

The Vital Components of Restaurant Service Quality that affect Guest Satisfaction in Srinagar of Kashmir valley

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Abstract

This is an empirical research work and the purpose of this study was to understand the factors affecting the guest satisfaction in the restaurants of Srinagar in Kashmir valley. After a sound literature review, authors considered decoration and theme, service promptness, food quality, flavor of food, behavior of service providers, value for money etc some key components to ask to the guests through a self-structured questionnaire and same components were analyzed for final results in order to reach the objective of this study. A total of 98 guests, who consumed the services in restaurants of Srinagar in Kashmir valley, were consulted to file the questionnaires in which 72 were Indian and 26 were foreigners.

Service industry is very minute industry in satisfying the customer and, of course, customer satisfaction in service industry is generated by serving as per the customer expectations and offering additional values and benefits to the customer. Understanding the customer preferences is very important before serving to customer. As the restaurant is the part of total service industry, there, the considerable attention towards the service quality, behavior of employee, food etc is very important. In this study, almost, all respondents showed a sound satisfaction towards the every asked statement, but in a few statements, like variety of menu, service promptness, cleanliness, portion size and in flexibility of dietary needs, customers are not satisfy.

This study could be useful instrument for the restaurant service providers of Srinagar in order to use their resources more effectively and efficiently by modifying their existing business plans and strategies in order to enhance the service performance and ensure more guest satisfaction in future.

Key words: *customer satisfaction, Kashmir valley, restaurants, Srinagar, service quality, tourist.*

1. Introduction

In today's modern fast and busy world the schedules and preferences of, almost, every human are changing day by day. The movements of people have generated the scope of restaurant industry across the globe and a number of restaurants are being opened everywhere which increased the competition among the restaurant firms and offers different restaurant options to people who dine out of their home. So, restaurant industry became one of the highly demanded industries worldwide, therefore, maintaining the high level of service quality and customer satisfaction became the matter of concern, because only those firms could survive that have delight and loyal customers. Thus, for restaurant service providers, it is very important to understand the factors which are influencing customer satisfaction prior to serving the customer. Generally, it is noted that food (**Chow et al., 2007**), behavior of service providers, atmosphere of venue, price, quality of services (**Barsky and Labagh, 1992**) etc are main components which are directly influencing the restaurant customer satisfaction. The restaurant service providers focus on to know the preferences of customers and meet their expectations and to delight them as the satisfied customers (**Juwaheer & Ross, 2003**) and, of course, they will come again on next time to consume the services (**Choi & Chu, 2001**). The question arises here that what is customer satisfaction...? As per the thoughts and ideas of different authors, this question has several faces and dimensions. The customer satisfaction is a way that how the service delivery is perceived by the customer (**Hernon & Whitwan, 2001**) or we say that customer satisfaction is the positive evaluation of consumed services by the customer at the end of services delivered (**Oliver, 1993**) and it is about the profitability of organization (**Luo, Homburg, 2007**).

The hospitality industry is increasing swiftly throughout the globe as the several outlets of hospitality industry, like restaurants, fast food points, catering, hotels, and bars are being opened everywhere in order to provide excellent and sophisticated services to customers out of their homes, moreover, under the **One Stop Shop** concept multi type services are provided at one point to the customers due to which the other food outlets snatches the customer share of restaurants. So how the restaurant industry can keep consistency in customer loyalty or how it will be successful in market penetration...?? Different things are there to take into consideration... The restaurant staff must be train and good professionals, should have service knowledge, in addition, customer preferences is very important to know before serving, because this is the way to meet customer expectations, wants and needs and then the customer satisfaction can be ensure. The image of restaurant is based on restaurant services provided to customer, hence food, physical environment of restaurant, attitude of service providers, and other services of restaurant are most important to focus on and customer expectations can be met. In case, service providers fail to meet the customer expectations, the restaurant customer will spread negative image of restaurant firm. The guest experience in restaurant is tangible as well as intangible, tangible aspects can be enhanced, but the intangible aspects of restaurant services need more consideration. That's why the service industry is very minute industry in satisfying the customer and, of course, customer satisfaction in service industry is generated by serving additional values and benefits to the customer.

Above, it is discussed that several factors are responsible in influencing restaurant guest satisfaction everywhere and also, in this study, focus is on the components of restaurant service quality which have direct influence on the guest satisfaction in Srinagar of Kashmir

valley. The Srinagar is famous and prominent tourist destination in Kashmir valley and the restaurant scope is quite obvious here throughout year. Several statements were asked, related to restaurant services, to the restaurant guests who consumed restaurant services in Srinagar in order to reach the objective of this study. The next sections of this study are the theoretical background as review of literature, discussion of results and interpretation of results in form of conclusion.

