Customer Satisfaction in Fast Food Restaurants in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract
This study assessed the factors affecting customer satisfaction and its effect on repurchase intention at selected Fast Food Restaurants (FFRs) in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. Primary data were obtained by administering structured questionnaire on a cross-section of 147 Customers of Fast Food Restaurants (CFFRs) who patronized FFRs. Multistage random sampling technique was employed to select seven (7) FFRs from the metropolis. The respondents' satisfaction level towards FFRs was obtained on Five point Likert scale. Each respondent's satisfaction level was then assessed by Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI). The data were analyzed using a combination of descriptive techniques and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression. The regression analyses were used to identify the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. These dimensions include tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy which concern the physical aspect, regularity and consistency of performances, readiness and willingness to help customers, knowledge and courtesy of the employees and individualized attentions towards customers of the FFRs respectively. Analysis of responses to various indicators of customers' satisfaction in CSI revealed that 76.2% of the CFFRs considered services of the FFRs as satisfactorily, while 74.5% considered the services as ideal. Regression analysis revealed that customers' satisfaction with services of the FFRs increased significantly with increase in customer's perception of tangibility dimension of the service quality ($p<0.01$), empathy ($p<0.01$), responsiveness ($p<0.05$) and assurance ($p<0.05$). The study therefore, concludes that customer satisfaction significantly enhances repurchase intention and this is closely related to the customers' perception of tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy dimensions of service quality. The study recommends among others that fast food operator should provide amenities such as parking areas and attractive building exteriors in order to enhance their customers' satisfaction towards services rendered. Also, service provider of fast food restaurants should endeavor to improve on their empathy by providing more caring and personalized service to customers in order to enhance customers' satisfaction.
Keywords: Nigeria, Fast Food Restaurants, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Fast food restaurants in Nigeria are modeled after McDonald's, and their colourful appearances edify their rapid spreads which make them very easy to identify in the major cities and some towns of the country. In Nigeria, today, the list of brand names in the industry is being extended, so far without an end in sight as high sales volume encourage new entrant to spring up incessantly (Outayo and Akanle. 2009). Most of the major fast food restaurants in the country have their headquarters in Lagos. For example, Mr. Bigg's and Tantalizers, have their headquarters at Ikeja and Festac, Lagos State, respectively.The level of competition in the fast food industry is only rivaled by that in the telecommunications and banking industries, as fast food restaurants concentrated in a particular surface in every environment considered viable to capture the market ahead of others. It is also common in the country to see fast food restaurants concentrated in a particular location, especially in industrial

and commercial areas. The competition is becoming keener even as the fast food industry is witnessing a boom (Nwuke, 2001). As a means of coping with this competition, product and service innovations, advertisements and sales promotion have become major tools. For example, some like Tantalizers engage in outdoor catering services for social occasions, while others offer telephone order delivery service for busy individuals who may not be able to go out for meals. Once a fast food restaurant open aggressive advertisement and "mouth-watering" promotions are rolled out customers are attracted to their outlets.

However, with the upsurge in the setting up fast food restaurants, retaining customers becomes an issue in particular when factors such as quality and safety are important consumer concerns. It is not surprising that companies spend substantial resources to measure and manage their customer satisfaction. As competition and other environmental influences increase globally, there is growing emphases on quality improvement and cost reduction in companies to achieve customer satisfaction and enhance organizational value (Iwarere, 2010). Many companies and organizations have come to acknowledge the critical importance of being customer-oriented and customer-driven in all their activities. Kotler (1997) asserts that it is not enough to be product-driven or technology-driven, without bringing the power of customer into the center of the business.

The fast food industry is a product–offering as well as service-rendering industry. This, thus, poses a fundamental challenge for the management of fast food industry. More so, that service quality is even more difficult to measure than measuring product quality. The industry is closely linked to the hospitality and health care industry where high quality product/ service cannot be compromised or satisfied. Therefore, the failure of any firm to meet the required level of expectation may spell doom for the outfit. Thus, there is need to identify the service quality gap and to continuously adapt to customer assessment or perception of service quality in the fast food industry in order to ensure high customers satisfaction and continuous patronage (Iwarere, 2011).

