



Marketing Strategies and Its Effect on Customer Patronage of Restaurants

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Abstract

Consumer behaviour and customer patronage are significantly influenced by marketing strategies in the restaurant industry. This study compares traditional and digital marketing strategies to see how they effect consumer participation, loyalty, and purchasing decisions. This study demonstrates that products, pricing, venues, and promotions—the marketing mix—are very effective in boosting customer satisfaction. It also explores the expanding scope of the influence of social media marketing, creative promotional strategies, and personalised engagement. Results indicate that organisations using adaptive and customer-centric strategies exhibit higher levels of brand loyalty and consumer retention. The study suggests fusing digital and traditional marketing methods to reach more consumer. The restaurant industry is highly competitive, so it's essential for businesses to continually adjust their marketing approaches to align with the evolving preferences of customers. This report provides valuable insights for marketers aiming to boost customer engagement and foster long-term loyalty.

Keyword: Marketing strategies, customer patronage, consumer behavior, social media marketing, restaurant industry.

INTRODUCTION

In the very competitive restaurant industry, restaurant marketing has emerged as a crucial component of success. These days, it takes more than just good cuisine to bring in customers; restaurants also need to be well-marketed to attract their ideal customers. (Weinreich, 2016)

In today's competitive restaurant industry, where marketing strategies are crucial, attracting and retaining consumers is crucial. Effective marketing influences customer preferences and loyalty in addition to increasing brand awareness. Restaurants use a variety of traditional and cutting-edge techniques to carve out a distinct niche for themselves and dominate their sector. (Chen, 2016)

Traditional Marketing Approaches

Promoting restaurants has traditionally relied on print media, outdoor billboards, and the personal touch of word of mouth. This method continues to be embraced by numerous businesses, particularly in areas where digital access is restricted (Axala, 2020). A common approach to connect with potential clients includes utilising flyers, placing advertisements in newspapers, and engaging in local sponsorships. Ads on TV and the radio can be effective, especially for well-established restaurant chains with a proven track record.

Digital Marketing and Social Media Influence

Online marketing has grown in importance for restaurants as people increasingly rely on digital platforms. To connect with customers, showcase menu items, and promote offers, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are crucial (Pankaj Rampal, 2018). Restaurants employ captivating visual elements, like vivid photographs and engaging films, to attract customers.

Google Ads and Facebook Ads are two instances of targeted advertising systems that allow businesses to reach certain demographics based on their online activity, location, and preferences.

Pricing Strategies

Competition substantially influences the decision-making process of a customer. Restaurants frequently use pricing strategies that are partially determined by customer categories, perceived value, and meal quantities (Barber et al., 2011). For instance, they may establish their rates at 199 rupees rather than 200 rupees to create the illusion of affordability. Some restaurants want to be considered upscale by using premium pricing tactics. Additional tools for revenue optimisation include dynamic pricing models, combination offers, and seasonal pricing.

Promotional and Loyalty Programs

One goal of loyalty programs and promotional efforts is to increase customer retention. Restaurants often run sales, sometimes for a short period, and sometimes as an incentive, like "buy one, get one free" promotions (King, 2018). Customers are more likely to stick around for the long haul when they can earn points or awards for their loyalty. Membership discounts and special incentives for repeat clients might help increase client retention. (Pal & Aradhya, 2020)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The key to thriving in the restaurant business for the long haul lies in building strong relationships with customers. CRM systems are helpful for customising services for each individual customer since they keep track of data like as comments, preferences, and purchase history. Customer information about exclusive events, new menu items, and special bargains is sent via email and SMS marketing campaigns (Jain, 2022). When tailored recommendations are provided based on prior purchases, customer happiness increases and they are more inclined to return.

Bringing together various types of advertising helps restaurants to shape their identities, connect more deeply with their patrons, and grow their enterprises. Drawing in and keeping clients in a constantly evolving market demands a thoughtful strategy that blends traditional methods with fresh ideas.

Customer Patronage

To remain in business and thrive, customer patronage is essential for every restaurant. Customer trust, contentment, and loyalty are reflected in it. High patronage has a beneficial influence on revenue, brand reputation, and business growth. Several variables influence customer patronage, including food quality, service experience, pricing, and marketing effectiveness (Manhas et al., 2024). Customers are more inclined to return and recommend restaurants that consistently go above and beyond what is required of them.