2. Review of Literature

The customer satisfaction is analyzed by several authors as **Minazzi (2008)** says that customer satisfaction is the equilibrium between customer expectations and customer perceptions, if both are in positive direction then satisfaction is result. **Zairi (2000)** stated that satisfaction is the feeling full of pleasure and filled expectations by the customer, or in other words it is purchasing and consuming experience of guest for self benefits as argued by **Andreassen and Lindestad (1998)**; moreover, **Levesque and McDougall (1996)** claimed that, as a concept, satisfaction is total response of customer towards the services and service providers, furthermore, **Malik & Ghaffor (2012)** says in the field of marketing, customer satisfaction is reaching to pre determined expectations. Several authors have suggested that selecting a restaurant is influenced by various factors (**Barta 2008**). **Cullen (2004)** says at different occasions, customer choices are different; however, quality of food, type of food, location, cleanliness, and good reputation of the restaurant etc are the main factors influencing customer satisfaction and restaurant selection. The customers are better judge himself/herself, because they measures quality of restaurant services by the fixed prices on the restaurant services by the service providers, they know high price restaurant serves better food quality than low price, hence value for money is also one of the prime factors influencing the selection of restaurant (**Muller and Woods, 1994**). **Kivela (1997)** stated that the choice of restaurant differs because of various reasons, as type of restaurant, age level, income, occupation, dining occasion etc, and the ambience and comfort level restaurants are preferred by the rich customers. A number of people are slaves of taste; they are often visiting those restaurants which are known for taste and flavor, hence **Josiam and Monteiro (2004)** are also stressing on the same thing that taste of food is important for customers to select any restaurant.

According to **Harnack and French (2008)** nowadays, due to various reasons, people are frequently having food out of home and they spending a sound amount on food and dining per month, therefore, maintenance of food quality and knowing the customer likes and dislikes is the fundamental task of restaurant service providers in order to retain the existing loyal customers and to add the more loyal customers. **Schall (2003)** analyzed that without understanding the customer's likes and dislike, the problems could arise in designing and developing the services and products, due to this, it is very difficult to satisfy any customer. The satisfied customers are the real assets of any firm, as the **Brockway, Mangold and Miller, (1999)** studied that one satisfied customer tries to motive averagely five people to use services of that particular firm, on the other hands a dis-satisfied customer shares his/her bad experience averagely with ten persons. **Sloan (2004)** has studied that the total physical environment of the restaurant such as

restaurant's décor, furniture, atmosphere and other facilities in restaurants can have a great impact on the dining experience of customers. **Hensley and Sulek (2004)** are stressing on that restaurant staff must be well trained and professional for the success of any restaurant; they added that restaurant staff must have full knowledge of restaurant services and attentiveness, courteous, knowledge of customer expectations etc are the other important qualities which the restaurant staff should have; on the other hands, **Raktida Siri (2009)** is giving the restaurant success credit to satisfied customers, because satisfied customers are showing consistency in consuming the restaurant services which boosts the all over performance of business and makes customer experience more positive and memorable. **Torres and Kline (2006)** says that delightful customer are better than the satisfied customers, the delightful customers are the actual loyal customers who are talking their experience positively to others and this is what we are saying word-of-mouth.

3. Research Methodology

This is an empirical research work in nature and the purpose of this study is to understand the factors affecting the guest satisfaction in the restaurants of Srinagar in Kashmir valley. In order to fulfill the objective of this study, after a sound literature review, a self administered questionnaire was developed and primary data were collected from 8 selected restaurants of Srinagar namely 7 C' Café N Fine Dine, Ahdoo's, Mugal Darbar, Kareema Restaurant, The Lalith Palace, Peerzoo Island, Grand Mumtaz and Shamayana Restaurant. 98 guests/respondents, who consumed the services of restaurants in Srinagar, were selected to file the questionnaires in which 72 were Indian and 26 were foreigners. The questionnaire was divided into two parts.... Part-I is about the demographic profile of respondents and the Part-II is related with main objective of the study. The data were analyzed by the SPSS software version 16.0.

4. Analysis and results

The responses of 98 guests, collect through structured questionnaire, are coded for data analysis. The results of this study are presented in the following sections.

a) Demographic Characteristics

Table-1 Demographic profile of respondents

Following is the analysis of demographic characteristics of 98 respondents:

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age in years	up to 20	20	20.4
	20 to 35	29	29.6
	35 to 50	26	26.5
	Above 50	23	23.5
	Total	98	100.0
Income/Annum in Lakhs (₹)	Up to 1 Lakh	3	3.1
	1 to 2	16	16.3