2.0   Theoretical Framework
2.1   Customer Satisfaction
Customer satisfaction as defined by Oliver (1980) is the after purchase judgment or evaluation of a product or a service. It is also frequently described as the extent to which the chosen product meets or exceeds consumer expectations.It is one of the most widely studied constructs in marketing research (Homburg and Stock, 2004) and is described as a consumer's affective evaluation of a product or service. As the consumer has become more discerning, demanding more differentiated products, business organizations have attempted to find ways of incorporating customer wants and needs into production and distribution.According to Barkema and Drabenstott (1995), Today's consumer, who demands an ever-widening variety of healthful, conveniently prepared food products, is driving the changes in food markets. Customers generally evaluate service quality before and after their use. According to Zeithaml et al (1993), consumers evaluate services and products through two processes. These are pre-purchase or search qualities are features that consumers look out for before buying and are those that they can see, feel or touch. On the other hand, experienced qualities are post-purchase features that customers assess during the post-purchase period. Customers cannot evaluate these types because they do not have the required skills, expertise and knowledge to carry out the evaluation. To that effect, customers place a high premium on the image and reputation of the service before purchasing.

2.2   Service Quality
According to Zeithamal et al (1998), the interaction or the relationship between customers and service organizations induce perceptions of customers' quality. The attitude of service providers can also serve as a quality indicator for customer. Alluding to this, Owusu-Frimpong (1999) claims a receptive attitude of workers is a key ingredient for giving customers a good impression about a restaurant and its service. The physical environment in terms of the infrastructure, the design and the general atmosphere are also considered by consumers in assessing the quality of services. Likewise, the duration of the service delivery gives a positive or a negative impression to customers. Ennew and Binks (1996:6) on the other hand think that the quality of the service will partially be based on the customer interactions with the organization rendering the service. They further indicate customers who are willing to participate actively in the delivery of service are likely to expect to receive a better quality of service. The reasons are that the service provider will understand their needs and circumstances. Also, customers involved in the service delivery process will have an insight into the impediments on the way of the service organization and therefore, be sympathetic in the quality expectations.

2.3   Interaction between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality
Ting (2004:408) has enumerated the differences between service quality and satisfaction. They indicated that the dimensions of service quality are specifically or directly connected with the rendering of the service whilst satisfaction is based on many factors, both directly and indirectly relating to the delivery of the service. Customers do not base their perceptions of the quality of service on experiences/encounters with both the service provider and the service environment. On the other hand, past experiences form the basis for evaluation of

satisfaction. In addition, quality is supposed to be ascertained by external cues such as price and reputation whilst satisfaction is prompted by conceptual cues like equity and regret. Also, ideals and excellence in connection with the service delivery are the cues to service quality. In the same vein, satisfaction perceptions are based on predictions or norms for the service delivery. Parsuraman et al (1988) postulate that satisfaction can be experienced and happened during or at the transactional level whilst quality is seen to be taking place at the global level. Oliver (1997) believes that quality judgments are more specific and that of satisfaction are holistic. Quality judgments have a connection with cognitive judgments whilst that of satisfaction relates to affective judgments.As noted by Ting (2004), researchers are divided over antecedents of service quality and satisfaction. Whilst some believe that service quality leads to satisfaction, others think otherwise. Authors like Parasuraman et al (1988) and Bitner (1990) are of the view that satisfaction leads to quality whilst others such as Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Anderson (1993) have a contrary view. Empirical studies regarding the latter also assert it. Studies of Tam (2000), Petrick and Backman (2002) and Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggest that satisfaction leads to quality. Newman (2001) also submits that there is a correlation between the quality of service and customer satisfaction. Enhanced service quality leads to customer satisfaction with its ripple effects such as; customer loyalty and improvement in the existing relationships between the organization and customers. It can be gathered from the above that the two concepts are the same and are being used interchangeably. Authors such as DeRuyter et al (1997), Rust and Zahorik (1993) and Boulding et al (1993) think that quality and satisfaction are closely connected and are synonymous and interchangeable. Thus, both concepts are referred to meeting the requirements of customers. Therefore, making a clear distinction between them will be a difficult task.

Moreover, this study aims to find out the followings;
1. Describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the fast foods consumers in the study area.
2. Assess the factors affecting customer satisfaction.
3. Determine the influence of fast-food consumers' socioeconomic characteristics on their satisfaction with fast food restaurants.

