

# **The covid-19 impacts on consumer behaviour in restaurant industry**

## Abstract

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Title of the thesis <b>The covid-19 impact on consumer behaviour in restaurant industry</b>		
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Abstract <p>Because of the pandemic issue, consumer behavior has altered, and almost every business has had to concentrate on improving business performance. The primary goal of this study was to discover how customer behavior in tourism and hospitality changed during and after COVID19.</p> <p>With two elements that work in conjunction, theoretical and empirical parts provide comprehensive insights of how consumers behave and the reality of how restaurant owners apply necessary business strategies to improve customer satisfaction. The quantitative research approach was used as the primary method for the report, allowing participants to provide as many responses as possible regarding what people had been through and how they had altered to adjust to the new habits.</p> <p>The study confirmed how customer behavior has changed and how company activities have altered to adopt a new consumer habit as a result of the COVID-19. Due to safety and restriction, it would be difficult for any business to attract potential customers. In the "newer technological" existence, changes in consumer behavior have had a direct impact on how businesses manage their operations and the use of digital tools in the business operations.</p>		
Keywords Consumer behavior, customer satisfaction, restaurant industry, Covid-19.		

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# 1 Introduction

The industrialization and fast-growing of a digital era have been crucially changed economy into a new structure in recent decades. However, it is postponed and shifted into another structure because of corona disease (Covid-19) from 2019 until now. Covid-19 has negatively affected the world's economy particularly in tourism and hospitality industry. In this thesis, the aim is to analyse the impacts of Covid-19 to restaurant industry and how customers behave when Covid-19 comes. Because of Covid-19, consumers behave differently, and it partly affects how restaurant serves products and services to its customers.

The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is a virus that causes Covid-19 disease. The coronavirus is infected to people health by respiratory problems, and it is a trouble of breathing. In December 2019, Wuhan, China is the first area discovered the virus. Covid-19 is a hazardous disease because of high speech of virus spreading from person to person. Shelter-in-place orders are made in some countries that means people need to stay at home at much as possible. Social distancing and shelter-in-place orders help people stay safe, however there is a drawback of those order. Businesses are closed and the world's economy shut down.

It has been a long time that Covid-19 crisis has postponed purchases and customer consumption of services or products such as concerts, restaurants, bars and sports. Demand of consumption has changed from now until the future because of this result. Consumers cannot go to the supermarket or shopping center, therefore work comes home. The flow of work, health, education, purchasing and consumption are reversed. Home delivery is a trend. It enhances customer experiences such as convenience and personalization. It calls 'store comes home' (Sheth 2020, 7.)

The Covid-19 crisis has strongly affected to economy in general and restaurant activity in particular. Now with the pandemic, government and local authorities provide timely strategies to prevent and minimise the impacts of Covid-19. Besides, consuming buying behaviour has changed during the pandemic and food delivery has become popular more than ever as a part of restaurant services. This thesis aims to present the covid-19 pandemic impacts to restaurant industry and its emphasis on the change of consumer behaviours.

## 1.1 Research questions and the aims of the thesis

The main research question is represented the best meaning of the aim of the thesis which is as follow:

- How does customer buying behaviour change in restaurant during the Covid-19?

This research question is related to the thesis topic of "The Covid-19 impact on consumer behaviour in restaurant industry", through which is emphasis the changing of consumer behaviour and how restaurant actives to maximize customer satisfaction. The aim is established a solid structure of knowledge base, it is fundamental to review the concepts in academic papers.

Consumer behaviour and customer satisfaction are two main concepts that need to be synthesized in this thesis literature review part. Consumer behaviour is how customer behaves and customer satisfaction enables restaurants to create a relevant strategy for increasing customer experience and maintaining restaurant running via adjustments to the variables.

## 1.2 Delimitations

To understand the thesis topic and collect research data to complete the thesis logically, delimitation is used to circle the research area in detail objectives and key issues of the thesis. In the theoretical framework, the thesis is concentrated on studying consumer buying behaviour and factors influencing consumer behaviour. Besides, customer satisfaction will also mention to prove the changes of consumer behaviour and customer satisfaction are relevant.

The covid-19 affects to economy and postpone growing of almost all countries all over the world. However, in this thesis, the main focus is on Finland where currently implement timely decisions and necessary restrictions to minimize the impacts of covid-19 on restaurant enterprises. Therefore, Finland is chosen to make a limitation for the research topic and also narrow the research scope. Finally, the thesis mainly focuses on the changes of consumer behaviour in restaurant during the covid-19 and is recommended to readers and especially who are majoring in marketing understanding how customers behave and how restaurant can satisfy customers.

## 1.3 Research methods

Conducting the research area, answer questions and evaluate research data in this thesis, quantitative research method is selected as an essential method because quantitative research is a systematic investigation to gather research data. It is defined where variables are measured using a numerical system, these data are analyzed using a selection of statistical methods, and the links and correlations between the variables are reported (Library CityUniversity of Seattle 2022.). Following to Creswell (2014,12) the result aims answer and hypothesis research questions through experiments and surveys. An analysis of variables is used to control the analysed statistical data, providing research measures to test a theory. The quantitative research method is used to collect data and information from significant and existed customers. With an advantage of a quick data collection, the data is analysed and represented in numbers, the research results will reliable and draw a wide scope of data collection for thesis research.

Some of quantitative research methods maybe mentioned to collect data such as surveys, interviews, or observations etc. Among those methods, survey is selected to use as the main method to collect data of the thesis. Creswell describes 'a survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population' (Creswell, 2014, 13.).

Survey is a technique for acquiring data from a sample of respondents by asking pertinent questions with the goal of comprehending people in general (Qualtrics 2022.). Everybody who is involved in the industry, from corporations to the public to the government and academia, relies on surveys as a vital source of information and views. Surveys normally do with a structured questionnaire that each participant is asked to answer to the same list of questions. To conduct survey research, multiple questions are created to collect data and then analyse collected data to create numerical outcome. For quantitative research method, the author can easily investigate a huge amount of respondents' answer. The survey research will be conducted mainly online because of the convenience and fast spreading of social media platforms and Facebook and Instagram are the main tool to conduct the survey. In this thesis, to make an effective survey research, a list of certain questions is organised and then spread on several groups in Helsinki location. The questionnaire will be public in English version on as much groups as possible to collect huge amount of responds. The questions will help to identify consumer behaviour and customer satisfaction during covid-19.

