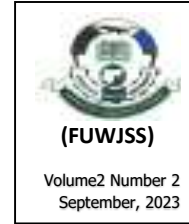


IMPACT OF MENU DESIGN ON CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION IN SELECTED HOTELS IN MAKURDI METROPOLIS, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA



Clement Ukayi Anake

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State Nigeria
anaclem@yahoo.com

Nyikyaa Wilfred Terseer

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State Nigeria

Abstract

Menu design has shown potential in influencing hotel customers' satisfaction and restaurant customers' food choice. In ascertaining this influence, this study assesses the impact of menu design on customers' satisfaction in hotels within Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria. The gaze motion theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. The study's sample consists of one hundred and sixty-two (162) respondents who were selected through the use simple random sampling. The structured questionnaire and indepth interview form the main sources of data collection in the study. The collated data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23). Data analysis involved descriptive statistical tools including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The study results and findings revealed that menu design has positive impact on customers' satisfaction in hotels within Makurdi metropolis. The results and findings also revealed that menu design assist customers in making more informed choices and customers perceived the menu in hotels under study to be highly attractive and visually appealing. The study recommends that hospitality professionals should pay more attention to menu design attributes by improving on their menus in order to be competitive in the industry as they are major marketing tools in the hotel and restaurant industry.

Key words: Hotel, Customer, Satisfaction, Menu, Hospitality

Introduction

Menu design is an important aspect of restaurant management which is growing rapidly. Food service operators are now intensifying their efforts to improve their menus. A restaurant menu traditionally was a blackboard in a

restaurant kitchen, which was continuously updated throughout the service period to notify waiters of the price and the number of portions of different menu items remaining (Antun & Gufstasin, 2005). However, the menu is a relatively new phenomenon in hotel management as it was a 'byproduct' of the French Revolution which brought about the emergence of fine dining establishments and this marked a distinctive innovation in service. There is no doubt that restaurant menu of this era is of great importance to the food service industry as it forms the basis of a successful restaurant.

Merriam-Webster's (2009), defined Menu as a list of dishes that may be ordered in a restaurant or that are to be served at a banquet. Also, Wansink *et al.*, (2001), observed that menus have both material and immaterial meaning. In terms of material, it is a list or a card which document the food and beverage options being offered by a restaurant. The immaterial meaning of menu state that a menu is a medium that affects customer's perceptions of restaurant experience. The menu reflects the formality, style, price range and the overall image of food service establishments (Antun & Gustafson, 2005). Thus, it is a marketing tool and a model to fit the operational strategy of restaurants. The objectives of a well-designed restaurant menu are to communicate, provide tangible information, facilitate choice of food items, enable predictions, costing, planning and to analyze a restaurant sales history (McCall & Lynn, 2008). Thus, the restaurant menu is intended to promote a perception of value to customers and to give more direction as to what to choose. It is in this way that menu designers use strategies such as providing symbols or highlights of particular menu items, placing particular items at the top or bottom of the list (primacy and regency effect), positioning the most profitable items in sweet spots (gaze motion) where customers eyesight reach most frequently and using salience builders to distract default preferences; through contrasting font style, font color, font size and pictures to increase the sales ability of the menu (Ozdemir, 2014). Panitz (2000) argued that menu which is a crucial marketing and selling tool for the food service industry must be designed to suit the facility as it tells customers a story about the dining operation through its descriptions and design as well as sending messages to the customers about their food choices. Menu design according to Ozdemir (2014) is concerned with the creation of an attractive menu that not only provides information, but also directs customer's attention to the food items that the foodservice establishment wants to sell most and aimed at meeting their satisfaction. Customers eat with their eyes, thus it is imperative for a menu design to be desirable and impress the customer as a successful restaurant menu reflects a deep understanding of customer's desires and characteristics (Baimy, et al, 2017). Well and sensibly selected words in a speech is not easily forgotten. Similarly for

menus, a well-designed menu is a map that moves the customer to reach their satisfaction and exceed their expectation.

Menu design is a variable that has considerable potentials in impacting on customer perception of menu items from both practical and academic perspectives. It is designed to promote the items the restaurant wants to sell most, instead of leaving it entirely to random selection. Menu if properly designed will direct customer's attention to menu items the restaurant wants to sell. The customer need menus that are attractive, however, the kind of information they want or view as important on menu is still not clear.

