



Customer Satisfaction in Ravintola Factory, Salmisaari

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The aim of the thesis was to evaluate the customer satisfaction levels in Ravintola Factory, Salmisaari, and determine the major causes of it. The purpose is to generate evidence-based insights that can support the restaurant's efforts. The theoretical framework that integrates established models of customer satisfaction, including the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), the SERVQUAL service quality model, and the concepts of perceived value and customer loyalty. These theories provide the basis for identifying key dimensions of the customer experience reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, food quality, and price-value perception and for understanding how they shape overall satisfaction.

The empirical study was based on a mixed approach with an on-site digital questionnaire. The survey was conducted to study the restaurant's customer experience. The survey examined the restaurant's customers and the purpose was to determine essential factors to facilitate this restaurant in maintaining loyal customers and in enhancing the quality of service overall. The survey was conducted on 10 November 2025 and was performed within the lunch service between 10:30 and 14:00 and enabled 55 valid responses among customers aged 18 and above. Open-ended questions and closed questions were incorporated into the questionnaire, which allowed making a quantitative measurement and a qualitative analysis.

The study concludes with recommendations for improving the customer satisfaction through improvement in menu diversity, rotating of specials and a wider selection of dishes, installation of acoustic panels to lessen the echo or rearranging the layout of the tables to lessen congestion or introducing incomplete partitions of the areas to form more intimate and quiet areas, increase in transparency, presentation of ingredient quality, portions, or nutrition on the menus, screens or at the point of sale, and also expanding the portion size of takeaway. The commissioner found the summary of the thesis to be very good, clear, and easy to understand, highlighting key points.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, customer experience, customer loyalty, restaurant industry, service quality

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1. Introduction

Restaurants and food service industry in cities like Helsinki has shown a high growth rate in the last few years which has led to a rise in competition among companies. Customer satisfaction has become one of the major factors of success and long-term profitability (Hanaysha 2016; Kotler and Keller 2016). Studies indicate that customer satisfaction in restaurants is affected by a number of factors, among them being food quality, speed of service, attitude of the staff, ambience, cleanliness, and fairness of prices (Ha and Jang, 2010; Ryu et al. 2012). The physical environment or services are of critical significance in influencing emotions and behavioural intentions of customers as suggested by Bitner (1990). In multicultural urban contexts like Helsinki, cultural and social dynamics further complicate satisfaction outcomes, as local and international customers may hold differing expectations (Tsiotsou & Goldsmith 2012).

The aim of the thesis is to evaluate the customer satisfaction rates within Ravintola Factory, Salmisaari and identify the key factors that drive it. This is meant to create evidence-based insights that can help in the attempt to improve the quality of service provided by the restaurant, living to the expectation of the customer and increasing customer loyalty in the competitive urban restaurant setting. The study is grounded in a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates established models of customer satisfaction, including the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), the SERVQUAL service quality model, and the concepts of perceived value and customer loyalty. These theories provide the foundation for reconising key elements of the customer experience reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, food quality, and price-value perception and for understanding how they shape overall satisfaction.

A mixed research methodology is chosen, and structured questionnaires will be used to gather data among customers at Ravintola Factory Salmisaari. The survey will focus on the major indicators of satisfaction-like quality of food, efficiency of the service, responsiveness of the staff members and general dining experience. Although this approach allows statistical analysis, such problems as the possibility of bias in the responses and the fact of conducting data collection at one place at one time are present.

Finally, the thesis explores customer satisfaction in Ravintola Factory Salmisaari by combining the theoretical information with the empirical data. The paper is organized into five sections, which are an introduction to the subject, a case profile of the company under study, a discussion of conceptual literature on the subject, description of the research methodology, and finally, a conclusion which gives practical recommendations. The study adds to the

further comprehension of customer satisfaction of fast-casual restaurants and can help in designing hospitality services strategic choices.

2. Case Company Ravintola Factory

Ravintola Factory Salmisaari is a chain of restaurants that is franchised in Helsinki, Salmisaarenaukio 1, which belongs to the larger factory restaurant chain that has been distributed in many other Finnish metropolitan regions. Salmisaari branch primarily targets office workers and local clients in the busy business locality. Lunch buffet is offered in the restaurant every day, on weekdays 10.30-14.00 and includes a salad bar, soup, three hot dishes, fresh bread, dessert, and choice of coffee or tea (Ravintola Factory 2025a). The normal buffet cost would be EUR 13.30 and the various cost would be EUR 12.00 after 13.00 to the pensioners. Being a response to the shifts to digitalised transactions, it has abandoned cash payment and it now takes various types of digital and lunch voucher, including Visa, Mastercard, Amex, Mobile Pay, and so on (Ravintola Factory 2025).

The business strategy of the restaurant follows the key trends in the evolution of the culture of dining in Finland, especially the increased popularity of fast-casual dining models, which have focused on efficiency, affordability, and the attractive dining experience. The interior design, which resembles factory, supports the modernity of the brand, which is a relaxed and comfortable environment that would allow busy professionals to feel comfortable at the location (InTravel 2025). Its menu is created in such a way so that to meet the needs of various diets, providing the options of the vegan, gluten-free, and lactose-free dishes to satisfy the demands of more health-conscious clientele (Ravintola Factory 2025). On top of the usual dine-in activities, Factory Salmisaari also offers catering and events hosting, which allow it to address the changing demands of corporate and social clients in Helsinki (Tripadvisor 2025).

With such an established position, Ravintola Factory has a number of challenges common with the modern hospitality industry in Finland. They are a rapid change in the taste of consumers, increased rivalry with conventional restaurants, and an increased pressure of the digital food delivery platforms, which have transformed the way customers receive their meals (Tripadvisor 2025). To be competitive, the restaurant will take every effort to know the needs of the customers by following the feedback, renewing menu items, and ensuring that operations in the restaurant are efficient. Maintaining the stable quality of foods and the stable standards of reliable service is also paramount since the restaurant caters to a wide and varied and urban clientele (Ravintola Factory 2025). By ensuring the constant adaption process and focus on customer demands, Factory Salmisaari strives to secure its role in the dynamic restaurant environment in Helsinki.

3. Integrated Customer Experience and Satisfaction Framework

The section synthesises key theoretical concepts to develop an integrated framework that explains how various dimensions of customer experience collectively influence overall customer satisfaction.

