

Customer Satisfaction Towards Restaurant Industry Services in Bangladesh: Evidence from Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Restaurant Business is very popular in Bangladesh, and it is increasing day by day as it is a profitable business. It has been seen that many restaurants are selling their food over the internet technology during this Covid-19 pandemic period. This study aims to find out customer satisfaction and their loyalty to the restaurant's food and service quality. The data are collected with a structured questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. A simple linear regression and correlation analysis have been performed using SPSS 25. The study finds a strong positive correlation among the restaurant's food quality, services quality, decoration & environment, employee response, delivery system, and customers' satisfaction. The study also finds out that the restaurant's customers in Bangladesh are very satisfied with food quality and the services provided by the restaurants. It is recommended that the restaurant in Bangladesh should improve their food quality along with services in a hygienic way. The restaurants should introduce the new internet-based application to handle the complaints of customers and to deliver the services quickly. This study will help the managers, business persons, and policy-makers to develop and enrich the health of the restaurant business in Bangladesh by ensuring customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Restaurant; Food Quality; Customer Satisfaction; Regression Analysis; Bangladesh.

Introduction: Going to restaurants has become a trend in urban Bangladesh whether it's for youths socializing with each other or official meetings, family gatherings, weddings, or parties' restaurants work as a social hub for people from all ages, different backgrounds, and professions. This makes restaurants a crucial part of day-to-day urban life. According to [2] (Abir, 2021), now a days Bangladesh is well sufficient with the restaurant business, and this business continually working for customer satisfaction and to reduce their monotonies and offerings the customer many attractive foods. Not only biggest city or the well popular areas or any busy places surrounding with offices, schools or colleges but also every street, every small and urban area are introducing different types of restaurants. The restaurant business is a growing business in Bangladesh; some years back it's hard to find a decent restaurant in Bangladesh. Some years back the fast-food restaurant was the only experimental restaurant in Bangladesh and people of all ages generally went there for spending some leisure time but these days the industry can be differentiated by a lot of categorized restaurants and different cuisines like seafood, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, Thai [16] (Kuddus et al., 2021). Therefore, the study has been done to explore the satisfaction of customers in the restaurant business in Bangladesh as satisfied and repeated customers are a great asset of a restaurant business.

Haque (2021) [11] explored that customer satisfaction depends on several factors such as – service quality, food quality, price of the food, overall environment and atmosphere of the restaurants, internal and external design and so much more. This customer satisfaction no longer depends on the price and quality of the food they are served, rather it depends on all of these factors which makes them post reviews online, or use word-of-mouth process to let others know why they liked or disliked a restaurant, and over time this immensely affects how a restaurant will progress through this highly competitive industry [26] (Shovon, 2020). Now a days people all over the world are suffering from covid-19; the coronavirus has been spreading all over the world as well Bangladesh too which shut down every school, college, office as a restaurant too. Since the pandemic of covid-19, in March 2020 the restaurant industry in Bangladesh got hit very badly as a customer refused to eat outside and more than 7000 restaurants are

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there in Dhaka [15] (Kibria, 2020). This coronavirus stops the operations of more than hundreds of restaurants permanently as the owners are not able to cover the operational costs which result from a decreasing revenue. Islam (2021) [13] says, besides that, many more restaurant owners are now planning for closing their business because of low customer turn-out and this has impacts on the growing economy of Bangladesh. Many are lost their job; many have to quit their business which has become harmful not only for an entrepreneur but also the GDP of a country and the economic breakdown all over the country [17] (Liaquat, 2021).

From the findings of the study, it comes to know that the customers are highly satisfied with the restaurant service and towards the industry also. Even they can easily identify their satisfaction on food quality and service quality and also the restaurant decoration and their employee's responses. On these viewpoints, the customer can easily segment their preferable restaurant and wishes to go to them frequently to enjoy some free time or for some specific purposes. These frequently going helps to understand that there is a positive relationship between the service quality provided by the restaurant and how the service satisfied the customer. Moreover, these customers are like to go to their favorite restaurant regularly as it contains customer taste, trust, and satisfaction.