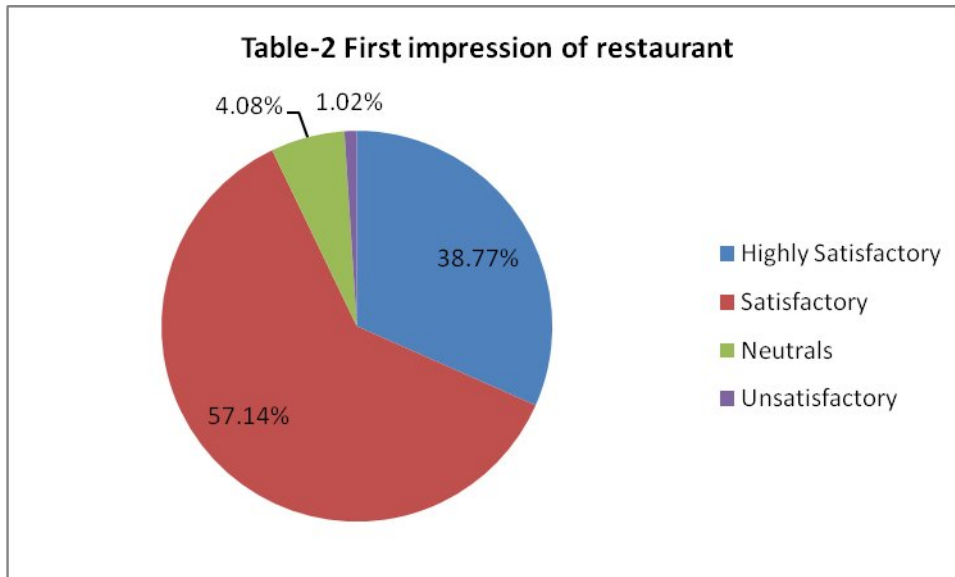
	2 to 3	49	50.0
	Above 3	30	30.6
	Total	98	100.0
Education	up to 10+2	30	30.6
	Graduate	26	26.5
	PG	31	31.6
	Other	11	11.2
	Total	98	100.0
Occupation	Study	31	31.6
	Business	34	34.7
	Agriculture	8	8.2
	Other	25	25.5
	Total	98	100.0
Sex	Male	50	51.0
	Female	48	49.0
	Total	98	100.0
Marital Status	married	64	65.3
	Unmarried	34	34.7
	Total	98	100.0
Nationality	Domestic	72	73.5
	Foreigner	26	26.5
	Total	98	100.0

The demographic profile of the respondents is recorded in Table-1 of this study. The seven demographic variables of respondents have been studied in this study. 29.6% of respondents are from 20 to 35 years age group which is the biggest group of respondents followed by 26.5% (35 to 50 years age group) and 23.5% of respondents are from *Above 50* years age group, while as 20.4% of respondents are from below the 20 years of age. 50% of respondents have annual income 2 to 3 lakhs followed by the 30.6% of respondents who have above 3 lakhs annual income, while as 16.3% is the second lowest number having annual income 1 to 2 lakhs annually, which is followed by the 3.1% respondents having only annual income up to one lakh. Almost, whole sample size is educated in which 34.7% are Graduate, 31.6% are PG, and 30.6% respondents have qualification standard up to 10+2, while as the 11.2% of respondents have other qualifications. As for as the occupation of the respondents is concern, 34.7% are indulged in business, 31.6% are doing study and 25.5% are involved in other activities, while as 8.2% are agriculturists. There is not much difference between sex ration of respondents, because 51% are males and 49% are female respondents; out of

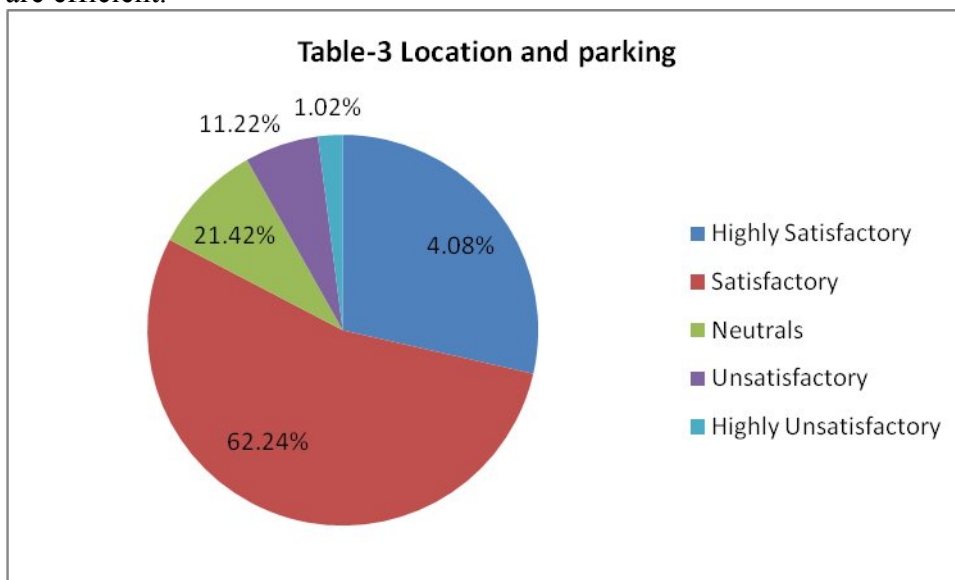
total respondents, 65.3% are married and 34.7% are unmarried. The 73.5% domestic and 26.5% foreigners have expressed their views in this study.