3.1 Customer Satisfaction

Kotler and Keller (2006, 144) state that satisfaction is the pleasure or disappointment that an individual has and which resulted by comparing the perceived performance results or outcome of a product against his/her expectations. Grigoroudis & Siskos (2010, 4) define customer satisfaction as such, as a judgement as to whether a product, or a service, or certain aspects or attributes of a service or product have produced a pleasurable state of fulfilment that comes to realization in the course of consumption.

In restaurant business, there are several variables which influence satisfaction, including food quality, service speed, friendliness of staff, cleanliness, and fairness of price. According to Ryu, Han and Kim (2008, 457), the level of satisfaction is highly related to the approach of atmospherics, the quality of provided service and the manner in which the food is presented in the casual restaurant environments. Every aspect of dining action makes up the customer perception of value and quality. Namkung and Jang (2007, 284) note that restaurant customer satisfaction extends beyond the tangible elements i.e., food to more intangible issues like ambience and emotional feelings. Customers living a hectic urban lifestyle will usually be willing to pay a premium price with a time constraint in mind, with special attention to efficiency without compromising customer comfort and quality; these soft factors are important in such a case. Picture showing key components influencing customer satisfaction through the total product concept is shown in figure 1.

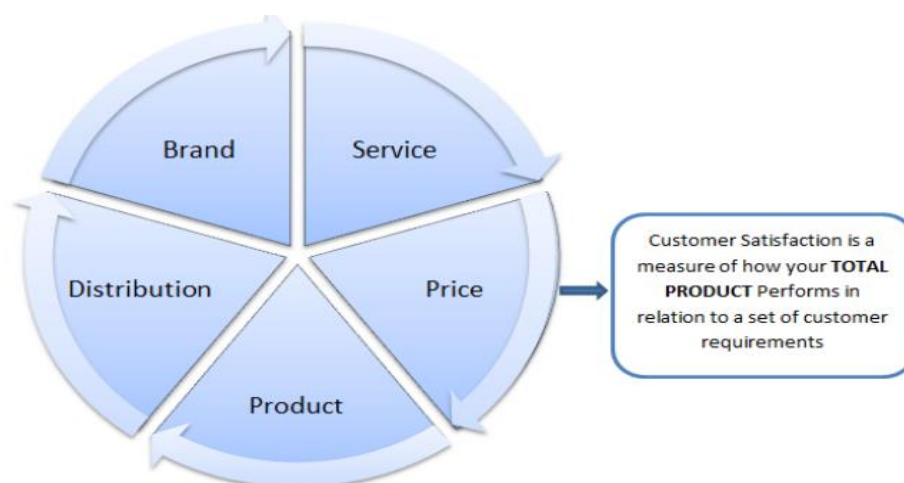


Figure 1: Customer Satisfaction and the Total Product (Hill & Alexander 2006, 31)

The figure 1 shows that customer satisfaction is the result of the overall performance of the total product, which comprises of five interrelated components, which include brand, service, price, product, and distribution. These segments are important elements that determine value perceptions by the customers. The brand impacts on the level of trust and expectations, service impacts on the inter-personal experience, price impacts on the value of money, core quality depends on the product and distribution provides availability and convenience. When all these components come together effectively in satisfying the customer needs, customer satisfaction is obtained. When one component fails, the total satisfaction level will reduce, thus, emphasizing about the holistic approach in total product concept (Hill & Alexander 2006, 31).

3.1.1 Theories of Customer Satisfaction

This has led to various theories and models explaining how and why customers make satisfaction judgments since the issue of customer satisfaction has been extensively studied within the marketing, psychology and service management fields. These theoretical contexts are significant to scholars as well as practitioners since they offer systematic approaches of explaining how customers perceive, anticipate and respond to service interactions. In a restaurant like Ravintola Factory, where the dining experience is formed through a set of factors including food, service, environment, and value, the application of these theories can help determine which factors play the biggest role in customer satisfaction and in which areas the restaurant needs to improve. Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, Equity Theory, SERVQUAL and Kano Model are the most influential theories in this domain.

One of the most common and broadly used models of customer satisfaction research is called the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT). It was first proposed by Oliver (1980) and it argues that satisfaction is measured by the comparison between the expectations that customers hold before the service and the perceived performance they achieve after consuming the service. When the perceived performance is as expected, confirmation is made and satisfaction is achieved. When performance is above expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs and leads to delight. On the other hand, when the performance is below expectation, the disconfirmation is negative which leads to dissatisfaction (Oliver 1997, 13).

The theory is very applicable within the restaurant business. Diners come with preconceptions that are created by advertising, online reviews, past experiences and through word of mouth. The Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory states that customer satisfaction involves an evaluation by comparing real performance versus what they previously expected (Oliver 1980). As an illustration, when a customer expects to get his lunch during the weekday and is served within ten minutes, satisfaction will be achieved. When employees provide the service

at even greater speeds without losing friendliness, the disconfirmation of positive levels is ensured, and so the satisfaction increases. Negative disconfirmation however takes place in instances where service is slow or careless in which case, dissatisfaction follows (Oliver 2014).

A benefit of EDT is that it can be used to explain changes in perceptions in relation to expectations. It also emphasizes the importance of controlling expectations in the form of marketing communications, menu design, and staff promises. Nevertheless, researchers have found fault with EDT because of its simplistic approach to customer satisfaction based on the premise that expectations remain constant and can be easily quantified (Yi 1990, 73). As a matter of fact, expectations are not fixed, but evolve through cultural conventions, peer and previous experiences. In the case of Ravintola Factory, this implies that the expectations of a regular customer and that of a first-time visitor could vary significantly and thus the measurement would be more complicated.

Another significant theory that is based on social psychology is the Equity Theory of Adams. It suggests that satisfaction amongst customers occurs in response to the perceived fairness of the transaction between the service provider and the customer (Adams 1965, 280). Customers determine whether the value they get in terms of quality of food, level of service, ambience and emotional comfort correlates with the resources they put in that in terms of money, time and effort. Customers feel satisfied when they believe that such an exchange is fair and balanced. But in cases where they feel that they are not getting as much as they are giving then they become inequitable and dislike offering their service experience and a negative judgment will be created.