McCall and Lynn (2008) observed that studies on menu design and item sales, revealed questionable empirical validity or lack of information about validity and reliability of measurement instruments. They further argued that though there are much academic interests in menu design, most of the studies are conducted in the advanced countries. Customer's behavior in developing countries is different from the developed countries because of differences in culture (Baker, 2001). Satisfaction, choice and perception may differ from country to country, race and religion and thus may significantly affect item choice, due to a wide range of interacting factors aside from menu item perceptions of customers.

With the high competition in the food service businesses, in serving both continental and ethnic cuisine in Nigeria today, it is important for food service operators and managers to use every opportunity efficiently and effectively to succeed in this competitive environment and to maximize sales.

According to Ozdemir and Caliskan (2014), general conclusion should not be drawn easily from existing menu design literatures; hence, more researches with larger sample size; valid and reliable measurement instruments should be used to assess the impact of menu design in order to validate the existing findings.

It is therefore imperative to identify and assess the different attributes of menu design, by taking findings from previous studies in developed countries, even though they cannot be used to reach conclusion on the impact of menu design on customer satisfaction in Nigeria. Preliminary literature reviewed shows nonexistence of research work regarding the impact of menu design on customers' satisfaction in Nigeria. It is in view of this that this study seeks to assess the impact of menu design on customers' satisfaction in hotels and restaurants within Makurdi metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

Menu Planning and Operations in the Global Hospitality Industry

A menu is a piece or a set of paper on which information and expressions are printed to communicate to customers regarding the quality, culture and

style of a restaurant (Seaberg, 1991). According to Reynolds and Taylor (2009), it communicates what will be offered, indicates the type of service to be expected, and reflects the amenities that will become the guest's dining experience. Pavesic (2005) argued that a menu is a printed medium that outline food and beverages to be read by the guest. A menu is different from the main product of a restaurant. According to Johns and Kivela (2001), the main product of restaurants is meal experience and it involved many components such as food and beverages, atmosphere, social factors and management. Memories and the overall perceptions of meal experience is what customers gain from consumption in restaurants, and menu is part of that experience and has relationship with customer's perceptions.

Restaurants began to develop menu arts in the 1800s, and popular French artists including Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, and Gauguin were hired to design menus using portraits and illustrations, especially for menu covers (Fellman & Leonard, 2001). The author pointed out that most covers were in full color; with many of them decorate with embossing and engraving. Artists were not hired by every restaurant at that time, so the easiest and cheapest method to produce a menu was to maintain a library of illustrations, proverbs and statements having to do with foods.

According to Scanlon (1999), restaurant's menu plays a vital role in the overall success of the restaurant as it describes to the customers the items that are available to sell. Menu design entails designing menu card with regard to menu card characteristics, menu item layout, menu item descriptions and labels in order to create an attractive menu that not only provides information but also direct customers attention to the items that the firm wants to sell more. Baiomy et al., (2017) identified some factors that influence customers' satisfaction to include: menu item descriptions, menu variety and menu design; which significantly predicted overall customer satisfaction with the menu in the dining experience. Characteristics of menu design include menu item position, menu item labels and descriptions, and menu card features. Menu item position has to do with locating or the positioning of menu items on a menu display (a card or a board), and in a menu category list. Yang (2012) explained that menu sweet spots on restaurant menus and concluded that if they exist, they are in the right upper or lower corner of a page where the reader's initial and final glances are focused on, and whether the placement of menu items on those spots or at the top or bottom of the category list may increase their sales. The author concluded that the placement of items on a menu display can increase customers' awareness of those items, and may positively influence their sales.

Menu item description involves the use or introduction of oral information about menu items on a menu display. McCall and Lynn (2008)

found that customers perceived items higher in quality when they are described in more complex terms, while Autun and Gufstain (2005), argued that detail of descriptions has a positive impact on customers' value perceptions. Menu item labels refer to the use of evocative labels instead of regular ones that stimulate positive perceptions by consumers. Wansink et al., (2001) opined that restaurant customers evaluated menu items more positively than regular-label items with reference to food quality. In terms of menu design formats, Miller and Paversic, (1996) argued that customers will react first to the physical design format of the menu, such as the cover, the shape and paper quality. They will interpret the messages that the menu is trying to deliver by these physical facts. Various menu formats identified by the authors include: single page or card, Two-page/Single-fold Format and panel.