#### 1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis has a total of seven chapters. The first chapter describes the Covid-19 situation in the globe, what it is, and how it affects people and the economy while describing the thesis's questions, research aims, methodology, and format. Basic concepts of consumer behavior, the buying process, and factors that affect consumer behavior are defined in Chapter 2. The discussion of customer satisfaction and its measurement is covered in the following chapter. The data and information will be gathered and analyzed in Chapter 4, and data analysis will make clear the full perspectives of both sides. The next chapter, chapter 5, offers restaurant owners some digital marketing advice on how to improve consumer experiences there and keep regulars coming back. The following chapter, chapter 6, presents the author's perspective on how to enhance customer service at a restaurant. After the Covid-19 is passed, some of the fresh concepts in this part can be used for both new and existing restaurants. Overall, chapter 7 provides a thorough summary of the entire thesis, including the findings of the theoretical and empirical studies, and finishes with a clear response to the thesis question.

## 2 Consumer behavior

### 2.1 Definition

Consumer behaviour is exceedingly complex since it is the outcome of interactions between individuals' distinctive characteristics and the parameters of the marketing mix proposed. These exchanges take place under specific time and place constraints. Consumer behavior is the way people choose and use your products and services (SurveyMonkey 2022.). Consumer decisions and actions are not random. Managers can attempt to predict how consumers will respond to commercial offerings by having a thorough understanding of the psychological process and how individuals are influenced. Consumer analysis should enable marketers to understand why, when, and how a person decides to try and then embrace an offer. Managers can then adjust the marketing strategy's levers to commercialize the offer as effectively and profitably as possible (Brunet et al. 2018, 187.).

It is a continual process that extends well beyond the mere purchasing act, particularly when a money transaction takes place between a consumer and a producer. Consumer research can only benefit business strategy if it encompasses the complete consumer decision - making process, which includes every decision, thought, and activities that occur before and after the purchase. For example, seasoned managers should aim to identify the information sources that have the greatest influence on their targeted consumers during the which was before stage. They must also ensure that the buying experience is enjoyable, effective, and stress-free, particularly through adjusting ambient and retailing elements in stores as well as the ergonomics of their e-commerce website. Managers must also grasp the factors that influence customer happiness after a purchase: a satisfied customer is more likely to repurchase and share positive word of mouth about the brand and its offerings (Brunet et al. 2018, 187.)

### 2.2 Consumer behaviour process

#### 2.2.1 Problem identification

Problem identification can also be referred to as need recognition. It happens when a customer identifies an unmet need that must be addressed. A need is a precise demand that you must meet in order to live and function normally. Physiological, personal, or socioeconomic needs can all be met. Food, shelter, transportation, riches, power, and social position are all examples of needs (Brunet et al. 2018, 194.).

There are two types of scenarios that can result in a need. The first is a negative alteration in an individual's state as a result of a broken, lost, or deteriorated object or minimum order quantity. In the second case, the ideal intended condition can be changed. For example, the news of the debut of the Apple iPhone 7, accompanied by a huge advertisement campaign, tried to make this edition a new desirable condition, which some buyers regarded as an opportunity for change even if their iPhone 6 still worked quite well (Brunet et al. 2018, 194.).

### 2.2.2 Information search

The development of a need initiates a phase of searching for information in a certain market sector. This data collection might take several different forms, which convert into various levers of activity for marketing professionals. The outcome of this search is then determined by the sources and the amount of information requested. Most people can remember known brands in a certain type of product without conducting any study (spontaneous awareness). This internal data search is frequently reinforced by query and analysis, in which people are paying attention to commercials, seek advice from trustworthy individuals or professionals, and, of course, use digital search engines such as Google and social networking sites (Brunet et al. 2018, 195.).

Brands have recognized search engines' dominant role of data discovery and are progressively honing the art of appearing at the top of results pages owing to search engine marketing. Sponsored content can also boost a website's exposure on search results pages by showing it as a link shortener. Another method for maintaining transparency is search engine optimization, which entails changing a website's code and architecture to achieve high ranking position on search rankings (Brunet et al. 2018, 195.).

### 2.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives

During the internally and externally information research stage, consumers can discover a number of possibilities, or companies, that they keep because they may accommodate their purposes. This is known as a choice set. This set is unlikely to encompass all of the products available on the market. The idea of a consideration phase, which is critical for marketing professionals, relates to the possibilities that consumers carefully examine when considering a purchase, out of all the choices that they are aware of. The consideration set alternatives are kept because they meet the consumer's initial purchasing criterion. A brand and product manager must understand why individuals in a segment of the market targeted by an advertising strategy may not provide the brand in their choice set (Brunet et al. 2018, 196.).

## 2.2.4 Decision and purchase

Individuals must choose from among the possibilities in their contemplation set after compiling them. In order to accomplish so, they pay close attention to decisive qualities. Some businesses may aim to add new features and make them a deciding factor for customers. To differentiate itself from competition, Coors Light, for example, uses hills that transition from white to blue on its cans to suggest ideal freshness. The model of compensatory and the model of non-compensatory are the two basic decision models used by consumers (Brunet et al. 2018, 197.).

- The model of compensation

Corrective decisions consider all determining qualities. As a result, the bad performance from one of the product's features may be offset by the good performance of another. Some consumers may feel that the stylish design of some sound headphones, which they may confidently wear in public rarely may compensates for the inferior audio quality (Brunet et al. 2018, 197.).