Equity Theory is most potent as it allows capturing both emotional and social facets of the satisfaction rather than rational comparisons. The customers do not just analyze the outcomes, but compare their treatment with others as well. Even when a diner feels that he received good service, when he/she realizes that there is another table that is getting better attention than him/her, he/she would get dissatisfied with it. Critics however believe that the perception of fairness is subjective and cannot be measured (Bolton and Lemon 1999, 173). This is a limitation, as the theory explains dissatisfaction triggers, but could be more difficult to measure in a survey.

The SERVQUAL model that was formulated by Parasuraman et al. (1988) has identified five major dimensions of service quality including, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The model further holds that satisfaction arises when the impressions of quality of service on these dimensions are either equal or exceeding (Parasuraman, Zeithaml et al. 1988, 15). Some of the examples of the tangibles in restaurants include cleanliness, menu design, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, i.e. excellence and courtesy in the staff, and individual consideration of the client preferences

(Ladhari 2009). Critics feel that SERVQUAL may need to be reconfigured to fit in different cultures and new models of services.

This is the strength of SERVQUAL: the instrument considers both intangible and tangible aspects of service as the customer satisfaction is rather complex. It is also a structured survey instrument managers can use to assess service gaps. But SERVQUAL has not escaped criticism. It is claimed by some authors that its five dimensions do not necessarily have cross-cultural or cross-industry applicability (Buttle 1996, 12). To illustrate, efficiency and low-profile service can be more important in the Finnish dining culture than outright friendliness whereas empathy and attention to details can be important in other cultures. In addition, the model presupposes that the quality of the service is directly converted into satisfaction, yet the latter cannot be independently of the personal mood, social situation, and preconceptions.

Kano et al. (1984) developed the Kano Model that classifies features of a product or service into three types of needs that can be classified as basic or must-be, performance or one-dimensional, and excitement or delighters. Satisfaction by satisfying the basic needs, such as cleanliness and food safety does not cause dissatisfaction but does not stimulate satisfaction. Attributes of performance such as prompt service or generous portions provide satisfaction in a percentage of the degree to which they are provided. It is possible to boost the level of satisfaction with the help of excitement attributes: free appetisers, innovative, seasonal cuisine (Kano et al. 1984). Recent studies (Chen and Chuang 2008; Mikulic and Prebeza 2011) focus on what is characteristic of what category of Kano in various user groups.

3.1.2 Importance of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a significant concept that can enable a business to achieve success in the long run, particularly in ventures that involve services such as the hospitality industry. It acts as one of the strong reference points to customer satisfaction or rather, as to whether business thoroughly satisfies the customer or not. Respectively, according to Kotler and Keller, (2016, 153), satisfied customers entertain higher chances of making repeat purchases, referring other people to the business as well as efforts geared towards avoiding switching to a competitor a factor that applicable to customer retention and profitability directly.

Loyalty and retention are mainly motivated by customer satisfaction, particularly in services where relationship is at the heart of the business. Satisfied customers are inclined to repeat purchases, make long term relationships with a brand, and buy it again (Anderson and Sullivan 1993). It is also less expensive to retain customers than it is to attract new ones because loyal customers need less marketing attention and are not price elastic (Reichheld and Sasser 1990). Customers who are pleased tend to become frequent consumers in restaurants, as they provide the restaurants with regular incomes. Oliver (1999) also adds that emotional loyalty, which arises out of such satisfaction can help businesses to avoid losing out customers to their

competitors, even when the market is very competitive. Customer satisfaction in the restaurant business affects the performance of operations as well as the brand perception. The level of satisfaction leads to the development of the customer loyalty, a better online review as well as a higher word-of-mouth referral, elements that are critical in terms of survival of competitive advantage (Namkung and Jang 2008, 394).

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is an excellent business development tool because of customer satisfaction. Happy customers can market better to their friends and families hence provide free publicity as brand ambassadors (Anderson 1998). Within the hospitality and restaurant industry, WOM bears greater responsibility since quality of services is not tangible and mostly gauged through a collective experience (Szymanski and Henard 2001). The emergence of online platforms has increased positive WOM via social media, review sites, and online communities such that reputation management cannot be independent of customer satisfaction (Verhoef et al. 2009). Good reputation earned by satisfied customers not only helps to gain new customers, but it also creates trust and credibility within the market.

Customer satisfaction has a direct relationship to the financial performance and competitiveness of a firm. Fornell (1992) also discovered that companies whose score on satisfaction is higher would tend to have a good profitability, churn would be low and their position on the market would be good. Customers who feel satisfied are likely to spend more each time they visit the restaurant, will accept the occasional failures and will show more brand advocacy in the restaurant industry (Zeithaml et al. 1996). This provides a predictable flow of income and eliminates business risks associated with fluctuations in demand. Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer (2005) demonstrated as well that customers who are satisfied will pay higher prices, and satisfaction, as a determinant of price, is also associated with profitability. In this way, satisfaction emerges as a key resource towards maintaining competitive differentiation in highly competitive service markets. The figure showing the correlation between customer satisfaction and profitability is shown in figure 2.

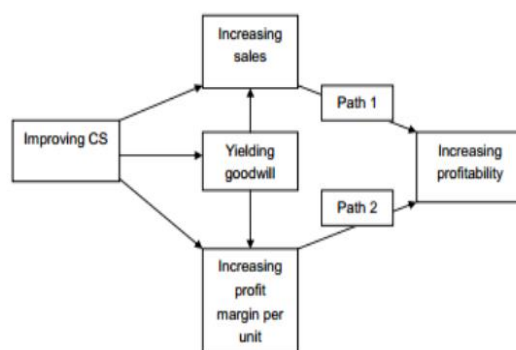


Figure 2: The correlation between customer satisfaction and profitability (Zhang & Pan 2009)

As demonstrated in Figure 2, customer satisfaction directly influences the profitability of a company in two main ways (Zhang and Pan, 2009). First, the increase in satisfaction will lead to repeat purchase and customer loyalty, which will enhance the volume of sales. Second, when customers are satisfied, they usually accept to pay more immediately enabling companies to make more profit margins. This relationship shows that customer satisfaction will also favour short-term financial performance and long-term competitive positioning by strengthening brand image and brand viability.