3.0   METHODOLOGY
3.1   Study Area, Sampling Technique and Instrument
Ibadan is the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria, located on longitude 3054'E and latitude 7023'N. Apart from Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria and is located in South-western of Nigeria, with a population of 1,338,659.An appreciable percentage of the people resident in Ibadan are engaged in white collar jobs in the State and Federal Ministries as well as private establishment. Also, a good number of inhabitants engage in corporate activities.The main data for this research were obtained from primary source collected in a cross-sectional survey of fast food customers in Ibadan metropolis. The data were obtained through the use of personally administered questionnairefrom the respondents at the fast food restaurants. The questionnaires sourced information on the socio economic characteristics, the factors influencing satisfaction with the consumption of fast foods. Multistage random sampling technique was used for this study.A list of registered fast food restaurants, namely; Mr Biggs, Tantalizers, Chicken Republic, Food Co, Big Treat, Food 'n' Wine, KFC, Western Fried Chicken, Scoops, Tasty Fried Chicken, Olass Chicken and Pie, Chicken Villa, was obtained from the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria, Oyo state chapter. In the first stage, seven (7) fast food restaurants were purposively selected from the sample frame. Three of these FFRs were major restaurants (Mr Biggs, Tantalizers, Chicken Republic) because they have more than one branch in which all of their branches were visited. The other restaurants visited include Big Treat, Food'n'Wine, KFC and Food Co. In the second stage, three branches were randomly selected from the major FFRs while the other four FFRs were also visited. In the last stage, systematic random sampling was used to select a total of 147 respondents from FFRs visited based on their sitting arrangement.Respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very satisfied) to5 (very dissatisfied).

3.2   Data Analysis
The data collected were analyzed by descriptive statistics and regression methods (ordinary least and tobit). The service quality dimensions according SERVPERF model (Audrey, 2003) were employed to categorize services rendered at FFRs. These dimensions include; Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. . The score of respondent for each dimension responded to on likert scale was calculated across and then divided by the maximum score that can be assigned for each dimension.

$$\text{Customer Satisfaction Index} = \frac{respondent score}{maximum score} \quad \text{... (1)}$$

Ordinary Least Square regressionwas then employed to assess the effect of the five service quality dimensions on overall satisfaction towards FFRs as adopted by Huam et al (2011). The implicit function can be expressed as:

$$Y = F (X_i, e_i)\text{... (2)}$$

Where:

Y is the overall satisfaction

X_i is the vector of the explanatory variables (the service quality dimensions)

Tobit Regression Model was used to identify those socio economic characteristics influencing customer satisfaction.The model was used because the ordinary least square regression model was found to be inappropriate.

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_j X_i + u_i$…………………………………….(4)

Where:

Xi is a vector of socio-economic characteristics that are hypothesized to influence customer satisfaction towards FFRs which includes;

Y= Overall satisfaction

X_1= Age (years)

X_2= Age square (years)

X_3= Marital status (1 if single and 0 if otherwise)

X_4= Gender (1 if female and 0 if male)

X_5= Education (years of schooling)

X_6= Household size (number)

X_7= Household size square (number)

X_8= Respondents' total income(₦/month)

X_9= Main occupation (1 if not formally employed and 0 if otherwise)

X_{10}= Fast food restaurants (1 if major restaurant and 0 if otherwise)

u_i= Random error term

4.0   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
4.1   Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Fast Food Customers

The study using descriptive statistics (Table 1) revealed that females dominate people patronizing FFRs in the study area. It was shown that majority (51.7%) of the fast food consumers were within age range 21-30years. The mean age was approximately 26 years. This implies that most of the fast food consumers in the study area are young adults. Distribution according to marital status shows that 35.4% of the respondents were married while 64.6% were single. The study revealed that most (51.0%) of the fast food consumers earned between ₦50000 and ₦100000 per month. The mean income earned was estimated to be ₦48605.44 per month. It was also revealed that majority (53.7%) of the consumers spend less than ₦5000 on fast food consumption with an average of ₦8,373.88, which implies that a one-fifth of income earned is spent on fast food per month. Also, it was revealed that majority (51.7%) of the consumers visited FFRs mostly during lunch time.