- The model of non-compensation

Non-compensatory decisions take into account only the predictor characteristics that consumers value the most. If the perceived performance of a product or service in these attributes does not match the minimum adequate standard, the consumer refuses the product or service, even if this poor performance is accounted for by the good performance of some other feature. For example, a tourist may skip all connections and keep just direct flights, even if they are considerably more expensive (Brunet et al. 2018, 197.).

Managers must take into account the reality that many people are involved in the decision-making process. A decision-making unit (DMU) is any person who takes part in the decision-making process of a buyer. Marketers must figure out who does what at each stage of the process in order to successfully impact the correct individual. The toy industry is an excellent example of this split of roles in the decision-making process. The child who will be utilizing the toy is frequently the one who initiates the purchase. However, the responsibilities of collecting information, evaluating choices, and making the purchase lay completely on the hands of the parents. Other members of the family may also interfere and have an impact on the purchasing process (Brunet et al. 2018, 199.).

The purchasing act may be acutely vulnerable to situational variables such as the consumer's feelings at the moment, stress related to the amount of time available to buy the thing, or if the buyer is shopping alone or with others. A store's physical environment is composed of a number of contextual factors over which marketing get some influence. Aside from the salesperson's skills and performance, their facial attractiveness and perceptions with the consumers may also be significant. According to research, simply having the same first surname or birth date as a salesman can boost intention of consumer toward that individual and

enhance the chance that they will adopt the suggestions of the salesman. Salesman, by providing advice and direction, also contribute at the crucial moment of the buying act by their verbal and nonverbal communication (Brunet et al. 2018, 199.).

### 2.2.5 Post – purchase evaluation

The experience of a consumer with a purchased product or service is the decisive moment: this is when they individually assess the effectiveness of the acquisition and decide how well it fits the demand that prompted the entire choice process. The consumer's happiness or dissatisfaction is an important part of the post-purchase phase. This assessment is not exclusively determined by the perceived performance of the goods or service (Brunet et al. 2018, 200.)

Customers who are happy because a good or brand surpasses the expectations are more likely to promote message positively, act as an advocate for the company or product, and genuinely suggest them (Brunet et al. 2018, 200.) The significance of post-purchase is crucial to comprehend how customers behave once a purchase is made. If a consumer is satisfied with the products, then are more likely to promote the brand to everyone else, which will increase brand and product awareness (Sage-Answers 2019.). Social media sites, without a doubt, broaden the reach of these activities to a huge and diverse core market. Essentially, buyers will be pleased only if the expectations are met over their standards. Dissatisfied clients, on the other hand, may not only decline to purchase the goods again, but may even do so to propagate their bad feelings by publishing bad feedback of the experiences on internet sites. These customer dialogues also highlight the necessity of not overlooking the postpurchase stage (Brunet et al. 2018, 200.).

## 2.3 Factors influence consumer behaviour

### 2.3.1 Internal influences

Consumer behaviour and decisions are influenced by fundamental psychology. For example, motivation impacts the amount of work that an individual is willing to expend when deciding. Consumer motivation is significant because it impacts the amount of work that customers are willing to devote to a behavior, decision-making, and information processing. Different forms of requirements might motivate customers. Several requirements might be sensed at the same time, and their relative importance in buyer motivation varies depending on the consumer category. Understanding and studying consumers' demands are essential precondition for product segmentation and placement (Brunet et al. 2018, 202.).

Furthermore, perceptual mechanisms show how description of the product and decode the marketing information they are exposed to. Perception is the process by which a consumer absorbs these many feelings and uses them to provide meaning to their surroundings. Marketers must employ marketing stimuli that exceed consumers' sensory thresholds in order for the message to be perceived. Consumers pay selective attention to marketing cues. Consumers are more likely to respond to marketing communications that address an immediate need (Brunet et al. 2018, 203.).

Consumers also remember and cognitively organize information and sentiments associated with marketing stimuli, which they then use to make choices. As previously discussed, mental connections with brands are the first sort of knowledge that influences the interpretation of stimuli provided by the brand. Inferences are based on beliefs that cause consumers to use an observable feature of a product (such as pricing) to derive an unobservable feature (its quality). Consumers intuitively categorize what they know about items, services, and brands based on object similarities (Brunet et al. 2018, 205.).

Finally, consumers develop positive or negative views toward businesses, the goods & services, and marketing messages. It has been observed that reason is not always the driving force behind decisions. Undoubtedly, emotions play a significant role in consumer psychology. Brands work hard to forge an emotional connection in order to increase their capital and establish a special relationship with the customer. Negative feelings can sometimes be a powerful tool for communication. For instance, advertisers may use guilt to persuade consumers to make charitable contributions. Marketing managers need to be aware of the emotions that might be connected to their brands and goods, as well as how to use those emotions to drive consumer relationships (Brunet et al. 2018, 207.).

Consumer motivation is significant because it dictates how much work customers are willing to put into a behaviour, decision-making, or information processing. The various forms of wants that might motivate customers fall into various groups. Furthermore, numerous requirements may be sensed at the same time, and their relative weight in buyer motivation differs by market category. Understanding and researching consumer demands are essential conditions for product segmentation and placement (Brunet et al. 2018, 202.).

### 2.3.2 External influences

Informational, normative, and comparative influences are the three basic categories of reference group impact that can be applied to consumers. Informational groups are useful resources for learning about goods, services, and brands; they therefore have a significant impact on the research stage that comes before a purchase (Brunet et al. 2018, 213.). The background of the respondents is then utilized as an informed resource in the various steps of the buyer's decision-making process. When a person or group member relies on the reference group's attitudes and beliefs as reliable sources, this form of influence occurs. This effect is due to two factors: the buyer's interests and those of the group members are comparable (MBA Knowledge Base 2021.).

The normative impact effected by reference groups is disseminated by the standards of action and consumption that they accept, in contrast to informational influence, which can be deliberately sought out by consumers. By leveraging on the normative influence, some very intriguing experiments have been conducted to promote more environmentally friendly consumer behavior (Brunet et al. 2018, 213.). Furthermore, when choosing businesses or products, an individual's values and conventions are shaped by the sample group (MBA Knowledge Base 2021.).