5. Findings

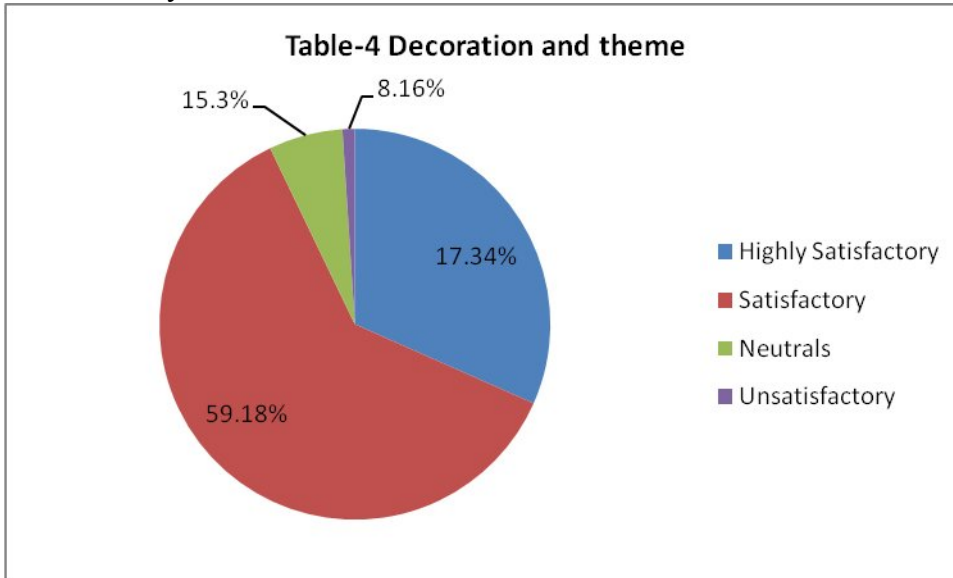
b) Findings and discussions of Part-II of questionnaire:



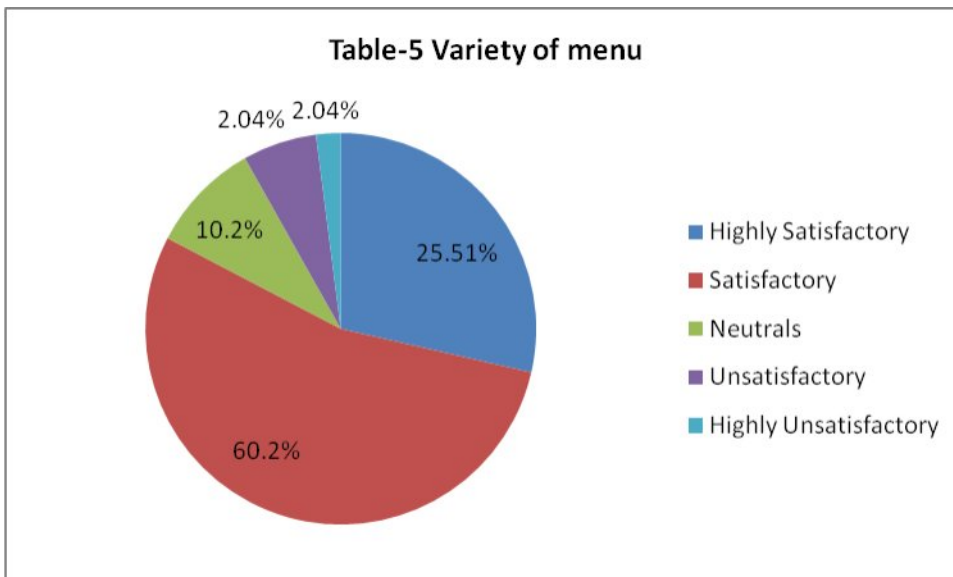
38.77% respondents are highly satisfied with the statement that first impress of restaurants in Srinagar is efficient while as the 57.14% respondents are satisfied with the same statement. 4.08% respondents are neutral in above mentioned statement and only 1.02% respondents are unsatisfied with first impress of restaurants in Srinagar are efficient.



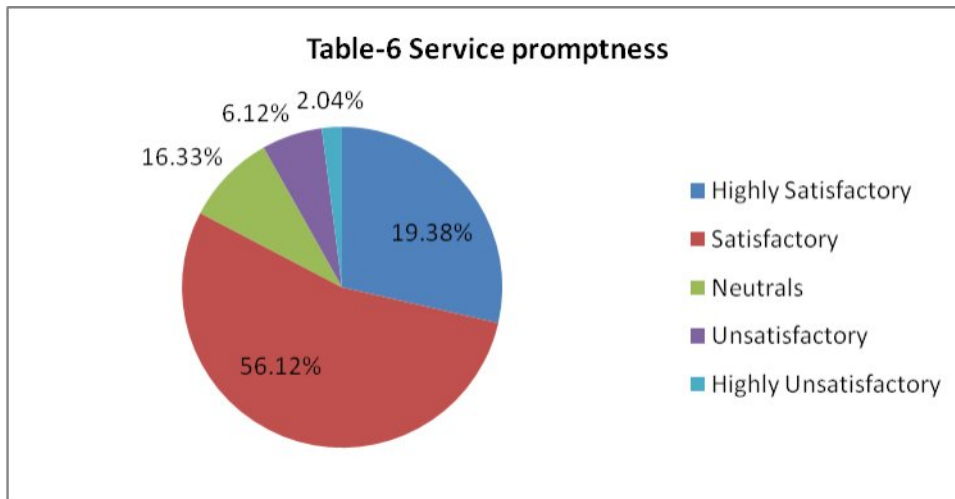
Location and parking around the restaurants statement is satisfying 62.24% respondents and highly satisfying 4.08% respondents. 21.42%, of respondents are neutral in this statement. 11.22% respondents are not satisfy with location and parking arrangements of restaurants in Srinagar while as 1.02%% respondents are highly unsatisfactory with the same statement.