Prioritising customer engagement and satisfaction is essential for firms in today's competitive market to retain patronage. A customer-centric strategy, customised services, and loyalty programs significantly contribute to retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. Customer reviews shared on platforms like Google and social media can significantly sway the dining choices of others, thanks to the evolution of digital transformation (Croitoru et al., 2024). To ensure stability and profitability, companies depend on impactful marketing strategies combined with outstanding service quality. This blend offers customers a strong motivation to come back.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Customer Patronage in Restaurants

Factor	Impact on Customer Patronage
Food Quality	Ensures satisfaction and encourages repeat visits.
Service Experience	Enhances customer trust and loyalty through attentive hospitality.
Pricing and Affordability	Influences decision-making, especially in competitive markets.
Marketing and Branding	Creates awareness and attracts new customers.
Loyalty Programs	Encourages repeat visits through rewards and incentives.
Online Reviews & Word-of-Mouth	Shapes public perception and influences potential customers.
Ambiance and Atmosphere	Affects overall dining experience and customer satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

(Cheserem, 2016) According to the research, marketing channels should aim to do more than just meet consumer demand for products; they should also work to increase demand via the dissemination of information, the development of physical closeness, and customer-generated promotion. A further conclusion drawn from the research is that company managers have the challenge of drawing in,

satisfying, and keeping consumers. It was determined in this instance that companies need to consider customer retention and acquisition strategies to increase their revenue.

(Amadi, 2020) In the global food and beverage business, marketing strategy is the primary factor influencing customer loyalty and satisfaction. Researchers in this research set out to answer the question, "How does the marketing mix of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nairobi, Kenya affect customer loyalty and satisfaction?" by looking at the restaurants' food and drink offerings. A total of 250 consumers were surveyed utilising questionnaires to gather data. A combination of the Sobel test and path analysis was used to analyse the data. Customer satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors; however, product, promotion, location, and price account for about 67.8% of this factor. The research was based on cognitive dissonance theory. The influence of marketing mix methods on customer loyalty and satisfaction in Nairobi's food and beverage restaurants was thoroughly examined using a descriptive survey approach. The results show that customer loyalty and happiness were favourably impacted by the product, promotion, location, and pricing. According to the research, location is a crucial component of the marketing mix as it not only satisfies need but also has the potential to stimulate demand.

(Okolo, 2017) Consumer patronage at Mr. Bigg's and other restaurants in Enugu was the primary focus of this research. The study set out to learn a few things: first, how much of an impact relationship marketing has on Mr. Bigg's patronage; second, how much of an impact overall consumer perception has on Mr. Bigg's patronage; third, how much of an impact consumer loyalty strategies have on Mr. Bigg's patronage; and finally, whether the choice of restaurants has any significant impact on Mr. Bigg's patronage. The study used a survey research approach. The population is unclear since the research population consisted of Mr. Bigg's in Enugu consumer. Based on Topman's calculation, we were able to establish that 340 people would make up an adequate sample. Specialists in the field of business and management sciences reviewed the questionnaire to ensure its validity, looking for signs of subject matter relevance, study objectives, content area coverage, language appropriateness, and clarity of purpose, among other criteria. Based on the results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, the value is 0.90. To put the hypotheses to the test, a chi-square statistical method was used. Major conclusions from the test of hypotheses are as follows: The following factors significantly impact consumer patronage of Mr. Bigg's:

individual determinants and social factors; consumer choice; relationship marketing practices; consumer perception; and subsequently, consumers' loyalty strategies.

(Gupta, 2022) The research demonstrated how social media marketing has a revolutionary effect on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty. Consumers are increasingly using social media for product discovery, research, and purchase, according to the statistics, which shows that social media marketing has a substantial impact on buying choices. The significance of captivating images and videos in social media campaigns is highlighted by the fact that visual material emerges as a crucial component in catching audience attention and boosting interaction. Also, to boost brand awareness and conversion rates, targeted social media ads are essential for reaching certain demographics with relevant, personalised messages and offers. Brands use a variety of engagement formats and techniques to create genuine relationships with consumers, increase brand loyalty, and encourage involvement on social media. But customers still have valid worries about data security and privacy, so firms should make sure their social media marketing is transparent, ethical, and compliant with regulations.

(Ceken, 2023) Researchers found that restaurants shifted their focus to digital and social media marketing during the COVID-19 epidemic. For low-cost customer interaction and communication, most participants turned to social media. successfully also offered online delivery options to increase competition and customer flexibility, and successfully blended conventional and digital marketing to retain customers. Loyal customers kept dropping by every once in a while despite the reduced frequency of visits caused by limitations and sickness, which was crucial to preserving customer flow throughout the epidemic. Keeping up with changing trends and technology requires restaurants to put an emphasis on customer retention and come up with innovative methods to engage with their consumers. Respondents 1, 3, and 5 all said that the restaurants continued to get considerate customers despite the epidemic. In order to reach a wider audience and get back on their feet faster, respondents 3 and 4 took to social media and newspapers with advertising. Integrating online delivery services, social media marketing, and customer retention strategies sped up the recovery process for four out of six responders. Restaurants that advertise via both online and offline means have a better chance of reaching their target demographic and recovering quickly.