Using a comparison point to assess its own performance or behavior is known as comparative influence. Eventually, brands may create such a deep bond with their devoted customers that they take center stage in the reference group. This is referred to as a "brand community" (Brunet et al. 2018, 213.).

The level in which an individual is involved in the group will determine its ability to influence individuals; for instance, if an individual is dependent on the group, that are more likely to conform to it (MBA Knowledge Base 2021.). These communities are perceived to have a stronger social factor can affect than other groups because of their distinctive features.

### 2.3.3 Contextual or situational influences

In addition to internal factors and marketing mix factors, customers also base their decisions on their mood, the urgency they feel to make the purchase, the physical and social environment, and how they intend to use the good or service they have purchased. People's decisions regarding the same product can vary between purchases for a variety of reasons, including their moods and physiological states, which are rarely the same from one purchasing occasion to the next. Consumers have been shown to spend more or less time considering a purchase depending on their level of involvement, among other criteria. As a result, consumers can get knowledge about a location and its offerings by observing other customers. On the other hand, the physical shopping environment's design, smell, and warmth may affect customers' choices (Brunet et al. 2018, 218.).

### **3 Customer satisfaction**

#### **3.1 Identification**

It argues that it is impossible and extremely challenging to measure consumer happiness. In the end, you either like the service you get or you don't. If your wishes are fulfilled, you are satisfied; otherwise, you are really not. How would you assess the quality of the recent service or product? (Paul 2005, 4.).

According to Paul (2015, 5), consumers come across scenarios frequently that may influence how they feel about a certain good or service. Consumer perceptions of the company, its service, and its product can be altered by a flood of advertising messages, company identity, and social media. In view of previous interactions with the company or its product, as well as in relation to what they have heard or seen about other businesses or organizations, customers' perceptions of an organization's goods or services are known as customer satisfaction. It is emphasized that delighting customers rather than just satisfying them should be the company's goal (Kotler 2003, 42.). Leading businesses strive to go above and beyond for customers in order to make them happy.

While it's crucial to treat every customer with respect, this does not require that they all receive the same level of treatment. Although all consumers are valuable, a few are more valuable over others. In order to keep the better customers longer and to encourage other customers to move up, the better customers should be offered additional benefits (Kotler 2003, 39.). Kotler (2003, 37) declares customers must be seen by businesses as a resource that needs to be handled and maximized just like any other resource. In the hopes of acquiring customer market share and retention of customers through their product/service portfolio and branding initiatives, businesses will restructure their overall marketing system once they are aware of the importance of this asset.

#### **3.2 How to measure customer satisfaction?**

The business can quantify customer satisfaction with its products and services in a number of ways. There is one of methods that can be used to evaluate a customer's level of satisfaction. A crucial performance metric of customer happiness is the Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) (CFI 2022.). The CSAT measures consumer satisfaction with the company's products, services, and customer service personnel. Users are questioned about how satisfied they are with one or more aspects of the company. A percentage, ranging from 0 to 100%, is used to express the CSAT responses. Higher satisfaction is indicated by a higher percentage.

Customer Pleasure Score (CSAT) is a metric that reflects a customer's satisfaction with a company, a purchasing, or an experience, according to (HubSpot 2021.). One of the easiest ways to evaluate user happiness is to offer a plain question example, "How satisfied were you with your experience?" There is a comparable questionnaire score to respond to, which ranges from 1 to 3, 1 to 5, or 1 to 10.

Calculating a CSAT score is simple. The total of all affirmative responses is multiplied by 100 and divided by the number of answers gathered. Individuals are left with the overall satisfaction rate of customers at the company as a result. This shows that the vast majority of consumers are pleased with the product while also emphasizing that there is still much opportunity for enhancement. Although CSAT scores differ by industry, a decent score usually ranges from 75% to 85%. It's challenging to achieve a nearly perfect score because CSAT solely considers your promoter scores. A score of 75% indicates that three of the four consumers gave you a favorable evaluation as opposed to an unfavorable or neutral one (HubSpot 2021.)

## 4 Empirical research and data analysing

### 4.1 Data collection

A questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data for this thesis since it was practical to gather general thoughts on the subject. A questionnaire is a form of interview that includes a printed question list. Users can rapidly and simply obtain comprehensive information from a large number of people using this kind of data collection.

The online survey was made available on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) so that users may express their thoughts and experiences regarding how Covid-19 has affected their behavior. The questionnaire is open to anybody who lives in Finland and is not information-restricted. The participant's personal information is not requested, and their sharing of thoughts will be anonymously, in order to achieve the most impartial and accurate answer. The specialized application would be used to assess the response and provide the precise quantity and opinions of customers because the survey data will reach a significant number (more than 100 persons).

The survey was carried out using a list of questions designed to determine how the COVID-19 has changed consumer behavior. The survey received more responses than anticipated thanks to the Internet. The third week of November 2022 saw the creation of the survey. Social media pages including Welcome to Finland - Vietnamese in Finland and International student in Finland posted the survey. By the time the survey was finished, 114 responses had been submitted. The desired output for every firm would be achieved by paying attention to consumer wants and demands.

Since English is a language that both residents and foreigners are familiar with, the thesis questionnaire contains 5 English-language questions. 5 questions make up the survey, as was already indicated. These inquiries serve four key objectives. The author starts by examining the customer behavior during the COVID-19 period. In the second section, question about wants during the COVID-19 are used to illustrate consumer behavior. When the COVID-19 is over, question 4 is concerned about consumer preferences. The poll finally asks respondents if they believe that digital tools will be helpful in addressing their needs in the COVID-19.