In this study, the main objective is given specifically in the introduction part and, in the literature review, the brief description of the study is given where the key element like service quality, and customer satisfaction during these days is describing briefly. Even for a better understanding, a conceptual framework is also given where a visual presentation of this study will get. In the fourth section which is the methodology part, where the research population, the sample size, the research instruments, and the hypothesis of this research are discussed. In the fifth part, the analysis and the results of this research are discussing where the reliability test, demographic analysis, correlation, and regression will be performed. After that, the findings, recommendations, and the conclusion of this study are discussed individually.

The prime objective of the study is to explore customer satisfaction towards the restaurant industry service in Bangladesh. The other supportive objectives are to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and to explore the correlation between customer satisfaction and food quality in the restaurant. Additionally, to formulate some recommendations for the restaurant industry in Bangladesh focusing on some selected factors, i.e. delivery system, employee response, and decoration of the restaurant.

Literature Review: Nguyen *et al.*, (2018) [18] explores that tangibles, responsiveness, and assurance, followed by reliability and empathy, are the most critical factors in generating consumer satisfaction in the UK fast food market. They conclude that in the context of the UK fast food market, the tangibles component is the most essential factor boosting customer happiness. Customer satisfaction is determined by the dining experience, accessibility, convenience, and pricing, as well as a product test [25] (Shinde *et al.*, 2018). There is a strong link between service quality, physical surroundings, and price perception, and the likelihood of returning [19, 24] (Polas *et al.*, 2020; Shamsudin *et al.*, 2020). They [19, 24] also states that customer happiness is a mediating factor between the physical environment and pricing perception, as well as the likelihood of a customer returning. Chahal & Kamil (2018) [5] remarks that customer satisfaction and consumer attitude are influenced by factors such as service quality, meal quality, and atmosphere. Cristo *et al.*, (2017) [6] concludes that Customer happiness is influenced by price, service quality, and the physical environment all at the same time. Customer satisfaction is influenced in part by service quality and the physical environment, but the price variable does not affect customer satisfaction.

For measuring service quality, SERVQUAL is the way of it which is categorized by tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [4] (Barber *et al.*, 2011). Kaura & Durga (2015) [14] also said that SERVQUAL is the best and easiest way to measure customer satisfaction and service quality. The categorization of SERVQUAL refers that tangibility means the physical appearance of a restaurant; reliability means the service quality on the basic demand of customers. Responsiveness means the employee's responses toward the customer demands; assurance means maintain employees' service and courtesy towards the customer and lastly, empathy means the concern or extra care towards the customer. Service quality is a multidimensional concept that can be

categorized into three categories; they are, customer expectation, process quality, and output quality [4] (Barber *et al.*, 2011).

H₁: Service Quality has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction: Hanaysha [10] (2016) explores that identifying the factors of customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry is very important for a restaurant. According to the author's data, food quality has a considerable beneficial effect on consumer satisfaction. Numerous studies [1, 3, 10, 22] also show that the food quality of a restaurant has an immense impact on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry (Abdullah *et al.*, 2018; Rozekhi *et al.*, 2016; Hanaysha, 2016; Al-Tit, 2015). The freshness and diversity of dishes are some of the most essential factors that determine customer satisfaction in upscale restaurants, and they are crucial for restaurateurs [22] (Rozekhi *et al.*, 2016). Another study [9] x-rays that for good restaurants, customer service and food are equally important (Ha & Jang, 2010). They also mentioned that strong employee support can help boost satisfaction levels.

H₂: Food Quality has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction: Cleanliness is the basic service quality of a restaurant, every customer desire to have food in a clean and in wonderful environment which will not create any suffocation. Moreover, this clean quality can bring more customers to the restaurant also [20] (Qin, 2009). The process quality will build the connection between the customers and the restaurant. How the restaurant offers various types of food, how frequently they contract with the customer, how well they quickly respond to any problems. Well-behaved workers and responsive administration can increase the customers' impression of service quality [7] (Gagic *et al.*, 2013). Output quality can be described as how the restaurant can fulfill the customer's demand, how well they served foods, and how deliberately they treat the customer [27] (Sumaedi and Yarmen, 2015). Services quality is the outcome of the customer expectation, it aims to increase customer satisfaction and as well as the loyalty of a customer so that the significance of service quality is essential for a restaurant.