4.2   Assessment of Customer Satisfaction

To show the overall satisfaction of the customers to services rendered at the FFRs, the score of respondent for each item used to indicate the information that could denote satisfaction level was summed across and then divided by the maximum score that can be assigned for each item to generate a customer' satisfaction level. This was adopted from TOPSIS method ((Dan et al, 2008). The analysis of responses to the various indicators of customers' satisfaction revealed that 76.2% of the customers considered services of the FFRs as satisfactorily; while 83.6% of the customers considered the services of the FFRs to be perfectly well and 74.5% considered the services as ideal. (Table2)

The Reliability test indicated that the reliability coefficients for the SERVPERF dimensions i.e. tangibility, reliability, assurance and empathy are considered good with cronbach's alpha of 0.817, 0.864, 0.851 and 0.853 respectively, while responsiveness (0.762) and overall satisfaction (0.798) were considered acceptable. These results indicated that the measures used in this study were reliable and consistent.

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to identify the most dominant variable that influenced the customers' satisfaction of FFRs. The dependent variable was customer satisfaction of FFRs. The independent variables included the five SERVPERF dimensions which were tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to assess the direct effect of these dimensions towards FFRs and the results are summarized in Table 3. As shown in Table 4, the service dimensions were positively and significantly related to customer satisfaction ($p<0.01$ and $p<0.05$) except for reliability. The coefficient of determination R^2 for this regression model was 0.588. This means 58.8% of the variation in the customer satisfaction towards FFRs' services in Ibadan metropolis could be explained by the five SERVPERF dimensions. As seen in Table3, the strongest that significantly the satisfaction of FFRs' customers was the SERVPERF dimension of empathy because it obtained the largest standardized coefficients score ($\beta= 0.521$, $p= 0.001$), followed by tangibility ($\beta= 0.475$, $p= 0.000$), responsiveness ($\beta= 0.238$, $p=0.050$) and assurance ($\beta= 0.172$, $p= 0.050$). However, empathy was found to have the strongest positive influence on customer satisfaction toward

FFRs in Ibadan metropolis.

4.3 Influence of Socio-Economic Characteristics on Customer Satisfaction

The Tobit regression model used in the study further revealed that the socio economic characteristics significantly influencing customer satisfaction. As indicated in Table 12, the log likelihood value of the model is 96.652979. The result shows that age of consumer, years of education, types of fast food restaurant, and income were significant on influencing customer satisfaction. Age of the consumers is significant ($p<0.05$) and with positive as expected which indicates that the age of a consumer has a positive impact on its fast food restaurant patronage, thus its satisfaction level which tends to increase at a decreasing rate as the age advances. In other words, older persons in the study area tend to patronise fast food restaurants less than young adults. The type of FFR had a positive and significant ($p<0.10$) relationship with overall satisfaction implying that fast food consumers tends to be satisfied with some fast food restaurants and thus, prefer them. Also, years of education of fast food consumers had positive and significant ($p<0.05$) relationship to overall satisfaction. Household size has a negative relationship with overall satisfaction, this implies that larger family size of the fast food consumers in the study area, the lower their satisfaction level with service rendered at fast food restaurants. This means that satisfaction level tends to increase at a decreasing rate with increase in household size. Income of fast food consumers also negatively and significantly ($p<0.1$) influenced their satisfaction with fast food restaurants. This may imply that as the level of the consumers' income increase, their rate of FFRs patronage decreases and this thus affect their satisfaction level.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Customer satisfaction is one of the mostly widely studied concepts in marketing research and is described as a customer's affective evaluation of a product or service (Homburg and Stock 2004). This study has been able to show that there is positive and significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Thus, obtaining customer satisfaction depends to a large extent that the firm (in this case; fast food restaurant) maintains high service quality standards. Putting in place quality mechanisms has significant effect on the level of customer satisfaction (Gloria, 2010). The result of the SERVPERF model carried out in this study show the dimensions of service quality have positive influence on customer satisfaction towards FFRs. This achieved the main aim of the study which is to identify the determinants of customer satisfaction towards FFRs. The study also revealed that the SERVPERF dimensions were consistent in measuring satisfaction and was found to have direct effect on customer satisfaction at 58.8%. This shows that service quality actually determines customer satisfaction. Also, as analysed in this study, it was seen that socio economic characteristics have influence on customer satisfaction. This may mean that disparities in different consumers actually affect the way they perceive service rendered at the FFRs, thus their satisfaction.