(Setia & Makwana, 2023) The ongoing expansion of online meal delivery giants Zomato and Swiggy is proof that their marketing campaigns are producing the desired results. These days, it's no wonder that individuals would rather use their mobile devices to place food orders than use any other method, considering how simple and convenient it is. To keep their dominant position in the market and assure their ongoing success, these corporations will have to generate new ideas. Customers may make more educated purchases when they are well-informed about the services' value, advantages, and quality, which is why customer education is fundamental. Therefore, the aim of this work is to investigate consumer opinions of Zomato, Swiggy, and their advertising campaigns.

(R & B, 2023) Zomato and Swiggy are two well-known Indian meal delivery apps, and this research set out to compare and contrast their marketing approaches. The study looked at several facets of their marketing approaches, such as loyalty programs, customer engagement efforts, social media campaigns, and discounts and deals. Customers and professionals in the field were surveyed using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Based on the data, it seems like these applications have done a great job of getting people to download and utilise them. Zomato and Swiggy were both identified as having a good brand image and user trust, which has contributed to their quick company growth, according to the report. Zomato and Swiggy were both identified as having effective use of referral programs, social media, and email marketing to attract new clients and hold on to current ones, according to the report. User engagement and revenues have both been boosted by their tailored marketing strategies.

(Almotairi, 2021) The purpose of the study was to examine retailscape aspects in Riyadh stores and to determine the mediating effect of customers' moods on the relationship between retailscape elements and their level of happiness. After carefully reviewing the existing literature, the researcher selects the study variables. There were 289 people chosen at random from the community to participate in the study; they are all grocery shop customers in Riyadh. An analytical tool called SEM was used in conjunction with smart PLS. According to the findings, retailscape components may affect customer satisfaction and customer patronage. Furthermore, customer mood is shown to moderate the association between retailscape and customer delight.

(Oyenuga Michael Oyedele & Labiyi Opeyemi, 2024) An indigenous restaurant in Abuja, Nigeria, was the subject

of the study, which aimed to determine how different marketing mix methods affected customer patronage. The research design used was a cross-sectional descriptive study. Three hundred and fifty-three guests of an Abuja restaurant made up the sample size. Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 24). Regression analysis was used to evaluate the connection between the dependent and independent variables. At Amala Spot, Abuja, the regression model found that physical amenities also had a substantial effect on customer patronage, whereas price had a positive but insignificant effect. Therefore, this research concluded and suggested that restaurant owners, particularly indigenous ones, should provide their consumers a rationale for the amount they pay. Providing clients with a physical environment of sufficient quality is one method of management.

(Opeyemi Oluwatoyosi Alao et al., 2020) In fast-food restaurants in Southwest Nigeria, the research looked at what influences customer repeat patronage. Questionnaires were sent as a means of collecting primary data. Using a combination of purposive and systematic random sample methods, 600 questionnaires were sent out to clients of chosen fast food restaurants. Participants in the interviews also included members of the restaurants' front-desk personnel. Descriptive statistical approaches were used to analyse the data that was obtained. Food quality, restaurant location, and ease of access, as well as a safe atmosphere, were shown to be the variables influencing consumers' recurrent patronage of fast-food restaurants in Southwest Nigeria. Owners of fast food restaurants should use these elements to their advantage, according to the report.

(Padam et al., 2024) With the use of social media, restaurants can rapidly sell their goods and services to a big audience, which is a huge improvement over traditional marketing efforts. Although restaurants have found social media to be a great tool for setting themselves apart from the competition, they are still on the fence about how social media can help them gauge customer satisfaction or learn what they can do to better meet their needs. When it comes to advertising sales and promotions to current and potential customers via social media, the majority of restaurants have strong opinions. Most restaurants also claim they don't use paid marketing methods to promote their eatery on social media, therefore the results of utilising social media for paid purposes are varied. The marketing strategy of restaurants revolves on the menu, cuisine, service, and atmosphere. While each restaurant's market share varies everyday, on average, restaurants require 100-150 people to break even

and achieve their sales forecasts. Many restaurants rely on honest guest feedback to address customer complaints, while others empower their staff to do the same and respond to reviews and comments on social media as a means of managing productivity. Another strategy is to hire skilled staff, but training current employees is the top priority.