H₃: Restaurant's Decoration & Environment has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction: Several studies have been done on restaurant industry services all over the world. There are very few studies have been done on the restaurant industry in Bangladesh. Moreover, most of the studies show the relationship between customer satisfaction, food quality, and service quality. Therefore, some other issues need to be addressed regarding the restaurant industry, i.e. (i) Employee response of the restaurant and, (ii) Delivery system of the restaurant. This study also addresses these two-issue in this paper.

H₄: Employee Response has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction

H₅: The delivery system has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction: The main aim of opening a restaurant is to seek the attention of a customer and increasing the satisfaction of a customer. Customer satisfaction is depending on two broad concepts, one is customer expectation and another is service quality (Gupta *et al.*, 2007) [8]. Customer satisfaction is always the reaction or the attitude to the provided service from a restaurant. It also can be said [12] that customer satisfaction is the combination of the customer demand, desire, need, or goal from a restaurant (Hwang and Zhao, 2010). Customer satisfaction is described as the feelings of pleasure of a customer and the combination of customer expectation and service performance and food quality is ensuring satisfaction also [23] (Saad Andaleeb and Conway, 2006). Another study [24, 25] finds that there is a positive and significant relation lies between customer satisfaction and loyalty of customers' towards the restaurant business (Shamsudin *et al.*, 2020; Shinde *et al.*, 2018).

H₆: Customers are satisfied with the services of the restaurant industry in Bangladesh.

Conceptual Framework: For a restaurant business's sustainability, customer satisfaction is a must. Customers are the key factors of a restaurant. The satisfaction of the customers depends on some key factors, i.e. Decoration of the restaurant, Food quality, Service quality, Employee's response, and the overall environment of the restaurant. When a customer is satisfied with the services of a restaurant, the customer then becomes loyal to the restaurant. The more satisfied and loyal customers a restaurant has, the more sustainable and profitable it will be. Therefore, to satisfy customers, the restaurants should improve their service quality, food quality as well as restaurants' overall

environment. Customer retention and customer loyalty will allow repurchasing from the same restaurant and increase sales (Razavi *et al.*, 2012) [21].

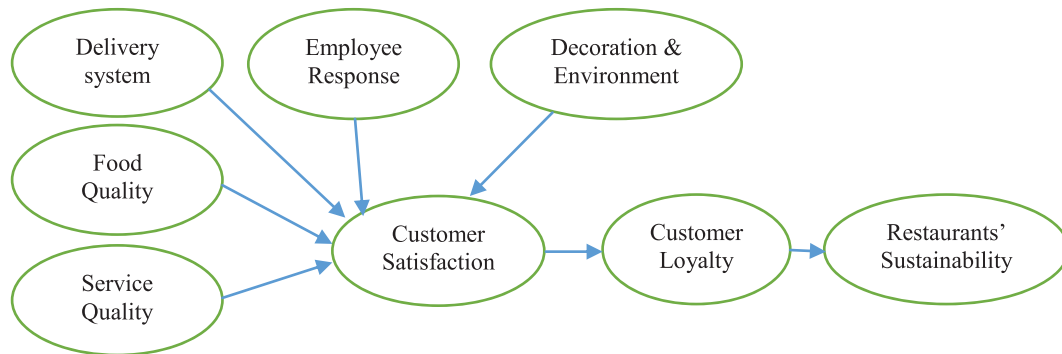


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework.

Methodology of the Study

Research Population: At present, the people of Bangladesh are very interested to take their lunch or dinner in a restaurant. Most of the people of urban areas go to a restaurant frequently. The number of restaurants is more in urban areas rather than rural areas in Bangladesh. All the customers of all the restaurants in Bangladesh are the population of this study.