Importance of Menu Design

Miller and Pavesic (1996), pointed out that the importance of menu design include:

- i). A properly designed menu communicates to customers. Customers receive and interpret its message and form an attitude based on the menu's concept. Symbols and words are decoded and translated developing an expectation and a perceived value.
- ii). A well designed menu is an effective communication, marketing and cost control tool; emphasize what the customer wants and what the restaurant prepares and serves best; obtain the necessary check average needed to realize sales goals and bottom line return; utilize staff and equipment in an efficient manner; and lead to more accurate forecasting of the menu sales mix.
- iii). A properly designed menu directs the attention of the diner to specific items and increase the likelihood that those items will be ordered. These items should be the ones with the highest gross profit and lowest food costs that help achieve the average check needed to return the desired sales. The customers' decision cannot be completely controlled; however, it can be directed and not left entirely to random chance selections.
- iv). A restaurant's menu is one of the most important internal advertising tools that can be used to educate a guest about the experience they are about to have. An effective menu design should communicate the brand, the vision, the ambiance, the food and beverage offerings, and the overall experience a guest can expect to have.

Conceptualizing Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality Industry

Customer satisfaction has been a key concept and goal for every business. Yang (2012) argued that business today is about making their client satisfied and keeping up a decent customer relation for the future, keeping in mind the end goal to achieve customer loyalty. A satisfied customer is less likely to switch their choice of products and services. Reynolds and Taylor (2009) observed that satisfaction can be related to a person's feelings that can be pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a service or product's perceived performance or outcome in relation to the buyer's expectations. A customer is the key factor in any business succession. He observed that a satisfied customer always demands for more which creates the opportunity to supply and gain profit in the competitive market. Wansink (2001) observed that satisfied customer is the key element to shape the establishment of any successful business since customer satisfaction encourages customers to re-purchase the products and services, ensures brand loyalty and improves the business image by increasing positive word of mouth. The number of satisfied customers represents the image or success of a business. In today's business world, there are several competitors for any kind of business in the market and the customers have high level of choices. If a business fails to understand its customers need, the sales starts declining which leads to failure of the business. In order to improve customer satisfaction, there is every need to first identify the customers experience and their needs. It is important for companies to consider and satisfy the customers' needs and wants in order to gain competitive advantage (McCall & Lynn, 2008). Wansink, (2001), believed that all business are build based on relationships, understanding customer relationship management or relationship marketing has become a necessity for understanding how to manage businesses in the service competition.

Concept of Menu Design

Menu design involves brainstorming what kinds of foods and beverages your restaurant will be serving. But that's not all. When designing a menu, you're also deciding on its layout and how it will be presented to customers. For example, designing a menu involves choosing a color scheme, picking a font, determining the price of meals, and figuring out how you'll arrange items on the menu. A good menu design is one of the most important aspects of a restaurant's marketing plan. When you design your restaurant's menu, it should represent your eatery's personality and keep your brand fresh in your customer's minds. By looking at your menu, diners should be excited to eat at your restaurant. A great menu keeps customers coming back and recommending your eatery to close family and friends.

Processes involves in producing an efficient and beautiful menu design include:

1. Keep your goals in mind

One of the first things to do when designing your menu is to think about your goals. What do you plan to accomplish with your menu? Do you want customers to spend more on your menu? Do you want to stand out from the competition? Whatever your goals, it's important to keep them in mind when designing your menu.

2. Stand out from the competition

To achieve an efficient menu design, make sure you're paying attention to what your competitors are doing. Look at their websites, menus, and marketing efforts to see what they're doing right and how you can apply the same techniques with your own unique twist. Next, consider your competition in terms of location. How can you make your menu different from other restaurants in the area? What menu items do you have in common? How does pricing compare? Does your menu offer more variety than other menus? Paying attention to these factors will give you a good starting point when designing your menu.