### 4.2 Data analyse

According to the survey questionnaire, the outcomes are shown in Figures 1 through 5 as follows:

**Question 1. Have you used restaurant services during the covid-19?**

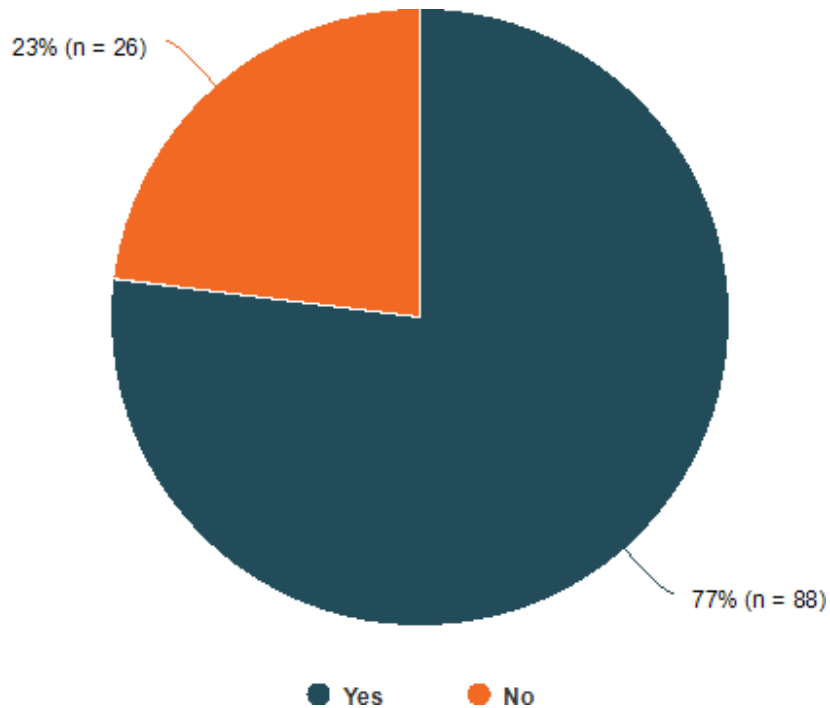


Figure 1. Question 1 in the survey.

In a survey of 114 individuals, 77% of respondents said they would use restaurant services during the covid-19, while 23% said they would not. People often stay at home and avoid in-person service because of the sensitive period of the COVID-19 restriction. As a result, there is a growing and constant need for online services.

**Question 2. If yes, what kind of restaurant services do you choose to use during the covid-19?**

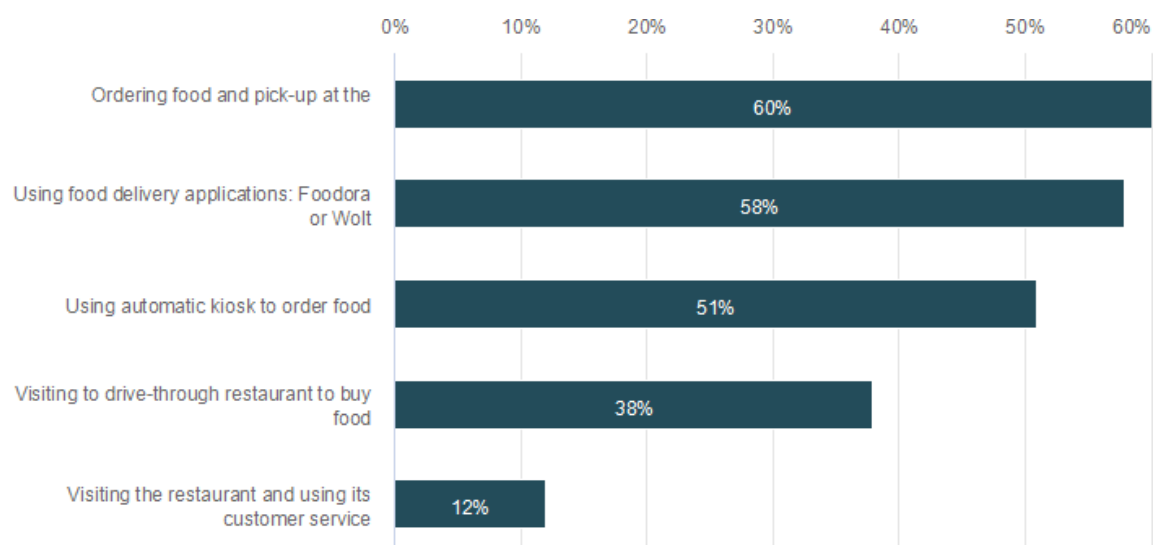


Figure 2. Question 2 in the survey.

The 89 respondents who indicated they would use an app to order food and pick it up at a restaurant tended to do so. The two options with the highest percentage of selections - more than 50% - choose to purchase food via an online application. That is present in 58% of delivery applications, and 60% of restaurant orders for pick-up in-person. Visiting the restaurant and using its service is only 12%. The chance to go to the restaurant and use its services during COVID-19 is essentially shrinking. Due to the restaurant's seat restrictions, the number of service requests has considerably decreased.