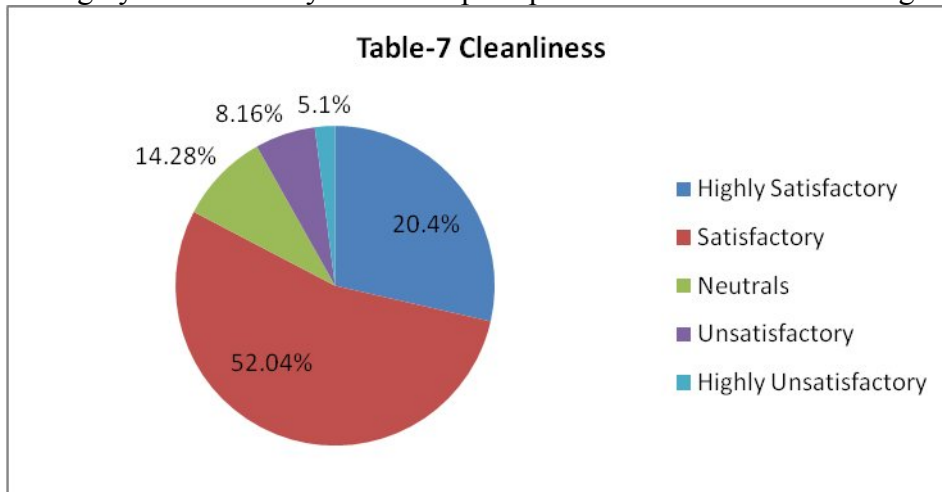
59.18% respondents are satisfied with the decoration and theme of restaurants in Srinagar and for the same statement, 17.34% respondents are highly satisfied. 15.3% respondents are neutral about the decoration and themes of restaurants in Srinagar, while as, 8.16% respondents are unsatisfied for the same statement.



In the variety of menu statement, the 25.51% respondents have showed their highly satisfaction towards it and 60.20% of respondents have showed satisfaction for the same statement. 10.2% respondents are neutral in variety of menu available in restaurants in Srinagar. 2.04% respondents are not satisfied with variety of menu in restaurant of Srinagar. Again, for the same statement, 2.04% respondents are also highly unsatisfied.

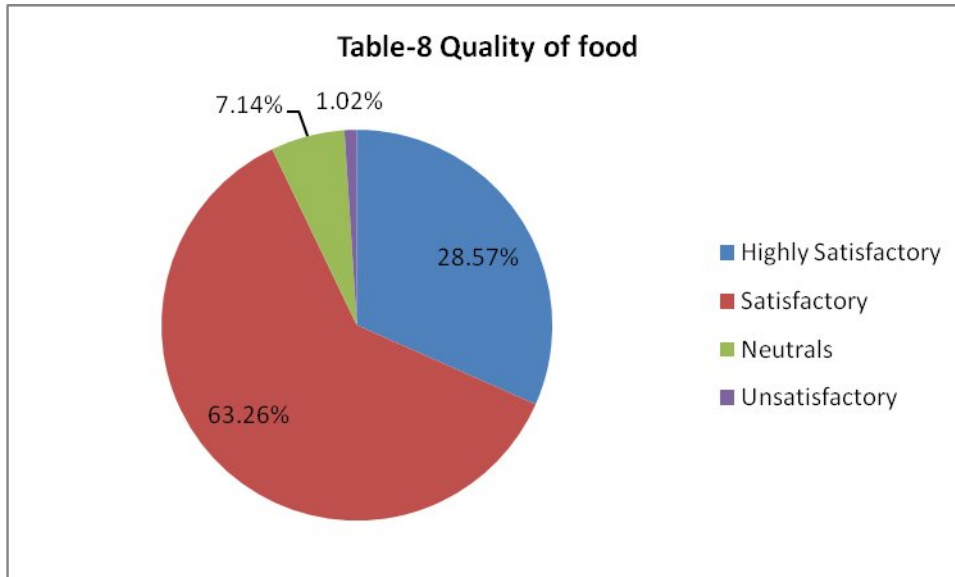


56.12% respondents are satisfactory in service promptness of restaurants in Srinagar while as 19.38% respondents have showed their highly satisfaction towards the same statement. 16.33% respondents are neutral about the service promptness of restaurants in Srinagar. 6.12% respondents out of total respondents are unsatisfactory and 2.04% are highly unsatisfactory in service promptness of restaurants in Srinagar.