Sample of the Study: The Covid-19 pandemic hit Bangladesh on 8th March 2020, and it continues to till now. Therefore, it was difficult to collect the data from the rural areas in Bangladesh. A convenient sampling method is used to collect the data. Most of the data are collected from the main cities in Bangladesh like Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, and Mymensingh by using the internet and social media platform through a structured questionnaire. A total of 402 responses were collected. Some of the responses were incomplete and finally, a total of 372 responses are count for the study.

Research Instrument: The SERVEQUAL method is used to design the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three categories, these are i. Demographic part, ii. Food quality, services, and assurance part, and iii. Customer satisfaction part. A 5-point Likert scale has been used to collect the responses (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree). The responses are collected with the help of google forms. The questionnaire has been sent to the customer of different restaurants in different parts of the country through some social media platforms, i.e. Facebook, Messenger, Linked In, and E-mail. Total 372 responses are count among 402 responses. The data were analyzed through a statistical package for social science, version 25. Reliability Tests, Demographic analysis, correlation, and linear regression have been performed to find out the results. In this study, Tangibility stands for decoration, Reliability stands for food quality, Responsiveness stands for service quality, Assurance stands for employee response, and Empathy stands for delivery of the food items.

Variable of the study: In this study, customer satisfaction is considered to be the dependent variable as customers satisfaction depends on some other underlying variable. The independent variable includes service quality, food quality, decoration and environment, employee response, and the delivery system. Decoration and environment means how the restaurant decorated its surroundings and how they maintain a healthy environment. Food quality refers to the quality and standard of the food. Service quality stands for the overall services that a restaurant gives to its customers. Employee responses refer to the responses, attitudes, and behaviors of the employees of a restaurant. The delivery system focuses on the entire delivery system of a restaurant.

Results and Discussion

Reliability Test

Table 1: Reliability Test.

| Reliability Test | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------|
| Construct | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Result |
| Decoration & Environment | 4 | 0.926 | Good |
| Food Quality | 4 | 0.931 | Good |
| Service Quality | 4 | 0.925 | Good |
| Employee Response | 4 | 0.937 | Good |
| Delivery | 4 | 0.936 | Good |

For measuring the internal unit of the related item in a group, Cronbach's Alpha is much important. From table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha is presenting. For succeeding parts, the Cronbach's Alpha result is satisfactory and reliable. In this result the value of reliability which is below 0.60 considered as poor; the value 0.70 is considered as standard and the value 0.80 is considered as good. So, from the following table, it is possible to say that the result of Cronbach's Alpha for Decoration and Environment, food quality, service quality, employee response, and delivery system is good.

Demographic Analysis of Restaurant's Customers

Table 2: Demographic Analysis of Restaurant's Customers.

| Demographic analysis of Customers | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 222 | 59.68% |
| | Female | 150 | 40.32% |
| | Total | 372 | 100.00% |
| Age | Under 18 | 11 | 2.96% |
| | 18-30 | 354 | 95.16% |
| | 30-40 | 2 | 0.54% |
| | 40-50 | 0 | 0.00% |
| | above 50 | 5 | 1.34% |
| | Total | 372 | 100.00% |
| Education | SSC | 4 | 1.08% |
| | HSC | 129 | 34.68% |
| | Graduate | 193 | 51.88% |
| | Post-Graduate | 23 | 6.18% |
| | M.Phil./ Ph.D. | 7 | 1.88% |
| | other | 16 | 4.30% |
| Income | Total | 372 | 100.00% |
| | Below 20,000 | 205 | 55.11% |
| | 21,000-30,000 | 89 | 23.92% |
| | 31,000-40,000 | 36 | 9.68% |
| | 41,000-50,000 | 27 | 7.26% |
| | Above 50,000 | 15 | 4.03% |
| Restaurant Visit | Total | 372 | 100.00% |
| | Once a week | 100 | 26.88% |
| | Twice a week | 53 | 14.25% |
| | Regularly | 46 | 12.37% |
| | Occasionally | 98 | 26.34% |
| | Monthly | 75 | 20.16% |