**Question 3. If no, how do you prepare for your meal?**

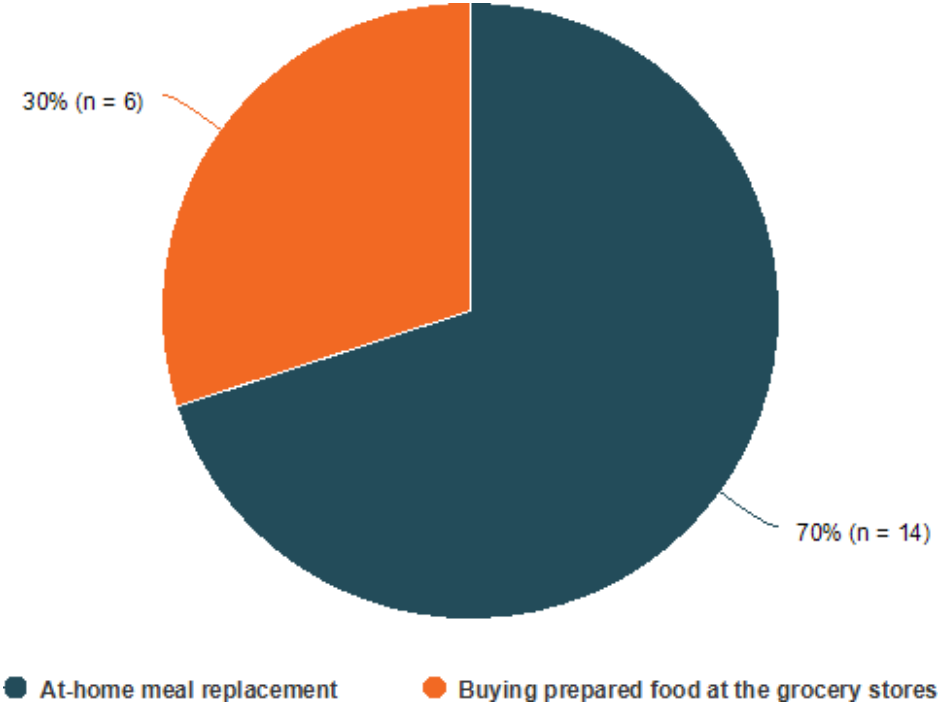


Figure 3. Question 3 in the survey.

28 respondents who were given this question chose not to use restaurant services during the COVID-19. In 28 responses, 71% chose to prepare meals at home as an at-home meal replacement, while 29% selected to purchase prepared foods at the grocery store. A few people are still staying at the home and have begun cooking for themselves. Many people develop habits out of it, and it helps to reduce the quantity of money.

**Question 4. When the covid-19 is over, what kind of restaurant services do you prefer to use?**

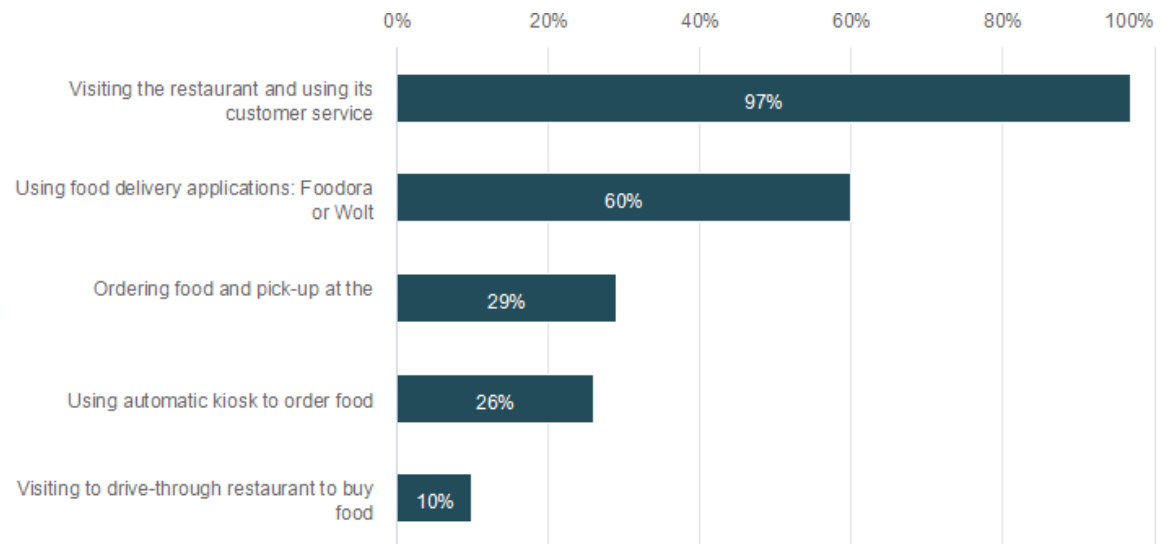


Figure 4. Question 4 in the survey.

The answer to question 4 has described how customer behavior has changed. With 106 replies about the services, they want to use during the COVID-19, 97% of respondents said they will visit to the restaurant and use its services. After the COVID-19, people choose to resume their regular lives and return to the restaurant to take advantage of its services. Additionally, 60% of responses still use online applications.

**Question 5. Do you think digital tools such as food delivery applications, and touch screen kiosks are helpful during the covid-19?**

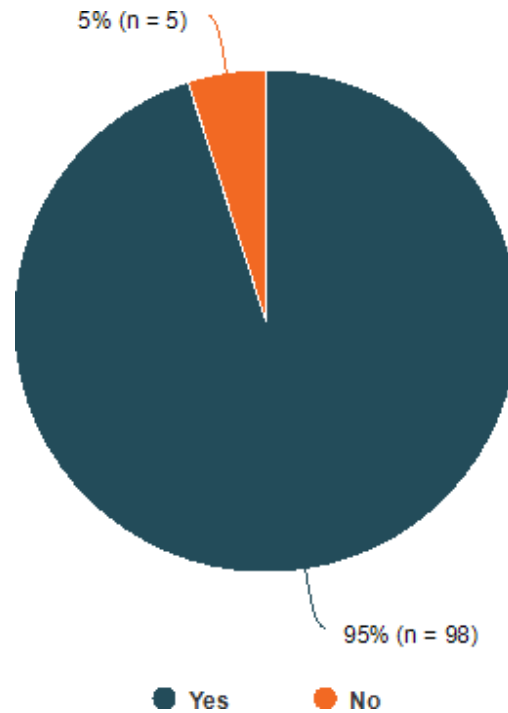


Figure 5. Question 5 in the survey.

In response to question 5, 111 respondents indicate that they think digital tools are beneficial and essential for their lives in the COVID-19. It is presented with a 95% yes response. During and after the COVID-19, digital tools gain in popularity. It makes life easier for the user and offers numerous benefits, such as cutting down on line wait times or being an excellent option for those who like to work from home.

#### 4.3 Results and discussions

What the consumer considers to be necessary has changed as a result of the Covid, which has played as an external pressure and life-changing occurrence. The Covid has accelerated a trend toward digitalization that was already moving quickly. With so many people who stayed at home, the online revolution is booming, and thanks to technology, things like watching television and buying stuff seem more regular.