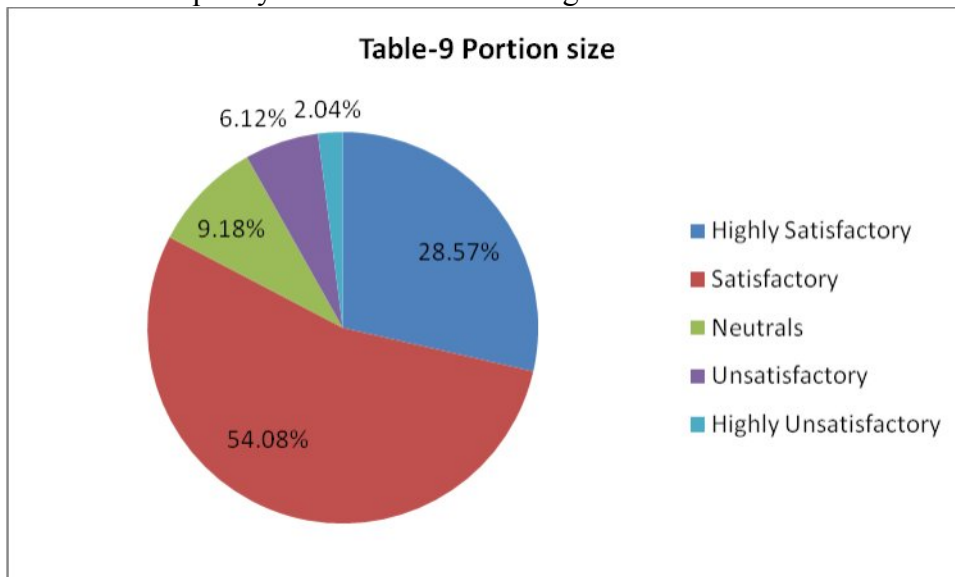


The cleanliness of the restaurants in Srinagar is highly satisfying 20.40% of respondents and satisfying 52.04% of respondents. 14.28% respondents are neutral

about the cleanliness statement. For the same statement, 8.16% of respondents are unsatisfied and 5.10% of respondents are highly unsatisfied.

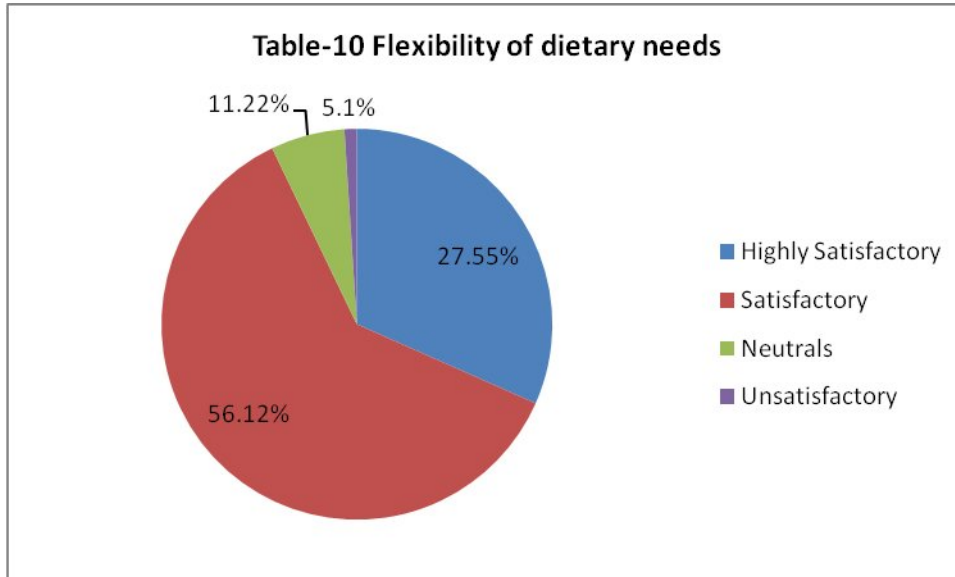


63.26% of respondents are satisfactory with the food quality of Srinagar restaurants and 28.57% are highly satisfactory with food quality of restaurants in Srinagar. 7.14% of respondents are neutral in this statement and 1.02% respondents are unsatisfactory with the food quality of restaurants in Srinagar.

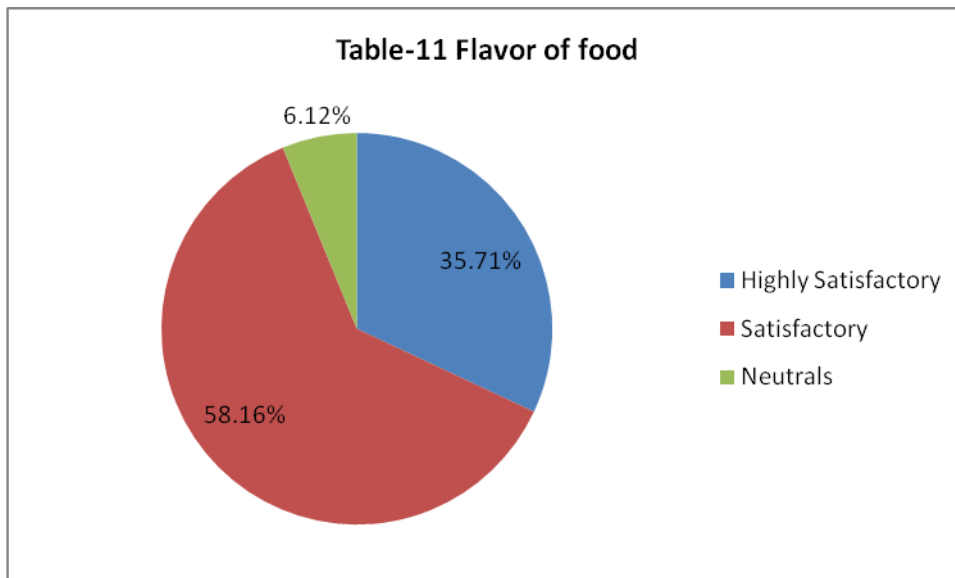


54.08% respondents are satisfactory with the portion size of restaurants in Srinagar while as 28.75% respondents are highly satisfactory with the portion size of the restaurants in Srinagar. 9.18% respondents are neutral about this statement. 6.12%