In addition to transactional performance, customer satisfaction is strategically important to the long-term success of service industries. Consumption is not possible without service encounters and satisfaction is both the outcome and strategic input of organizational learning and innovation (Ladhari 2009). Satisfaction feedback help managers to shape the products and services available to them by spotting gaps in service delivery, training the personnel, and aligning the services with the changes in the customer expectations. The design of customer-focused strategies, in which quality is promoted through constant Customer satisfaction in a restaurant is not only to enhance the immediate dining experience of the guests but also promotes a culture of continuous improvement, which enables the business to achieve long-term sustainable competitive advantage.

To conclude, customer satisfaction is both critical to improving the existing dining experience and the long-term achievement of the restaurant. A satisfied customer will return and become loyal hence providing restaurants with a consistent pool of repeat customers. Customers who remain loyal also mean that there is no need to market itself at all times, and act as a shield against competition. Besides loyalty, delighted customers would discuss their experiences with other people in person and online, which would create an effective word-of-the-mouth that would raise awareness and attract new customers (Kotler & Keller 2016). Such advocacy is particularly vital in the business world where the restaurant industry is concerned, as reviews or personal recommendation plays a vital role in determining the customer preference. Monetarily, greater satisfaction is usually translated to greater revenue since customers will spend more, come more frequently and will be less price adverse. Strategically, customer satisfaction is a positive sign of management in streamlining the delivery of services, improving employee performance and addressing the needs of customers.

3.1.3 Aspects of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is determined by a combination of factors since they all influence the perceptions of a customer about a product or a service and whether he or she becomes tempted to come back. This is more so in the service based business such as restaurants where it is not only the experience with what you eat but also with the entire restaurant setup (Zeithaml et al. 2018). These aspects play a major role in shaping the positive or

negative impressions among customers, which ultimately determine the long term loyalty as well as business performance.

The first and most impactful aspects include service quality which comprises of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles (Parasuraman et al. 1988). In a restaurant sense, this is the constant provision of food of the standard promised, having a caring and respectful staff and a neat, cozy and pleasant atmosphere. Customers want more than good food; they also want effective service that will not waste their time. Delays or other negative actions by unprofessional staff members can result in dissatisfaction even when the food was good.

Intimately connected to quality of service is quality of the core product - food in this case. According to Kotler and Keller (2016, 156), one of the key elements of customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry is product quality. The customers want the meals to taste good, fresh, and attractive. Taste and quality should be consistent throughout visits and build trust and loyalty to visit again. Any failure to meet these expectations will result in dissatisfaction and loss of brand credibility.

The other important issue is how much value does it add which is the perception of a customer on whether the experience is worth the money being spent. Oliver (1997, 13) observes that customers will compare the equity in the pricing to the quality of food, service and the experience. Positive value perception leads to greater satisfaction, and negative perceptions of perceived overpricing or lackluster service can lead to negative assessment. Therefore, customer expectations and market standards require that customer satisfaction should be maintained through pricing strategies.

Perceptions and expectations of the customers have a central role in determining the level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is achieved when what happens is equal to or greater than what was anticipated previously; the opposite is also true since a difference between what is expected and what actually happens usually results in dissatisfaction (Oliver 1997, 13). Effective management of expectations should include communication, transparency, and service delivery. The promotional messages, description of menu, and promise of the services must be accurate to discourage disconfirmation by businesses to ensure that the promises are not false information about the actual experience.

On top of the functional features, emotional and social factors have a very important role in customer satisfaction, especially in service establishment. According to Han and Jeong (2013, 211), the psychological attachment of the customer to the brand can be strengthened through emotional appeal, e.g., a sense of being respected, welcomed, and valued. This feeling of belonging and comfort is created through social interaction with the employees, the atmosphere of the place, and the entire hospitality experience. They are intangible aspects

that in most cases distinguish high performing service providers amongst their competitors and also play a critical role in creating customer loyalty.

Overall, customer satisfaction is influenced by the complex interaction of the quality of services, product excellence, perceived value, the management of expectations, and emotional involvement. The organisations which successfully respond to those dimensions competitively are more likely to give superior customer experience, which will lead to the establishment of loyalty and growth sustainability in competitive markets.

3.2 Customer Service

Customer service is an inherent part of the entire customer experience and has a determining factor on the level of satisfaction especially in service based industries like hospitality. It includes every direct interaction between the customers and the service providers, starting with the first greetings to the resolution of a problem, and these experiences have a strong influence on how the customers perceive a business (Lovelock and Wirtz 2016, 210). In the restaurant business, where the service experience is incessant and very interpersonal, the quality of customer service can receive as much significance as food. Good relationships bring about comfort and trust and the bad ones come easy and overshadow a good meal.

Customer service is generally effective in various dimensions, and these are responsiveness, empathy, assurance and professionalism. These factors are consistent with the general SERVQUAL model which states that service quality has a significant role in customer satisfaction and retention when the results are improved or surpassed (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988, 16). Responsiveness is the speed and the effectiveness with which the staff is responding to the needs of the customers and empathy is the ability to comprehend and cater to the preferences of a person. Assurance means presenting professionalism and confidence that would make the customer feel safe with the service he gets. These are bound together through professionalism to make the staff members act in a polite, reliable and consistent manner. According to Homburg et al. (2011, 97) customers appreciate it when firms take care of their time and ensure they are served in a manner that does not cause any stress to them and so the entire experience is enhanced and chances of revisiting are improved.

When applied in the restaurant environment, a high-quality customer service will be associated with prompt order taking, a friendly and courteous communication, and the adequate response to the problems or concerns that may occur during the dining process. The behaviour of staff such as friendliness, attentiveness and ability to solve problems directly determine the customers feeling appreciated and welcomed. The degree of satisfaction can be enhanced both in the short term and a good word of mouth, repeat service and competitive advantage can be generated by introducing a strong customer service (Johnston

and Clark 2008, 142). However, in situations where food is of good quality, failure in service can lead to dissatisfaction. Thus, good customer service should be upheld at all times to create customer loyalty and long term successful performance in the competitive restaurant business.

According to one of the most accepted SERVQUAL models, designed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), good customer service has five basic dimensions. Customers use tangible elements of customer service (staff appearance, cleanliness of the restaurant, physical environment) as signals to form their opinions about the quality of service (Zeithaml et al. 2018). Tangibles will prepare the meal experience by giving an impression of professionalism and attention to detail (Johnston and Clark 2008). Customers make judgments regarding the quality of service based on such visible factors even before tasting the food (Ryu and Jang 2008). It is thus important to keep the facilities and the whole Ravintola Factory clean and well maintained in order to reinforce the positive image of service.