3. Price your menu wisely

Determining the right prices will help diners see how your items match up value-wise against your competition. Follow these pricing guidelines:

- a. Keep everyday items around \$1 more or less than your competition
- b. Price items unique to your restaurant a bit higher than other items.
- c. Don't use dollar signs. According to one source, people spend more money as a result.
- d. Spell out the price. (Ex: ten dollars instead of 10)
- e. Throw expensive dishes on the menu. This makes other menu items look like a deal.

4. Consider visual appeal

Your menu is one of the first thing customers see when they walk into your restaurant, so it should be visually pleasing. Color, font, and organization are key visual components.

The following guidelines are necessary when thinking about color:

- a. **Green:** fresh food, just picked from the garden
- b. **Orange:** stimulates the appetite
- c. **Yellow:** promotes happiness
- d. **Red:** grabs attention

Effective typography communicates your restaurant's brand. Choose a font that appeals to you, but make sure it's legible. You could also use more than one typeface to distinguish the names and descriptions of menu items, which can help to guide customers through the menu.

Theoretical Framework

Gaze Motion Theory

Researchers used Gaze motion theory to explain the relationship between the attributes of menu design and consumers' ordering behaviors. This theory was propounded by a menu and graphic designer, William Doerfler in 1971 when he argued that customers focus on a single-fold menu with two facing pages lying in the region above a diagonal line cutting across both facing pages (Panitz, 2000). He further argued that the most influential area lies just above the mid-point of the right page. Yang (2012) collaborated this, when he observed that with reader's identifiable pattern of gaze movements across a display like a menu card, people can more accurately recall the first and last items seen. Because of the predictable pattern of reading menus, menu sweet spots evolve, and with a strategic placement of menu items on these spots, it is possible to draw initial and repeated attention of customers to them in order to increase the possibility of their choice. In view of the above, the gaze motion theory is hereby adopted as the base of this study. This is because it captures the necessary needs and requirements of customers in the study area.

Research Methodology

The population of study comprises of all customers of Benue hotels and resorts in Makurdi. To obtain the population of study, a list of all registered hotels within Makurdi was obtained from the ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Makurdi, Benue State. The simple table random sampling technique was used to select four (4) hotels out of the total number of registered hotels in the study area. The selected hotels includes: Doo Palace Hotel, Benue Hotel and Resort, Hally Day Hotel and Smile View Hotel.

A total number of 162 was drawn from four hotels in the study area, as study population; which comprises of customers and staff of the hotels (Table 1).

Table 1: Population of the study

Hotel	Population		Total population
	Customers	Staff	

Doo palace hotel	35	5	40
Benue hotel and resort	38	5	43
Hallyday hotel	36	5	41
Smile view hotel	34	4	38
Total	143	19	162

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The survey sampling technique, in line with Denga and Ali (2003), was adopted as the procedure of selecting or drawing from the study population to ensure that the portion of the population being selected is the representative of the population.

Consequently, fifty (50) customers were used as the sample size. This was obtained using Taro Yamane scientific formula given as $\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where:

N= the finite population

l= constant value

e= degree of sampling error in a given situation, in this case (5% or 0.05).

n=sample size.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{58}{1+58(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{58}{1+58(0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{58}{1.145} \\ &= 50 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 2, below, 150 total sample size was obtained out of the total target population of 162, using Yamane scientific formula

Self-administered questionnaire, participant observation and oral interview were used as instruments for data collection. Questionnaires were administered to the customers while the staffs were interviewed orally. The questionnaire contains section A and B. Section A contains personal information about the respondents. Section B is the main body of the questionnaire. This section contained close ended questions using a four (4) point likert scale through which the opinions of the respondents are expressed. This range from 1= strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 4 = agree and 5= strongly agree.

Satisfaction of customers is however rated based on three main levels: (1 =Not at all, 2 = To some extent, 3 =To a large extent).