Demographic analysis of the customer of the restaurant is presented based on their gender, age, education, income, and several visiting the restaurant. In this survey, it finds that 222 males and 150 females took part in the survey and from the respondent's maximum were found between the age of 18-30 which is almost 95.16% which gives the idea that the young generation is many interested in having food from the restaurant which is a positive market for this

industry. It is also found that the maximum respondent which is 51.88% is marked as a graduate so that its second-highest, 34.68% is indicated as the higher secondary level student. And the number of SSC, HSC, Graduates, Post-Graduates, Ph.D., and others are respectively 4, 129, 293, 23, 7, and 16 among 372 respondents. Respondents who are under the age of below 18 are using the income level from their pocket money that has been given by their parents. Most of the respondents are mixed in income which is salaried and self-employed and their income level is between 10000-20000 which is 55.11% among different levels of salaries. As all the customers are educated so it is considered as an opportunity for the restaurant that they can launch diversified food for its customer with some digitalized activities in the restaurant.

Index scores of different dimensions of restaurant services in Bangladesh

Table 3: Index scores of different dimensions of restaurant services in Bangladesh.

| Dimension | Measurement Indicators | Index value | Average Value |
|---|--|-------------|---------------|
| Tangibility (Decoration and Environment) | The restaurant was well organized | 2.06 | 1.98 |
| | The restaurant had an healthy environment | 1.90 | |
| | Tables and chairs were neat and clean | 1.87 | |
| | The server was dressed appropriately and neat & clean in appearance | 2.09 | |
| Reliability (Food Quality) | The restaurant serves the food on time | 2.08 | 2.06 |
| | Meal items were served correctly as ordered. | 1.95 | |
| | The availability of condiments, napkins, and utensils was sufficient. | 2.14 | |
| | Server responded promptly | 2.08 | |
| Responsiveness (Service Quality) | The server was very helpful | 2.09 | 2.21 |
| | Service was courteous and professional | 2.12 | |
| | The restaurant provides quick service. | 2.22 | |
| | The restaurant gives extra effort to handle your special requests | 2.43 | |
| Assurance (Employee Response) | The server was knowledgeable about the menu item | 2.05 | 2.06 |
| | The server checked to see if anything else was needed | 2.14 | |
| | Employees should always be ready to help. | 2.10 | |
| | Staff should be polite. | 1.94 | |
| Empathy (Delivery system) | Employees take care of customer demand and talk to the customer about the way of food delivery | 2.02 | 2.11 |
| | They deliver exactly what customers demand | 2.21 | |
| | They are much concern about food delivery & packaging | 2.02 | |
| | The delivery system is so smooth and in time. | 2.20 | |

A different dimension which is based on the SERVQUAL model of restaurant service in Bangladesh is presented in table 3. Structure questionnaire on a scale of 1.00 to 5.00 means the five-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses. The findings of the survey show that all are on the positive side but tangibility, reliabilities, assurance scores are lower than the rest of the two dimensions named responsiveness and empathy which indicated that customers are desiring well-decorated restaurant and maintaining the cleanliness and reliability indicated that the customer wants that the restaurant should concern about the service time duration to order and the staff should need to be polite to its customer by knowing details about the menu which is considered as assurance and these are the demand from the customer.

Now at the responsiveness side of restaurant service, the customer is more preferring for professionalism and they want that the server should be helpful and professional and the restaurant must serve their food quickly by maintaining special requests from the customer. This study also finds that the customer prefers that the employees will take care of their demand and concern about the food delivery or packaging by continuous improvement process. As maximum respondents are educated and prefer the digitalization element; they will love to get a website of their preferable restaurant and also, they prefer to get the delivery service from the restaurant which helps to have food without going to the restaurant.

