the product, consumers would assess and evaluate the value between product performance and the expected belief before purchasing; when the values of the two sides are equivalent, consumers receive satisfied feeling; otherwise unsatisfied.



Lovelock	1996	Customer satisfaction mainly refers to the comparison between the utilization efficiency and expectation of product or service. Customer satisfaction is also an important resource of customer loyalty, there has positive relationship between the two factors. In other words, the higher the customer satisfaction of product or service, the better the customer loyalty.
Su	1996	Customer satisfaction refers that a group of representative consumers separately take part in a certain service delivery process procedure under the circumstance of without prior agreement and concluded the average satisfaction degree toward the service.
Kotler	1997	Customer satisfaction is the function relationship between the expected and use results of a specific product.
Oliver	1997	In consumer satisfaction, judging the whole dimensional attitude and let consumers weighted higher for their own important categories could more precisely reflect the real customer satisfaction degree.
Kotler	2000	No matter the degree of consumer feeling about the product is good or bad; high or low, the perception results from the product function and the comparison between expectation and usage. If the product function is inferior to the expected objective, consumers feel unsatisfied; on the contrary, if the products perform match or higher than the original expectation, customer satisfaction goes up naturally.
Baker & Crompton	2000	Satisfaction refers to the psychological situation after consumer go through and experience the product or service, which then formed a kind of attitude or perceived behavior and influenced by the outer society and psychological situation.
Yeung, Ging & Ennew	2002	Customer satisfaction is an identify way of customer expectation, which is regarded as a standard of customer satisfaction to the service.
Vavra	2002	Satisfaction refers to consumer emotional response, which would lead to certain expectation from the former experiences and integrated comments to the products and stores after experiencing.
Turban, King, Lee, Warkentin, Chung, & Chung,	2002	Customer service is the procedure of an entire activity and also an important feeling of consumption experience, which is mainly to lift customer satisfaction. It is how product or service could satisfy customer expectation and feeling.
Kotler	2003	Satisfaction is the degree which consumers feel happy or disappointed; it resulted from consumer perception and expectation of the product (function or feeling).
Dutty	2003	The degree of customer satisfaction would be impacted by internal or external factors, and bring benefits for consumers and companies through varied methods.
Ranaweera & Prabhu	2003	Customer satisfaction is regarded as a decisive factor of long-term customer behavior.
Cho, Lee, Kim, Lee, & Choi,	2004	Customer satisfaction is the respond to customer's comparison between the prior experience and expectation, which is customer response made for evaluating the product practical efficiency between before purchasing and after purchasing.
Chen	2006	Customer satisfaction refers to the results of before purchasing the product and after purchasing and using the product. Consumers make comparisons between the two situations and conclude the degree of expectation and perception.



Joewono & Kubota	2007	Customer satisfaction is the comparison of product or service according to the past experiences and the whole evaluative activity of consumption experiences.
Liu, Tu, & Lo	2010	The measurement item of satisfaction is classified into single item and multiple item, of which, single item only measure the unitary “entire product satisfaction degree”, while the multiple item add up and combine the satisfaction degree by way of measuring the degree of consumer satisfaction toward the product attributes.

3. METHOD

The study conducted a brief interview to understand the customers’ satisfaction toward the several popular vegetarian restaurants in Taiwan. It is because vegetarian culture in Taiwan is flourishing in the recent years, understanding the satisfaction would be referential for practitioners. Therefore, investigators work in pairs and go to the exits of the selected vegetarian restaurants to ask customers about food satisfaction, service satisfaction, layout satisfaction... etc. The interviewed customers were most friendly to the interviewers, this make the interview results be more referential.

4. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The results indicated that demographic factors do significantly impact on customer satisfaction. For example: people with low income would not tend to go to high level restaurant; customers with high education usually have wider selection when facing meals because some of them expressed that eating is relaxing so they are not so care about price but restaurant environment and food quality; while customer age varies, their preference is also diversified; gender factor also shows variances in restaurant satisfaction because individual preference is varied. In sum, demographic factors significantly impact on customer satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned reports, demographics play a critical role in dominating customer satisfaction. As the competition goes more and more intensive in the modern era, customer satisfaction has then become the pivotal to bring a firm to be successful. Practitioners and policy makers have to pay more attention to prudently make strategic policies so that business could strive for success.

It is suggested that future researcher may go further to explore the details that have impacts on customer satisfaction, such as psychological factors (value, personality, or life style,....., and so on) .

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