One of the most frequently mentioned aspects of service quality is reliability or the capability to provide the promised service on a consistent and dependable basis (Zeithaml et al. 1988). Customers want to see that food is delivered in the order, within a reasonable time, and on a regular basis visit by visit. Predictability brought about by consistency brings in a feeling of trust, and leads to repeated patronage (Gronroos 2007). Conversely, inconsistency undermines credibility and reduces customer trust.

Responsiveness is described as customer helpfulness and responsiveness in customer services (Zeithaml et al. 2018). Responsiveness in a restaurant context involves welcoming customers at the door, accepting orders promptly, and addressing customer grievances effectively. It is found that the responsiveness directly determines the level of customer satisfaction since one of the most common sources of customer dissatisfaction is delays and unresponsiveness (Johnston and Clark 2008).

The competence, politeness and power to create trust and confidence in the staff members are related to assurance (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Professionalism serves as an authority, which customers are confident in when they are troubled by issues such as dietary issues or any questions they may have regarding the ingredients contained in their dishes. Visible hygiene levels and a sense of safety are other assurance elements within the hospitality sector (Han and Ryu 2009). Customers will trust the restaurant more and have confidence in their choice of restaurant when the staff conducts themselves in a professional manner.

The degree of care, individualized treatment of customers is defined as empathy (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Attentive service: attending to needs of the individual, retaining the regular customer or taking special orders. Studies have pointed to personalization as a

way of developing emotional attachment to a brand and memorable experiences (Verhoeff et al. 2009). Empathy can be a significant point of differentiation in the restaurant setting, particularly in the competitive markets, particularly because it humanizes the service encounter which increases loyalty (Han and Jeong 2013). As well as the mentioned main dimensions there are those practical concerns known to provide excellent customer service, i.e. the attitude of personnel, effective communication, and efficiency.

3.3 Customer Experience

Customer experience has become a key notion in modern day service marketing, specifically when the service sector of interest has made it a priority to be customer-focused like the hospitality and food industries. It means the overall impression that customers create to themselves in relation to their total experience of product interactions with a company via multiple touchpoints (Lemon and Verhoef 2016, 70).

Customer experience is also the journey and not just a single encounter of service as is the case with isolated service encounters. It is related to tangible and intangible aspects of the environment such as physical surroundings, sensory input, emotional reactions, and human relations. Shaw and Ivens (2005) emphasize that the experience that a customer has is subjective in nature and is influenced by personal expectations, assessed through personal emotional and cognitive frames.

Customer experience process is dynamic and multidimensional and has a number of sensory and emotional issues that influence how a customer will form a general perception of a brand. It encompasses the physical elements of the arrangement, hygiene and design of the service area, which determine the level of comfort and overall impression of the customers. Moreover, the eatery, auditory and visual appeal are the sensual factors that help in the overall feel, which is memorable and captivating. On top of the physical points, emotional reactions like satisfaction, comfort, or frustration are also instrumental in the shaping of long-term attitudes to the brand, as well as impact purchasing decisions in the future (Oliver 2014).

These dimensions are invariably compared to the expectation of the customer and any disparity between what was expected to happen and what actually occurred, may have severe implications on satisfaction and loyalty. A positive customer experience increases emotional engagement, brand relationships and advocacy behaviours. Conversely, the poor experience will lead to the lack of satisfaction and negative feedback and the loss of the clientele (Homburg et al. 2017).

Finally, customer experience is a business strategy of service-based business. When each touchpoint is crafted and managed with a sense of intent and empathy, companies can make

impressive and impactful experiences that customers can relate to and that persist in bringing success over time (Lemon & Verhoef 2016; Schmitt 2010).

3.3.1 Dimension of Customer Experience

Customer experience is a multidimensional construct which incorporates both cognitive and emotional reactions of customers that arise at various points of engagement with a business (Verhoff et al. 2009). Contrary to mere transactional exchanges, the experience is a product of a synergistic interaction of rational evaluations and sensory perceptions and emotional relationships. Knowledge of its dimensions is enabling business to create service encounters which transcends beyond functional satisfaction, and creates enduring loyalty. A number of important dimensions of customer experience are identified in the hospitality industry, and specifically in restaurants.

Cognitive dimension is associated with the rational and evaluative dimensions of the experience. It contains the images referring to the quality of food, reliability of the service, correctness of the ordering, and value-price. Customers are constantly evaluating the level of satisfaction with their expectations and the value of the entire service payment (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

The affective dimension is defined as emotional responses customers receive in response to their visit and may be joy, comfort, relaxation, or frustration (Walls et al. 2011). Emotions are likely to be more influential than mere logical choices in determining customer loyalty since people will choose to go back to a place where they have felt truly appreciated and valued. In a restaurant setting, the warmth and friendliness of the employees, their attentiveness to the customers needs and their capability to create a good, welcoming, and cozy environment in which the customer feels taken care of, all contribute to the emotional dimension greatly, within a restaurant setting.

The sensorial dimension is tied to the physical environment and the stimulation of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste (Schmitt 1999). This applies in the area of dining, such as food presentation, design, lighting, background music, and even in the feel of menus or table set-ups. Such factors as the buffet layout, the cleanliness of the dining hall, and the general atmosphere helps in creating the perception of the customer by engaging their senses.

Customer experience is also characterized by social interactions with service staff as well as other customers. This dimension includes an aspect of being respected, esteemed and part of a social environment (Verhoff et al. 2009). Socializing can further enhance the process of dining out particularly in cases of dining out with friends or during a gathering of fellow

employees. Moreover, good relationships with employees make them feel like they belong and attached hence increasing their loyalty.

The pragmatic dimension entails ease and efficiency of service process. It considers such aspects as ease of booking a reservation, quickness of service, accessibility of menus and payment options (Gentile et al. 2007). The pragmatic aspect is decisive in the case of Ravintola Factory where customers come in during specified lunch times, and they want to be served with a fast and non-slow pace without any quality being compromised.

Dining is not necessarily a functional process; it might possess elements of pleasure, novelty and delight. The hedonic dimension will include excitement, entertainment or surprise, which values the experience (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Finally, the experiences tend to be either personal or symbolic. These customers are able to associate a restaurant with social bonding, occasions or identity (Walls et al. 2011).