Table 2: Sample size table

Hotel	Population		sample size		Total Sample size
	Customers	Staff	customers	Staff	
Doo palace hotel	35	5	32	5	37
Benue hotel and resort	38	5	35	5	40
Hallyday hotel	36	5	33	5	38
Smile view hotel	34	4	31	4	35
Total	143	19	131	19	150

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data collated through questionnaire were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, tables and simple percentages which form the basis for decision making.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Socio-Demographic	Frequency	percentage
GENDER		
Male	105	72.4
Female	40	27.6
Total	145	100
AGE		
18-25	11	7.6
26-35	41	28.3
36-45	83	57.2
46 and above	10	6.9
Total	145	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	53	36.6
Married	92	63.4
Others	0	0
Total	145	100
EDUCATION LEVEL		
Primary	12	8.3
Secondary	38	26.2
Tertiary	95	65.5
Total	145	100
TYPE OF CUSTOMER		
New	17	11.7
Regular	128	88.3
Total	145	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4, above revealed that, 105 of the sampled respondents were Males which represent 72.4% while 40 of the sampled respondents representing 27.6% were Females. Regarding the age of respondents, 11 of the respondents representing 7.6% fall within the age range of 18-25. 41 of the

sampled respondents representing 28.3% fall within the age group of 26-35. The table also shows that 83 of the sampled respondents representing 57.2% fall within the age range of 36-45 and 10 of the sampled respondents representing 6.9% were above 45 years. With respect to marital status, the table shows that 53 of the respondents sampled for the study representing 36.6% were single, 92 of the respondents representing 63.4% were married while Zero (0) respondent fall under others. Regarding the educational background, the table shows that, 12 of the sampled respondents representing 8.3% attained primary education, 38 of the respondents representing 26.2% attained secondary education while 65.5% (95) of the total respondents attained tertiary education. Regarding the type of customer, 17 of the sampled respondents representing 11.7% were new customers while 128 of the total respondents representing 88.3% were regular customers.

Impact of Menu Design on customer's satisfaction of Menu Item Choice

Table 5.1 below presents a summary of the means and standard deviations for the five (5) items used to measure customers' perception of menu design. The result revealed that, an average score of 3.61, 3.70 3.67 and 3.65 and standard deviations of 0.489, 0.458 0.472 and 0.479 respectively strongly agreed that, the design of the menu is descriptive, attractive, visual appealing and communicative, while 3.21 average mean and standard deviation of 0.411 agreed that the menu is less voluminous.

Table 5:1 Customer's Perception of Menu Design

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.	Decision
Descriptive	3	4	3.61	.489	SA
Attractive	3	4	3.70	.458	SA
Visually appealing	3	4	3.67	.472	SA
Less voluminous	3	4	3.21	.411	A
Communicative	3	4	3.65	.479	SA

Likert scale: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagreed; 1.5-2.49 = Disagreed; 2.5-3.49 = Agreed; 3.5-4.00 = Strongly Agreed.

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 5.2: Reasons for Customers' Satisfaction of Menu Item Choice

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.	Decision
A dish could not prepare at home.	2	3	2.03	.168	A
Healthiness of menu item.	2	3	2.70	.458	A
Preparation method.	2	3	2.03	.164	A
Ingredient of menu item.	2	3	2.83	.379	A
Accompaniment.	1	3	2.06	.258	A

Scale: 1 = Not at all; 2 = to some extent; 3 = to a large extent

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 5.2, above presents a summary of the means and standard deviations for the five (5) items used to measure reasons for customers' satisfaction of menu item choice. The result revealed that, an average mean of 2.03 and 0.168 standard deviation are in agreement that a dish that could not be prepared at home is the reasons for their satisfaction of menu item choice to some extent. An average mean of 2.70 and 0.458 standard deviation agreed that, a menu item representing a healthy option is the reason for their satisfaction. Meanwhile, an average mean of 2.03 and the standard deviation of 0.164 agreed that, the method of preparation is the reason for their choice of menu item. Also, 2.83 mean score and 0.379 standard deviation agreed that, the core ingredient of the menu item is their reason for choice of menu item while an average mean of 2.06 and 0.258 also agreed that, the accompaniment that comes with the menu item is the reason for their choice of menu item.

Table 6: Menu Design Characteristics (MDC)

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.	Decision
The typeface used.	3	4	3.40	.492	A
The color used.	3	4	3.41	.494	A
The Illustrations and graphics of menu items.	3	4	3.39	.489	A
The paper type used.	3	4	3.14	.346	A
The font size used.	3	4	3.43	.496	A

Likert scale: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagreed; 1.5-2.49 = Disagreed; 2.5-3.49 = Agreed; 3.5-4.00 = Strongly Agreed.