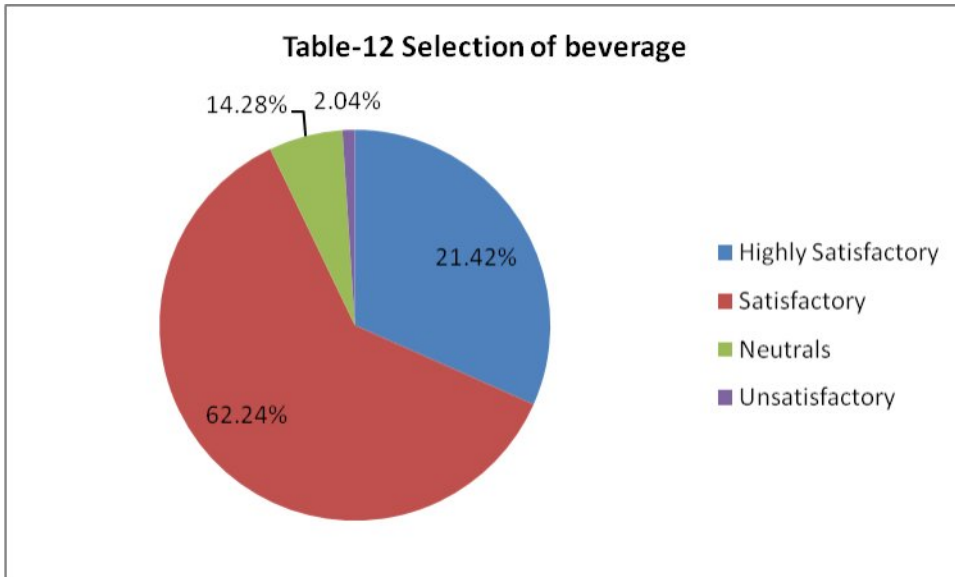
respondents are unsatisfactory and 2.04% respondents are highly unsatisfactory with the above said statement.



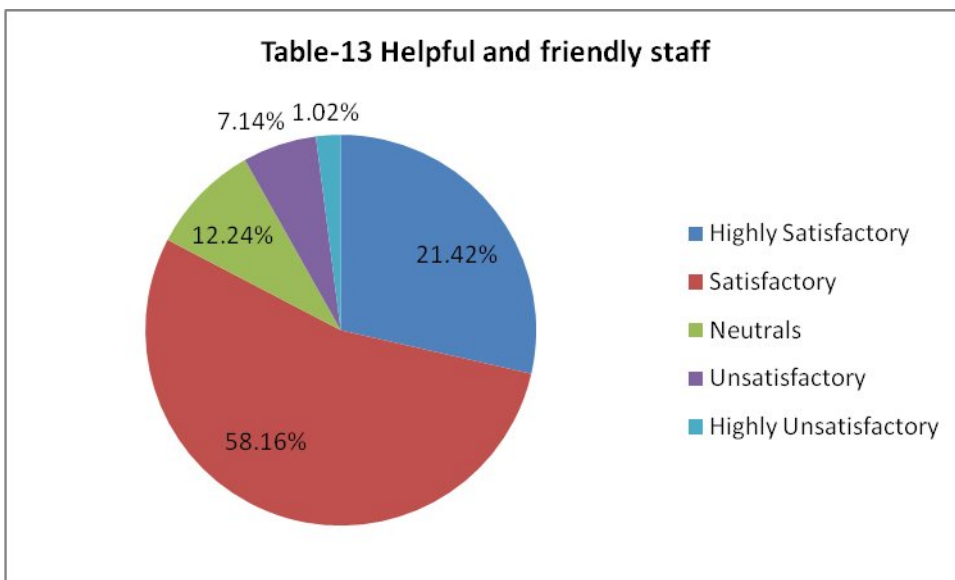
56.12% respondents are satisfactory with the Flexibility of dietary needs in restaurants of Srinagar and 27.55% respondents are highly satisfactory with the said statement. 11.22% respondents are neutral about the Flexibility of dietary needs in restaurants in Srinagar. 5.10% respondents are unsatisfactory regarding the above mentioned statement.



The flavor of food in restaurants in Srinagar is satisfying 58.16% of respondents and 35.71% respondents are highly satisfied with flavor of food in restaurants of Srinagar. 6.12% respondents are neutral with the above sated statement.