3.3.2 Impacts of Customer Experience on Business

Customer experience is a strong factor that gives out the shaping of business performance, especially that of the industrially inclined sectors like the hospitality industry. Good customer experience results in higher customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, word of mouth marketing and eventually a higher profitability (Lemon and Verhoef 2016, 71). This strong correlation with trust and emotion create opportunities to main long-term customer engagement.

Customer loyalty through positive customer experience is greatly enhanced. Loyal customers will hardly abandon the company thus multiplying its chances of repeat business. It has been observed that by simply improving customer retention rates by 5% only, profit can increase by as much as 25% to 95% (Bain & Company, cited in Kolikoff 2024, 12). When customers are satisfied and made to feel valued based on their experience, then they are likely to resist being poached by the competitors, resulting to decreased churn rates and assuring stable business development.

Moreover, according to Klaus and Maklan (2013, 230), an efficiently maintained Customer experience program facilitates the brand reputation and operates efficiency. As an illustration, the knowledge of emotional factors of customer experience can make companies adjust services to expectations so fewer complaints and more consistency in service are achieved.

3.4 Quality

Quality is a key and multidimensional element in the manner in which customers perceive and are generally satisfied especially in service sector like hospitality. According to Garvin (1987, 104), there are a number of perspectives of quality namely: quality-performance, quality-

features, quality-reliability, quality-conformance, quality-durability, quality-serviceability, quality-aesthetics and quality-perceived which help in determining the interpretation and appraisal of quality by the customers of any product or service. These dimensions not only focus on an aspect of functionality but also offer an experience underpinning and show that quality is not a solitary phenomenon but a set of attributes that work together to change customer judgement. Perceived quality and service performance are especially critical in the restaurant industry because customers evaluate them using both tangible (qualities and cleanliness of food) and intangible (behavior and ambience of the staff) cues.

This assertion is supported by Zeithaml (1988, 3) who adds that the quality of services is expressed by the customers with respect to the experience and presentation of service as a whole and not as very specific things. The evaluation of quality by customers occurs in the course of the interactions that start prior to consumption and extend that to the experience of the service. Quality service will decrease the number of complaints, ease of contact with customers, and induce the repeat business and word-of-mouth. Since customers are very dependent on these impressions to make subsequent consumption decisions, it is important to ensure that quality is maintained at all times as part of establishing trust and long-term loyalty.

The aspect of quality plays a key role in defining the level of satisfaction in service industries due to the fact that services are not tangible, are produced and consumed simultaneously therefore the customer is an active participant in the process of delivery. Service quality in a service as Parasuraman et al. (1988, 16) assert is the level of satisfaction or above the expectation of the customer in the service. This in the hospitality industry includes not only product aspects like taste, freshness, and presentation of the food but also service aspects like responsiveness, professionalism, communication and speed of service provided by the staff. Setting conditions such as atmosphere, cleanliness, and design are also major determinants of the quality perceptions. When such attributes are in line with customer expectations, they strengthen satisfaction, loyalties and retention. On the other hand, insufficiencies in all of these aspects may result in disappointment and negative reviews despite some aspects of the experience being satisfactory.

The eight dimensions of product-quality by Garvin (1987, 101-109) offer a methodical approach of evaluating the degree in which a product or service meets the needs of the customers. These aspects performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics and perceived quality elicit tangible traits and subjective qualities. Performance can be defined as a competence of the core product, including the accuracy of orders or the heat of meals. Features are other distinguishing features that add value such as menu choice or special deals. Reliability is an indicator of service consistency in terms of visits. Conformance measures conformity to prescribed norms, e.g. hygiene practices or

quantities of portions. Durability, though it is more applicable to physical products, can be applied in restaurants as uniformity and preservation of quality in the long run. Serviceability deals with how the issues can be easily fixed e.g. responsiveness of the staff to deal with complaints. Aesthetics are connected to sensual aspects such as the appearance of food or the mood in the restaurant. Lastly, the perceived quality encompasses the overall perception of the customer which is based on brand reputation, previous experiences and external indications.

High quality is a key contributor towards satisfaction as it helps to strengthen the positive experiences and exceed or justify the customer expectations. Performance, reliability and serviceability are some of the core elements that determine the level of satisfaction as Garvin (1987) observes. The freshness of ingredients, the speed with which the meals are served, the behavior of the staff and visible hygiene standards are the immediate indicators of the quality in restaurants. Such aspects have a great impact on the impressions of customers and can make them decide to go back or not. Providing a quality that is higher than that of the customer is likely to lead to repeat visits, a positive word-of-mouth, and high retention rates (Zeithaml et al. 2018, 102). These are all the more crucial in terms of a competitive business, as customer loyalty reflects on profitability directly, and it is a guarantee of a viable business in the long run.

3.5 Customer Feedback

Customer feedbacks are the data that a customer offers regarding his or her experiences with a service or a product. It plays a vital role in the measurement of satisfaction and highlighting on what should be improved. The feedback may be done in a form of a survey, online reviews, social media, and direct communication and it should provide great advantages to a business concerning the perceptions, expectations, and tastes of the customers (Wirtz & Lovelock 2016, 137). Feedback in service industry such as hospitality industry is timely and constructive; as this assists companies such as Ravintola Factory Salmisaari solve problems before they can occur in businesses; and it assists businesses to target customers and customize services to suit customers.

Proper utilization of customer feedback improves the ongoing process in terms of performance and service innovation besides promoting more customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Johnston & Clark 2008, 158). It further encourages loyalty and participation as customers will feel their voices do count when they are viewed to be making a difference through their thoughts. Thus, structured feedback systems and response to the learnt insights are essential to the continuity of excellent services and acquisition of competitive edge.

Direct feedback encompasses surveys, comment cards, suggestion boxes and Internet feedback systems that give quantifiable and measurable information on the trends on satisfaction. The indirect feedback is collected by online reviews, social networks, and word-of-mouth and its impact is constantly increasing because customers tend to use peer-based ratings in their restaurant choices (Zhang et al. 2019). The immediate feedback that is provided through the dining experience is in the form of verbal comments to the staff which enables the managers to correct the problems before it turns into dissatisfaction. Experience feedbacks are received following the service encounter, usually on the form of a follow-up email or an online survey, and provide more insightful information to facilitate long-term enhancement and performance measurement.