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 6, above presents a summary of the means and standard deviations for the five (5) items of Menu design characteristics (MDC). The results revealed that, the average mean of 3.40 and 0.492 are in agreement that typeface on the menu is clear, 3.41 mean score and 0.494 are in agreement that the color used enhanced the legibility of the menu, the table also revealed that, 3.39 average mean and standard deviation of 0.489 agreed that, the illustrations and graphics of menu items on the menu are well presented and enhance their satisfaction of the menu item choice, similarly, an average mean of 3.14 and 0.346 standard deviation agreed that, the paper used for the menu is of good quality and enhances their satisfaction of the restaurant service quality while an average mean of 3.43 and 0.496 standard deviation agreed that, The font size used makes the menu more readable.

Table 7: Menu Item Description (MID)

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.	Decision
Satisfaction of menu items	3	4	3.30	.461	A
Minimal information on menu	3	4	3.21	.411	A
Easy identification of categories of menu items	3	4	3.67	.472	SA
Choice of the item.	3	4	3.39	.490	A
Organized information	3	4	3.14	.346	A.

Likert scale: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagreed; 1.5-2.49 = Disagreed; 2.5-3.49 = Agreed; 3.5-4.00 = Strongly Agreed.

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 7, above shows a summary of the means and standard deviations for the five (5) menu item description (MID) items. The results revealed that, an average mean of 3.30 and 0.461 standard deviation agreed that, the description of menu items influences their satisfaction of menu item choice. 3.21 average score and standard deviation of 0.411 agreed that, the information on the menu is minimal and does not distract them in selecting menu items. Similarly, an average mean of 3.67 and 0.472 standard deviation strongly agreed that, with the description, categories of menu items on the menu are easily identified. Also, 3.39 and 0.490 standard deviation agreed that, the description of menu items influences their choice of the menu item while an average mean of 3.14 and 0.346 standard deviation agreed that the information on the menu is well structured and organized.

Table 8: Staff/Management Knowledge of Menu Design

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.	Decision
Importance	3	4	3.73	.450	SA
Its design.	3	4	3.17	.379	A
In response to complaints.	1	3	1.57	.568	D
The concept of the restaurant.	3	4	3.10	.305	A
Quality of service.	3	4	3.20	.407	A

Likert scale: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagreed; 1.5-2.49 = Disagreed; 2.5-3.49 = Agreed; 3.5-4.00 = Strongly Agreed.

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 8, above presents a summary of the means and standard deviations for the five (5) items on Staff/Management knowledge of menu design. The results revealed that, the respondents agreed that their knowledge of menu design is anchored on the above items. For instance, the average mean of 3.73 and standard deviation of 0.450 strongly agreed that the menu is the

basis for a restaurant success. Meanwhile, an average mean of 3.17 and 0.379 standard deviation agreed that the menus in the sampled hotels are well designed. Respondents disagreed with the statement that customer often complaint about the menu placed in restaurants of the sampled hotels with an average mean of 1.57 and 0.568 standard deviation. They agreed that the concept of the hotel restaurants is reflected by the design on the menu with an average mean of 3.10 and 0.305 standard deviation while an average mean of 3.20 and 0.407 standard deviation were in agreement that customers are always satisfied with the restaurant service quality.

Discussion of Findings

According to data obtained, out of the 150 questionnaires administered, 145 questionnaires were retrieved. All the data collated were reliably good and were used for the analysis. The study found that (72.4%) of the respondents who took part in the study were male, while (27.6%) were Females. This implies that majority of the respondents sampled for this study were Males. The disparity in gender among the respondents was not deliberate but goes a long way to show that men were willing to provide information. Regarding the age of respondents, 11 of the respondents representing 7.6% fall within the age range of 18-25. 41 of the sampled respondents representing 28.3% fall within the age group of 26-35. The result also shows that 83 of the sampled respondents representing 57.2% fall within the age range of 36-45 and 10 of the sampled respondents representing 6.9% were above 45 years. This is an indication that young person constitutes large proportion of the total respondents. With respect to marital status, the table shows that 53 of the respondents sampled for the study representing 36.6% were single, 92 of the respondents representing 63.4% were married while Zero (0) respondent fall under others. Therefore, majority of the sampled respondents were married, as they had the highest frequency and percentage. Regarding the educational background, the table shows that, 12 of the sampled respondents representing 8.3% attained primary education, 38 of the respondents representing 26.2% attained secondary education while 65.5% (95) of the total respondents attained tertiary education. This implies that majority of the respondents sampled for this study attained tertiary education. Regarding the type of customer, 17 of the sampled respondents representing 11.7% were new customers while 128 of the total respondents representing 88.3% were regular customers. Therefore, majority of the sampled respondents were regular customers as they constitute large proportion of the total respondents.