As shown in Figure 2 above, respondents frequently use internet services to make food while staying at home. In addition to reducing cooking time because to the convenience of food delivery, lockdown restrictions and social distancing also being observed. 60% of respondents say they order meal for delivery while they are at home, while 58% say they order food and pick it up from the restaurant. That indicated a reduction in the high demand for restaurant seating and an increase in the utilization of face-to-face interactions during restaurant service.

In reality, because of the government's restrictions during the pandemic, restaurant patronage has declined dramatically. People can only leave their homes for significant journeys or when they have a compelling reason to do so. Staying at home during the lockdown has forced people to act differently, develop new habits and behaviors, and accept the situation as it is. A prime illustration of that is working remotely or from home. In addition, restaurants frequently reduce their operating expenses to maintain a viable business. The use of technology to replace employees has increased with the need to decrease costs in both labor and business expenses. When combining those two key elements, the delivery food service and online ordering have become crucial tools for both consumers and businesses. Customers' custom of eating out has been replaced by ordering delivery from restaurants while sitting in their own homes. Their needs for food and other items are being met with a few clicks on a smartphone without them having to go anywhere. On the other side, it is a benefit for restaurants because technology has addressed the challenges they had at the time, including a seat limit, a lack of staff to provide customer care, and particularly social distance. The survey's findings indicate that there is a great demand for leveraging technology in customer service and minimizing congested places like restaurants. Customers are shifting to using automated technologies and online offerings to meet their needs for experiencing actual restaurant service.

To adapt to the new environment and fulfill the shifting needs and preferences of clients, marketing professionals must understand the change in consumer behavior. Effective strategies and how to adapt to new consumer behavior are thus challenging problems for businesses and marketers. The author's perspective on how to create a marketing strategy satisfied customer experiences is presented in the following section.

## 5 Marketing strategies to increase customer satisfaction

The increasingly changing of consumer behavior has been changed the standard of elements in customer experiences. Consumers consider as a small business owner when making purchases in addition to how highly they value business goods or services. Whether how many years the restaurant starting out in this industry or have been running for a while, promotional strategies are important to organizational achievement. The key to long-term success is using effective digital marketing methods to bring in new consumers, keep old ones, and getting a reward customer service.

Since consumers may now see what want to buy online, marketing ads must be of higher quality to draw in as many customers as possible. Customers can now see the product, the service, and how other customers feel about it on the company website more than ever. Before making a physical visit, customers can research and evaluate restaurants online. Customers decide based on what they find online mostly. Online users can freely discuss opinions of restaurant meal quality, service, and recommendations. How therefore can a company afford to have more customers make buying decision at its virtual restaurant?

### 5.1 Brand recognition

To begin with, redesign the company website for the food delivery service to encourage more user clicks on the name of the brand. Consumers are drawn to vibrant, appetizing images of food and food decoration, thus before publishing food images online, attention is paid to picture quality. Consumers frequently select foods that are well-known and simple to visualize in their minds. It is a comparison of internet restaurants with and without food and menu images. So, take care of the menu and invest in images of dishes! Additionally, maintaining a positive business image is crucial for keeping customers interested in the enterprise. People want to post gorgeous photos on social media, thus a background is essential. It works for both actual restaurants and online restaurants. As a result, the restaurant would have to be ready to adapt its appearance for both the restaurant background and food photographs.

### 5.2 Promotion

Furthermore, as word spreads about the business, more customers will want to stop by and give it a try on business online website. As a result, ensure that each service at the restaurant is as prepared as feasible. So might provide some modest tokens of hospitality to business customers by offering them a special discount or free delivery during off-peak times. Or enticing incentives like saving receipts to receive a discount on your subsequent purchase. It also aids in more effectively marketing the restaurant with just a few modest incentives. Customer emotions will be indirectly impacted even though it does not help direct advertising. From there, customers will spread the word about the restaurant, suggest it to friends, or bring more customers there.

### 5.3 Search engine optimization - SEO

Next, the current marketing trend is search engine optimization for restaurant promotion. Every company's online marketing plan should include SEO. Before making a choice, customers frequently develop the habit of using online resources to research eateries. Without SEO, clients will have a harder time finding your website on the first few pages of their searches. Customers are less likely to know about and dine at your restaurant as a result of this. So how a business can implement SEO to its business? Create a list of keywords: The restaurant business will have a specific key search term, much like every other sector. The company will be more visible when people seek out information if it creates a collection of keywords that correspond to the search intent. The majority of users simply look for data in the top results. Thus, SEO will greatly assist you in growing both business consumer base and overall revenue, and then, adopt the appropriate creative and media marketing strategy: If the website offers content that address users' problems, individuals will frequently visit. Business can do this by hiring an individual or content team for business website. Lastly, enhance website's appearance, company must create a captivating, user-friendly website, speed up the page load time, and other things.

### 5.4 Advantages of social media tools

Besides, the advantages that social media brings to restaurant marketing are clear in a time when digital advertising is as prevalent as it is right now. Therefore, restaurants must use social media to boost brand development. To give clients comprehensive information about the menu, prices, and deals with the most realistic and appealing photographs, restaurants need to develop a distinct page on Facebook. Additionally, aggressively promoting in credible Facebook groups is another highly successful method of marketing. Many potential clients are the main focus of food Facebook groups. Understanding how to take advantage of them will aid in the effective marketing of your restaurant. One of the most popular social networks is Instagram. This social networking service offers users more visual content, primarily in the form of photographs and videos. When promoting restaurants on this network, businesses must heavily invest in the dish's visual appeal. Verify the image's resolution, the movie's video quality, and the colours. In addition to that, Tik Tok is a social media platform designed to promote information via brief videos. Tik Tok can be concerned as a new tool on social media, however, the result of using this tool is unlimited. The platform is currently strongly expanding and evolving. Not only start up business but also old model business need to must create a unique Tik Tok channel for the restaurant with interesting material, and the submitted videos' subjects should be related.