The study therefore recommends that fast food operators should provide amenities such as parking areas and attractive building exteriors in order to enhance their customers' satisfaction towards services rendered. Also, management should ensure that their employees are well dressed and presentable.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Fast food operators should provide amenities such as parking areas and attractive building exteriors in order to enhance their customers' satisfaction towards services rendered. Also, management should ensure that their employees are well dressed and presentable.

2. Service provider of fast food restaurants should endeavour to improve on their empathy by providing more of caring and personalized service to customers. This is of great importance to those FFRs already in business and those aspiring to venture into fast food industry.

3. Responsiveness of FFRs' employees can be increased through increased employee motivations, improved selling skills, positive training attitude, clearer role perceptions, high service knowledge and high awareness of organizational policies. Thus, service quality and organizational effectiveness can be improved simultaneously.

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Table1: Distribution of Fast Food Consumers by Socio-economic Characteristics (N=147)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	83	56.5
Male	64	43.5
Age (years)		
<20	41	27.9
21-30	79	51.7
31-40	24	16.3
>40	6	4.1
Mean	**26.07**	
Marital status		
Single	95	64.6
Married	52	35.4
Income per month (₦)		
≤50000	115	78.2
50001-10000	15	10.2
100001-150000	7	4.8
150001-200000	2	1.4
200001-300000	5	3.4
>300000	3	2.0
Mean	**48142.86**	
Amount spent on fast food (₦)		
≤5000	79	53.7
5001-10000	35	23.8
10001-15000	9	6.1
15001-20000	8	5.4
>20000	16	10.9
Mean	₦	
Consumption time		
Lunch	76	51.7
In-between meal	60	40.8
Dinner	11	7.5

Source: Data from Field Survey, 2012

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by their Overall Satisfaction

Indicators	VS	S	IN	DS	VD
Experience been up to expectation	29(19.7%)	83(56.2%)	27(18.4%)	7(4.8%)	1(0.7%)
The restaurant serves perfectly well	33(22.4%)	90(61.2%)	23915.6%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.7%)
Service compared to the ideal	27(18.4%)	81(55.1%)	31(21.1%)	5(3.4%)	3(2.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 3: Reliability Coefficient of the Instrument for Each Dimension

Instruments	Number of items	Mean	Std. deviation	Reliability coefficients
Tangibility	8	32.40	4.381	0.817
Reliability	6	23.94	3.746	0.864
Responsiveness	4	15.70	2.089	0.762
Assurance	4	15.81	2.783	0.851
Empathy	5	19.29	3.169	0.853
Overall satisfaction	3	11.79	1.942	0.798

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 4: Estimates of Ordinary Least Square Multiple Regression

Items	Beta Coefficients	T-values
Constant	1.255***	14.053
Tangibility	0.475***	4.705
Reliability	0.002	0.019
Responsiveness	0.238	1.953
Assurance	0.172	2.295
Empathy	0.521	6.839

R^2-0.611 Adjusted R^2-0.597 F-value-44.227

*** Significant at 1%, ** Significant at 5%, *   Significant at 10%

Source: Data from Field Survey, 2012

Table 5: Results of Tobit Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	T-ratio	Marginal effect
Constant	6.6269***	11.022	0.692525
Age	0.0088800**	1.8935	0.0003790
Age square	-0.000141511	-0.63423	-0.000015163
Marital status	0.074516	0.35085	0.0077871
Gender	-0.23456	-1.2734	-0.0024512
Years of education	0.041661**	2.0480	0.0043537
Household size	0.016084	0.37736	0.0016808
Household size squared	0.0040309	1.0596	0.00042124
Income	-0.0000020081*	-1.6042	-0.00000020985
Main occupation	-0.030608	-0.15097	-0.0031986
Type of fast food restaurant	0.32960*	1.7011	0.034444
Log likelihood function	97.608267		
Mean square error	0.01073827		
Mean error	0.00011325498		

***significant at 1%, **significant at 5%, *significant at 10%

Source: Data from Field Survey, 2012