(Nwachukwu et al., 2022) The researchers in this study set out to answer the question, "How does gustative marketing strategy affect customer patronage of restaurant businesses in Port Harcourt?" by looking at the statistical data. This investigation made use of a quantitative approach to research by means of a cross-sectional survey. Our sample size was determined to be 384 using the Godden (2004)

infinite sampling technique. The target population consisted of all the customers of 369 registered restaurants in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, as listed in the Rivers State Yellow Page Directory. Since this population is infinite, we were able to draw from it. Out of the 384 questionnaires sent, 371 were deemed legitimate and used for the research. The questionnaires used in the study were double-checked by experts to ensure their accuracy, and their reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha Test. Results demonstrated a good correlation between gustative marketing strategy and two patronage metrics (customer referral and customer repeat buy). The research thus came to the conclusion that gustative marketing tactics had a major impact on customer patronage in restaurant enterprises in Port Harcourt.

Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Methodology	Key Findings
Cheserem (2016)	Role of marketing channels in customer attraction and retention.	Literature review and analysis.	Marketing goes beyond satisfying demand; it must also stimulate demand through information, proximity, and promotion. Businesses must focus on attracting and retaining customers for sales growth.
Amadi (2020)	Effect of marketing mix on customer loyalty and satisfaction in food and beverage SMEs in Nairobi.	Descriptive survey with 250 customer respondents; Sobel test and path analysis.	Product, promotion, place, and price contribute 67.8% to customer satisfaction. Place should not just meet demand but also encourage it.
Okolo (2017)	Impact of marketing strategies on consumer patronage in Enugu (Study of Mr. Bigg's).	Survey research with 340 respondents; Chi-square analysis.	Individual determinants, social factors, relationship marketing, consumer perception, and loyalty strategies significantly impact patronage.
Gupta (2022)	Social media marketing's impact on consumer behavior and brand engagement.	Data analysis of consumer behavior on social media platforms.	Social media significantly influences purchasing decisions, emphasizing visual content, targeted advertising, and customer engagement. Privacy concerns remain a challenge.
Ceken (2023)	Shift in marketing strategies of restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Mixed methods study, interviews with restaurant owners.	Restaurants used digital and social media marketing, combined traditional and digital approaches, and integrated online delivery to retain customers and recover.
Setia & Makwana (2023)	Marketing strategies of Zomato and Swiggy.	Consumer perception analysis.	Online food delivery growth is driven by digital convenience; companies must innovate to maintain market leadership.
R & B (2023)	Effectiveness of marketing strategies of Zomato and Swiggy.	Qualitative and quantitative study of customer engagement and brand image.	Social media, email marketing, referral programs, and targeted campaigns successfully drive customer engagement and sales.
Almotairi (2021)	Impact of retailscape components on customer mood and patronage.	SEM analysis using Smart PLS with 289 respondents.	Retailscape elements influence customer joy and patronage, with customer mood mediating the relationship.
Oyedele & Opeyemi (2024)	Effect of marketing mix strategies on customer patronage in an indigenous restaurant in Abuja.	Cross-sectional descriptive study with 353 respondents; SPSS regression analysis.	Price had a positive but insignificant effect; physical facilities significantly impacted customer patronage.
Alao et al. (2020)	Factors influencing repeat patronage in Nigerian fast-food restaurants.	Descriptive statistical analysis of 600 customer responses.	Food quality, location, accessibility, and a secure environment drive repeat patronage.
Padam et al. (2024)	Impact of social media on restaurant marketing strategies.	Mixed-methods study of restaurant strategies.	Social media assists in product differentiation but is not widely used for measuring service quality or offering discounts. Employee training and customer feedback resolution are prioritized.

Nwachukwu et al. (2022)	Effect of gustative marketing strategy on customer patronage in Port Harcourt restaurants.	Cross-sectional survey of 371 customers; statistical analysis.	Gustative marketing positively influences customer repeat purchases and referrals, leading to increased patronage.
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Conclusion

A clear pattern arises from the study on marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behaviour: tailored approaches tend to enhance customer involvement, satisfaction, and loyalty. Going beyond merely satisfying demand, marketing strategies actively shape consumer preferences through tailored promotions, enhanced accessibility, and strategic positioning, as indicated by research. Studies focussing on the food and beverage sector highlight the significance of the four Ps of marketing—product, price, location, and promotion—in nurturing consumer loyalty and satisfaction.

On top of that, social media has changed the way brands and consumers communicate, which in turn affects engagement and consumption. To keep customer connections and operations running during disruptive times like the COVID-19 epidemic, digital marketing tactics were crucial for companies. Online channels are becoming more important in contemporary marketing, highlighting the need to be adaptable. Additionally, aspects of the retailscape, service quality, and gustative marketing all contribute significantly to the overall customer experience and the likelihood of repeat patronage.

At last, effective marketing has evolved beyond a static concept; it now embraces a fluid journey that weaves together digital trends, consumer psychology, and thoughtful investment. Even with the increasing competition, those businesses that embrace fresh ideas, maintain a personal touch in customer interactions, and utilise a mix of digital and traditional channels will find success. To ensure brand sustainability, marketing needs to align with what consumers expect.

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