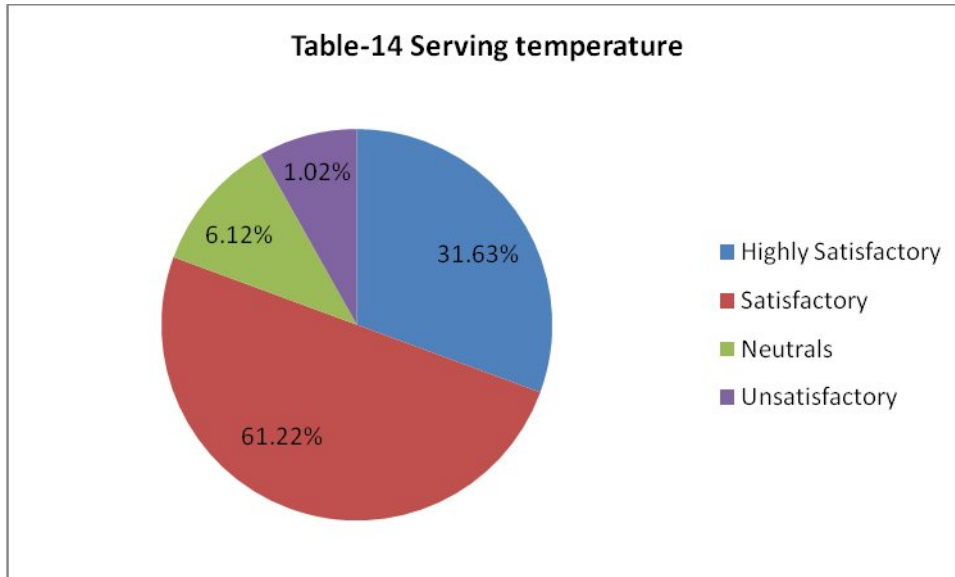


62.42% respondents are satisfactory with the selection of beverage in restaurants of Srinagar and 21.42% respondents have showed highly satisfaction in the same said statement. The 14.28% respondents are neutral in selection of beverage in restaurants of Srinagar and 2.04% respondents are unsatisfactory with the same statement.

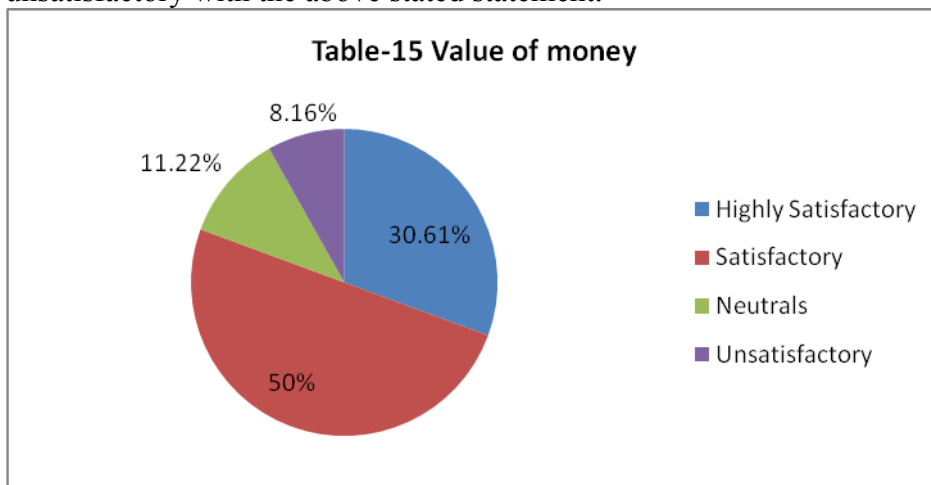


The helping nature and friendly behavior of restaurant staff in restaurants of Srinagar is satisfying 58.16% respondents and highly satisfying 21.42% respondents. 12.24%

respondents are neutral in helping nature and friendly behavior of restaurant staff in restaurants of Srinagar, while as the 7.14% respondents are not satisfy and 1.02% respondents are highly unsatisfactory with the same statement.



61.22% respondents are satisfactory with the serving temperature in restaurants of Srinagar and 31.63% respondents are highly satisfactory with serving temperature in restaurants of Srinagar. 6.12% respondents are neutral and 1.02% respondents are unsatisfactory with the above stated statement.



50% respondents are satisfied with that consuming the services in restaurants of Srinagar is value for money and 30.61% respondents are highly satisfied with the same statement. 11.22% respondents are neutral in that consuming services in restaurants of Srinagar is value for money and 8.16% respondents are unsatisfactory with the statement.

6. Conclusion

This is an empirical study, the main purpose of the study is to examine the satisfaction of guests over the services used in restaurants of Srinagar in Kashmir valley for which 72 Indian and 26 foreign guests have been consulted. Several statements, related to restaurant services, are used through the questionnaire to know the results for the objectives of this study. Mostly, the respondents are young and from upper middle class with good qualifications; moreover, the respondents are involved in business and least in agriculture. The gender ratio of respondents is not much different while as the married and Indian guests are more in consuming the services in restaurants of Srinagar in Kashmir valley. Though, the good number of respondents showed their satisfaction towards almost every asked statement, like first impression of restaurants, location & parking, decoration & theme, variety of menu, quality of food and so on, but the various respondents are neutral in several statements, as location & parking, decoration & theme, serving promptness, quality of food, flexibility of dietary needs etc, moreover, a considerable number of respondents are also not satisfy in different asked statements as variety of menu, service promptness, cleanliness, portion size, flexibility of dietary needs etc.

However, according to above findings and discussions, it is necessary for the restaurant service providers of Srinagar to modify their existing business plans and strategies in order to enhance the service performance in future. Moreover, more empirical research needs to be conducted on the same area of research in near future. As food is one of the basic needs of tourists at any destination, being a well known tourist destination, Srinagar restaurants must have every aspect of services in such ways which could give the feeling of 'wow!' to the tourists.

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