Customer feedback functions as an early warning system in a restaurant business, where the service experience is perishable and competition is stiff (Ladhari 2009). The negative remarks shed light on the same problems in the way food is cooked, waiting time, or the behaviour of the staffs so managers can take corrective actions which would help to avoid dissatisfaction. Positive feedback, conversely, reinforces the positive practices and enhances the staff motivation (Tax et al. 1998). In the environment where frequent business-lunch patrons are a key business requirement, feedback plays a very important role, as their response to services and quality of service is a major element that defines whether they will be a recurring customer (Han and Ryu 2009). Finally, good feedback systems do not only help in service recovery and customer loyalty but also help in competitive advantage. When the customer feedback is incorporated into the quality management, the customer voice is used to make a decision in the operations leading to increased satisfaction and brand equity (Zeithaml et al. 2018).

4. Research Approach

The aim of the thesis was to assess the level of customer satisfaction at Ravintola Factory and at Salmisaari as well as the key factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. Research method sets the broad outline that is followed in integrating the many components of research in a unified and effective way. It outlines how the research questions will be answered and systematically arranged using the purpose of the thesis of Customer Satisfaction in Ravintola Factory Salmisaari. The method employed in this research is a mixed-method study, wherein the information to be incorporated is quantitative and qualitative in nature to gain a profound understanding of the problem of customer satisfaction (Creswell & Plano Clark 2017).

4.1 Research Methodology

The quantitative technique included the use of structured questionnaires to the customers of Ravintola Factory Salmisaari. This contributed to gathering numerical information on satisfaction levels, quality of services, and customer expectations (Bryman 2016). The data were statistically processed in search of trend and correlation that may indicate the dependence of service quality on customer satisfaction. Quantitative research is used to guarantee objectivity and can be statistically proven (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019).

As compared to quantitative methodology, the qualitative study enables the researcher to be more flexible and in-depth when examining the research subject. Such method will help the researcher to tailor the process and obtain meaningful and context-driven insights (Denzin and Lincoln 2018). The study also collected in-depth information about the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of customers through the use of the qualitative method of gathering information that included informal interviews and observations. This approach helped in revealing its latent themes and emotional reactions that may have been omitted through quantitative analysis.

The research approach used in the study is a mixed-method research method that integrates the quantitative and qualitative methods to provide an explicit image of customer satisfaction in Ravintola Factory Salmisaari (Creswell 2014). To calculate the quantitative part, convenience sampling was employed in the selection of the customers that visited the restaurant on the day the data was collected. This was an effective method since it could easily access a pool of customers of diverse demographics. The sample was chosen to give sufficient information on which a meaningful statistical analysis would be done. On the qualitative element, secondary sources that were pertinent and reliable were referred to to enhance the knowledge base on customer satisfaction and informal observations, customers who would develop interesting leads in regard to personal service experience were performed through purposive sampling.

The quantitative data collected in the form of questionnaires were coded and processed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency distribution, mean scores, and correlation analysis (Saunders et al. 2019). The techniques came in handy in establishing tendencies and relationship between the variables used to establish customer satisfaction.

Ethical issues of study were taken into account. The study involved informed consent and was voluntary (Resnik 2018). Respondents were guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity by not collecting any personal identifiers and all the data were only stored securely to be utilized in academic purposes. The respondents were told that they could pull out at any point without reproach. All these measures made the study an ethical and responsible one that did not violate the dignity and rights of all the participants.

4.2 Implementation Plan

The data collection on this thesis was conducted on 10 November 2025 when Ravintola Factory Restaurant Salmisaari was delivering lunch (10:30-14:00) with a target to gather responses from 60-80 customers. The survey conducted on-site made sure that the feedback was provided by the customer right after dining experience, which made the answers more precise and dependent on the state of the services at the moment.

The survey method was digital, and the respondents got access to the questionnaire by scanning QR codes given by the research team. Scholars were stationed by the restaurant door and approached customers once they had eaten. The inclusion criterion was that the customer had to be 18 years or above and participation was optional and anonymous to ensure that no ethical concerns were violated in the process of data collection.

The questionnaire had ten concise questions, both closed-ended and open-ended to facilitate both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the customer. The design was based on the existing literature on customer satisfaction and targeted vital parameters including food quality, service, ambience, pricing and general experience at the dining place. This method guaranteed the acquisition of the quantitative and valuable qualitative feedback.

The total number of responses obtained during the survey period is 55, which is slightly less than the intended target since some customers without the desire to participate declined. Nonetheless, further survey days were considered unnecessary because the same category of customers usually comes in during the lunch time, and the demographic representation would be not considerably different. Majority of the respondents were foreigners and frequent patrons, which is a representation of consistent and diverse lunch place visitors of the restaurant.

4.3 Results and Analysis

The survey with 55 respondents offers a valuable account of customer experiences in Ravintola Factory Salmisaari, with high rates of satisfaction in the main aspects of the service. A large number of the respondents described themselves as frequent visitors, which showed a loyal customer base of the lunchtime. Service quality ratings were always high with the staff friendliness attracting an average of 3.93, speed of service 3.91, and staff knowledge 3.78. These findings indicate that the employees of the restaurant are greatly involved in the creation of positive customer experiences and efficiency in running the service operations.

Generally positive perceptions towards the food were also experienced by customers. The average score of taste (3.67), freshness (3.74), and presentation (3.74) shows that the central

culinary product is generally satisfactory. Nonetheless, qualitative remarks displayed the recurring remarks in regards to menu variety and seasoning, saying that customers would enjoy a wider range of options and more consistent flavouring. The comments regarding the dining setting were also rather favourable, as the cleanliness was rated highly at 3.83 and ambiance at 3.56, but a significant portion of the respondents reported such problems as uncomfortable seating and crowd noise during the busiest hours. These observations hint at ways of improving physical dining experience.

The majority of the participants anticipated to view value money, though some also got the feeling that they were not sure about what some of their products like takeaway salads cost and therefore the prices could be communicated better. It is important to note that the overall satisfaction (mean = 4.03) as well as intention to visit again (mean = 4.27) were high which is a measure of high level of loyalty amongst customers. Overall, the findings suggest that Ravintola Factory Salmisaari does not require any radical changes in its operations regarding the quality and regularity of services, but certain improvements in such areas as menu variety, eco-friendliness, and price openness will allow bringing the customer experience to a whole new level.