## **6 How to improve customer service?**

The level of customer service affects the company's revenue. So, the key to assisting enterprises in the market is increasing the quality to increase customer service. Particularly in today's environment of intense competitiveness in business. Businesses will reap a variety of advantages when they provide high-quality services. A loyal client base is built on providing excellent customer service, especially to returning consumers. When the necessity comes, they are constantly prepared to visit your home to make a purchase. They will also be responsible for spreading the influence of the present product range. They serve as a link to help clients attract new customers.

Why does the company need to enhance its customer service? Due to the excellent customer service, customers feel at home at the restaurant and want to return as well as make more purchases. Customer service practices determine how satisfied customers are. As a result, the tactics listed below may assist businesses in increasing customer satisfaction.

### **6.1 Being easy**

Making things easy is the first key to enhance customer service. Customers report feeling uneasy while dealing with internet retailers in a hazy, ambiguous manner. The online store's credibility and client experience suffer as a result. When setting up appointments with clients, make sure to be always explicit. To give clients as many contact options as possible, diversify online care channels such chat boxes, company websites, etc. The online store must offer the best customer care service in order to keep its consumers' support.

### **6.2 Taking care of business website**

Besides, customer trust can be generated by an active website. They will feel more confident in online brands if they have quick access to support material or shop news. As a result, update the news on your website frequently and send customers updates about the product and store's initiatives via social networking sites. Customers will benefit from easy access to product information, which will raise their awareness of your business.

### **6.3 Taking care of customer feedback**

Additionally, customers will feel more at ease shopping with business online if company provides forms on its website that allow for customer feedback. Never be afraid to listen to customer complaints, treat them politely, and come up with a solution to the issue the client is having. Try to respond to all client messages and comments on online sales platforms like website, business social media pages, etc., not only professionally but also by reiterating the goal of the online business to always pay attention to its customers. However, for understaffed online companies, having to reply to every customer comment and feedback on social media

networks, particularly during busy times, would place a lot of pressure on sales consultants and business owners. If the company performs poorly in this area, then might think about employing a software service offered by a third party to support sales management, omni-channel automation, and maximize salesperson performance.

#### 6.4 Be presented on business website

Finally, to improve the customer experience when ordering online, changes must be made frequently. In this manner, business may keep clients and win its loyalty. Never let the customers feel unimportant. When the business is not on social media, install automated answer templates to respond to customers. For instance, request contact information from consumers so that staff members can offer advice as quickly as possible. Customers will feel valued and have a positive opinion of the store as a result. Do not even forget to let customers know you are there when you are prepared to offer them advice and support. One may entirely create a system of devoted customers by showing appreciation for them while also offering competent customer service.

## 7 Summary

### 7.1 Answer the research question

The research question had been established from the start in order to support the thesis' principal objective. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the questions' goals, the author aggregated and examined every factor. Consumer behavior has changed dramatically throughout the pandemic, particularly in terms of purchasing habits and shopping preferences in the food business. Without the benefit of technology, the restaurant sector would not be able to reach the large number of customers that it does now with meal delivery services. Consumer behavior has changed as a result of the new habits of working from home, staying in, and being under lockdown. Thanks to the restaurant's timely customer service transfers and effective tool use, new customers, a new target audience, and a fresh way to reach out to potential customers are all attracted. According to the author, it won't be an issue for restaurants when the covid is passed provided they can develop a timely marketing and brand-building strategy. Nearly every restaurant is upgrading its online marketing, and there is more advertising on food delivery apps, which is a terrific indicator of the value of digital marketing. Additionally, after COVID19, digital marketing will be a major trend for every firm to build their position again and regain customers. Everyone concurred that digital marketing will be a crucial component of all businesses, large and small.

### 7.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the thesis study examined every aspect of patron satisfaction and patron behavior in the restaurant sector. The theoretical framework was given definitions relating to those terms in order to aid the reader in gaining a general knowledge of the key phrases, from the most fundamental, such as definition, to the most complex, such as how to assess customer happiness. Additionally, because to COVID-19, consumer behavior has evolved from sitting at a table in a restaurant to using an online service to fulfill customer needs. Prior to COVID-19, customers tended to use restaurants' services offline before switching to online digital tools to purchase goods. Along with the theoretical component, empirical studies offered more evidence for the reality that shifting consumer behavior affects future consumer behavior. As a result of the COVID-19, consumer behavior has changed, thus timely measures should be implemented as quickly as possible to enhance business operations and customer experience. Digital approaches are a tool that businesses may use to handle both their existing problems and those that will arise in the future as digitalization continues to expand. Applying digital tools in service is a must to boost corporate revenue and draw in more customers via online support. The author provided readers with recommendations of how to improve customer service to attract more visitors and digital marketing tools for restaurants based on the results of empirical research to give them additional inspiration as they

begin to consider new possibilities for the field of digital marketing. The researcher expects that the study will be a useful resource for the hospitality business, or more specifically the restaurant sector. Owners will save time by being informed of developments and implementing the best practices for the company.

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## Appendix: Survey questionnaire

1. Have you used restaurant services during the covid-19?
  - Yes
  - No
2. If yes, what kind of restaurant services do you choose to use during the covid-19?
  - Visiting the restaurant and using its customer service
  - Using food delivery applications: Foodora or Wolt
  - Ordering food and pick-up at the restaurant
  - Using automatic kiosk to order food
  - Visiting to drive-through restaurant to buy food
3. If no, how do you prepare for your meal?
  - At-home meal replacement
  - Buying prepared food at the grocery stores
4. When the covid-19 is over, what kind of restaurant services do you prefer to use?
  - Visiting the restaurant and using its customer service
  - Using food delivery applications: Foodora or Wolt
  - Ordering food and pick-up at the restaurant
  - Using automatic kiosk to order food
  - Visiting to drive-through restaurant to buy food
5. Do you think digital tools such as food delivery, and touch screen kiosks are helpful during the covid-19?
  - Yes
  - No