Correlations

Table 4: Correlations between customary satisfies limit by decoration of restaurant.

| Correlations | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| | | (Decoration & Environment) | Food Quality | Service Quality | Employee Response | Delivery | Satisfaction |
| (Decoration & Environment) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.919** | 0.863** | 0.864** | 0.821** | 0.703** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Food Quality | Pearson Correlation | 0.919** | 1 | 0.894** | 0.885** | 0.848** | 0.703** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Service Quality | Pearson Correlation | 0.863** | 0.894** | 1 | 0.900** | 0.839** | 0.677** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Employee Response | Pearson Correlation | 0.864** | 0.885** | 0.900** | 1 | 0.861** | 0.702** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 |
| Delivery | Pearson Correlation | 0.821** | 0.848** | 0.839** | 0.861** | 1 | 0.788** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |
| Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | 0.703** | 0.703** | 0.677** | 0.702** | 0.788** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A significant positive correlation finds from the study which gives the idea of customer satisfaction towards the decoration, clean and hygiene environment of the restaurant, the service performance, and benefits from the management and availability of diversified food. Customer satisfaction is positively correlated with tangibility and empathy at a 99% confidence level. From the correlation table, it is possible to say that when customers are satisfied with the well decorated and hygiene-maintained environment, better service performance in food serving, nature and behavior of the staff than they get more attached to visiting the place more and more which also helps to get more potential customer through this process. Even this will increase the sales of this industry too.

Regression Analysis

Table 5: Regression Analysis.

| Regression Analysis | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. The error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | 0.791 ^a | 0.626 | 0.620 | 0.69018 | 0.626 | 115.293 | 5 | 345 | 0.000 |

This regression analysis model reveals that 62% of the dependent variable is satisfaction can be explained by independent variables which include the necessity of better customer service and use of digitalization the responsive, assurance of the better service. The P-value of model 1 is 0.000 which is less than 5%; that indicates independent

variables like service quality, food quality, decoration & environment, employee response, and delivery system have a significant impact on the customer satisfaction of restaurant business with a 95% confidence level

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

| Objectives | Findings |
|--|--|
| To explore the customer satisfaction towards the restaurant industry service in Bangladesh. | The P-value of linear regression is 0.00 defining that customers are satisfied with restaurant industry service in Bangladesh. |
| To find out the key drivers of customer satisfaction. | The key drivers of customer satisfaction are food quality, service quality, decoration, and employees' response. |
| To examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. | There is a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. |
| To explore the correlation between customer satisfaction and food quality in the restaurant. | Customer satisfaction is strongly positively correlated with the food quality of the restaurant. |

Recommendations

- a) The restaurant should strongly maintain their food quality.
- b) Restaurants should maintain personal and environmental hygiene and cleanliness.
- c) The introduction of a strong mobile food delivery application will be appreciated.
- d) Restaurants should be well decorated and nicely organized.
- e) The employees of the restaurants should be trained up.
- f) They should deliver the food in time and provide the food exactly what customers want.
- g) The restaurant's authority should always priorities the demand and satisfaction of the customers.
- h) A regulatory authority should be developed for the proper maintenances of the restaurants.

Conclusion: Now a day's the covid-19 pandemic has become a crucial issue and it changed a person's daily activities. People cannot go outside because of this virus. As every sector of the economy, the restaurant industry has stopped too. People cannot go to have food or cannot spend time together because of this virus. Dine-in services have to stop and only take away service is available but this is decreasing also because of the hygiene concern. As the customer satisfaction much depends on the decoration of a restaurant, hygiene, and healthy environment and also, they prefer that the employees will be responsive and lastly best food and service quality but these are not appreciable because the pandemic made it to do. So that the restaurant can take different strategy which is the authenticity and maintaining fare safety for cooking food. The cook will wear musk and gloves while cooking food. And the remarkable development of digitalization in the food industry is food delivery service. Every restaurant's order should be computerized and they should deliver the food by their delivery system; it will be more effective if the restaurant can provide the safety wipe which will help to clean the delivery packages and the restaurant should ensure the safety and also should inform their customer that they use proper safety while making the food; so that it will increase the customer satisfaction as well as the customer loyalty which will help to increase the growth of the restaurant industry and restaurant sustainability. The result of this study can help managers, business persons, and policymakers to develop and enrich the health of the restaurant business in Bangladesh by ensuring customer satisfaction.

The major limitation of this study is that it has been performed based on data that have been collected from the respondents with the help of the internet, social media, and email because of a covid-19 pandemic. The lower

sample size is the second limitation of the study. Future research can be done by involving more respondents, and also by using more factors both internal and external so that the result can be more accurate.

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