S.N.	Areas	Expected Score in terms of Ratings before Survey (Scale 1-5)					Perceived Score in terms of Ratings after Survey (Average value out of 5)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Taste				X		3.67
2	Freshness				X		3.74
3	Presentation				X		3.74
4	Staff Friendliness			X			3.93
5	Staff Knowledge				X		3.78
6	Speed of Service			X			3.91
7	Cleanliness				X		3.83
8	Ambiance						3.56
9	Seating Comfort		X				3.63
10	Overall customer satisfaction				X		4.03
11	Intention to revisit				X		4.27

Table 1: Expected value and average perceived value of the Survey.

4.4 Recommendations

The results indicate that Ravintola Factory Salmisaari presents good performance in service delivery and has relatively high customer satisfaction rates. Nevertheless, a few specific measures can be used to better the dining experience and improve the competitive edge of the restaurant. The biggest opportunity is connected with the development of the menu, where the quantitative ratings and the open-ended feedback indicated the issues regarding a lack of variety and irregularity of tastes and seasoning. Customers observed the need to have more choices especially in rotating of specials and a wider selection of dishes that are able to meet different dieting needs. Better proportion of flavour and enhancing the uniformity of specific products and particularly desserts which were cited in the qualitative feedback would go directly to the expectations of the customers and strengthen the impression of culinary value.

The second important matter, which should be amended, is the physical location at the time when the dining process is performed; the most important are the level of noise and the comfort of sit. Although the scores on the overall ambience were positive, some of the respondents indicated having a negative experience at the rush hours and they cited loud noises and cramped seats. The space would also need to be made relaxed and enjoyable to facilitate the customer satisfaction. Practical solutions might involve the installation of acoustic panels to lessen the echo or rearranging the layout of the tables to lessen congestion or introducing incomplete partitions of the areas to form more intimate and quiet areas. These environmental factors would not only enhance the dining experience but also make customers spend more time and visit the place more often thus increasing loyalty and repeat business.

Lastly, the idea of better communication in terms of pricing and value became a vital suggestion, especially when it comes to takeaway and salads when the clients were not sure about whether they were paying the right price. The increase in transparency may include the presentation of ingredient quality, portions, or nutrition on the menus, screens or at the point of sale, and also expanding the portion size of takeaway. The feeling of fairness and trust would also be increased by explaining what the customers are getting at the price they are paying. Combined, these constitute the targeted improvements that comprise the expansion of menu range, the stability of flavours, the environmental comfort, and the pricing communication, which can be directly related to the key issues that the survey has revealed. The suggested changes would help the long-lasting customer retention, the growth of the overall satisfaction, and, more crucially, allow Ravintola Factory Salmisaari to maintain its competitive advantage in the competitive restaurant business of Helsinki.

5. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to evaluate customer satisfaction in Ravintola Factory Salmisaari and the importance of all the factors that affect the dining experience. The research integrated some theoretical views on customer satisfaction, service quality and customer experience with empirical evidence gathered via on site survey. Through the target based on quality of food, performance of food and drinks, service ambience, price and general satisfaction, the research intended to offer practical and evidence-based information to contribute to the continuous improvement of services provided in an urban restaurant in a competitive environment.

The research was conducted in a very effective manner and data collection was effective in producing meaningful results within one day of conduct of the survey. A sample size of 55 actual diners was collected during a lunch service, and the results were recorded as true and immediate experiences of customers. The combination of the qualitative and the quantitative viewpoints made possible the analysis of the quantifiable trends and the perspectives of the qualitative aspect of the issue which provided a balanced picture of the strengths and the areas of development. Though the number of respondents fell short of the maximum planned on account of some customers declining to participate, the data was adequate and representative since the same group of customers visit the restaurant on a daily basis.

Overall, the thesis achieved its purpose and provided valuable insights into customer satisfaction levels at Ravintola Factory Salmisaari. The outcomes showed high service quality and satisfaction levels were achieved with high revisit and recommendation intentions. Simultaneously, other aspects of the menu diversity, acoustic comfort, and value transparent communication appeared as the opportunities of priority development. The learning process of the authors was also enhanced with the experience of the research as it provided improved skills in practical research, data analysis, and the knowledge of customer-oriented service enhancement. A broader sample size, survey days, or comparing the different days across other Factory locations can be used to enlarge the study and gain a deeper understanding of the strategic implications and contribute to the ongoing improvement in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The customer satisfaction survey

Questionnaire: Customer Satisfaction at Ravintola Factory Salmisaari

This survey is carried out as a part of a bachelor's thesis at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. It will evaluate the level of satisfaction of customers at Ravintola Factory. Your opinion will be used with great pleasure, and it will be stored confidentially.

Thank you and take care!

.....

Section 1: Personal Profile

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. Age

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56 and above

3. How often do you visit Ravintola Factory Salmisaari?

- First time
- Once a month or less
- 2-3 times a month
- Weekly
- More than once a week

Section 2: Food Quality

4. Please rate the following aspects of the food you received:

(1 = Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
Taste					
Freshness					
Presentation					
Portion Size					

Service 3: Service Quality

5. Please rate your satisfaction with the following service elements:

(1 = Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
Staff Friendliness					
Staff Knowledge					
Speed of Service					
Accuracy of Order					
Responsiveness to requests or complaints					

Section 4: Physical Environment and Atmosphere

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following service elements:

(1 =Very Poor, 5 = Excellent)

Aspect	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness					
Ambiance (lighting, music, décor)					
Comfort of seating					

Section 5: Price and Value

7. How do you perceive the price in relation to the quality of food and services?

- 1. Very Poor Value
- 2. Poor Value
- 3. Neutral Value
- 4. Very Good Value
- 5. Excellent Value

Section 6: Overall Customer Satisfaction

8. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at Ravintola Factory Salmisaari?

(1 = Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

9. How likely are you to recommend Ravintola Factory Salmisaari to others?

(1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely)

- 1 2 3 4 5

10. How likely are you to revisit Ravintola Factory Salmisaari?

(1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely)

- 1 2 3 4 5

Section 7: Open-Ended Questions

11. What improvements would you suggest to enhance your experience?

Thank You for your Feedback!!!