Considering the impact of menu design on customer satisfaction, five (5) items were used to measure each objective, on assessing customer's perception of menu design, the result shows that, respondents rated attractive

and visual appealing attributes of the menu very high with an average score of 3.70 and 3.67 respectively. This implies that most of the respondents perceived restaurant menu in the selected hotels to be attractive and visual appealing. The associated standard deviation to attractive and visual appealing are 0.458 and 0.472 respectively. Apart from attractive and visual appealing attributes, all the other items relating to customers' perception of the menu had an average score greater than 2.5, indicating their agreement with the various items of customers' perception of menu design. The lowest agreement of the items was however, less voluminous with an average mean of 3.21.

In assessing the reasons for customer's satisfaction of menu item choice, the mean ranges from 2.03 to 2.83 and the standard deviations from 0.164 to 0.379 respectively. The items under the constructs were rated based on three main levels such as; (1 = not at all; 2 = to some extent; 3 = to a large extent). The result obtained indicated that respondents are in agreement with all the items on the reasons for their satisfaction of menu item choice to some extent. They are in high agreement that the core ingredient of the menu item affect their choice of menu item to some extent with the highest average score of 2.83 and 0.379 standard deviation. They were also in agreement to some extent with the statements that; a dish that could not be prepared at home, a menu item representing a healthy option, the accompaniment that comes with the menu item and the method of preparation were sometimes the reasons for their satisfaction of menu item choice with an average score of 2.03, 2.70, 2.06 and 2.03 respectively. This is a clear indication that respondents are in agreement with the items relating to the reasons for customer's satisfaction of menu items choice; however they agreed more on the core ingredient of the menu item as it has the highest average mean of 2.83.

On assessing the impact of menu design characteristics on customer's satisfaction of menu item choice, the mean of the measured items ranged from 3.14 to 3.43 and the standard deviations ranged from 0.346 to 0.496. From the results, respondents are in high agreement with the font size used which make the menu more readable as it had the highest average of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 0.496. The lowest score was the paper type of the menu as it had the lowest score of 3.14 mean and 0.346 standard deviation. On average, the respondents rated all the items under the construct above 3 indicating their high agreement for the items. This is a clear indication that respondents are in agreement with all the menu design characteristics (MDC) items, however they agreed more on the font size used, followed by the color, typeface, illustrations and graphics, and paper quality. It is evident here that, menu design characteristics has positive

impact on customer's satisfaction of menu item choice as respondents are in agreement with all items relating to menu design characteristics.

Similarly, in assessing the impact of menu item description on customer's satisfaction, respondents rated the items on the average above 3, indicating their agreement. Most of the respondents indicated that with the description, categories of menu items on the menu are easily identified as it had the highest score with an average mean of 3.67 with standard deviations of 0.472. The lowest agreement was that the information on the menu is well structured and organized as it had an average mean of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.346. This suggested that, on average, respondents agreed with all the menu item description items relating to customer satisfaction in hotels. It is also evident that, menu item description has positive impact on customer's satisfaction of menu item choice as respondents are in agreement with all items relating to menu item description. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Riberiro Soriano (2002), that agreed that, menu design communicate to customers the quality of food items, the restaurant theme and the service quality.

In considering staff/management knowledge of menu design, five (5) items were also used to measure their knowledge of menu design. The results obtained revealed that, the respondents agreed that their knowledge of menu design is anchored on the above items in table 4.7. For instance, the average mean of 3.73 and standard deviation of 0.450 agreed that the menu is the basis for a restaurant success. Meanwhile, an average mean of 3.17 and 0.379 standard deviation agreed that the menus in the sampled hotels are well designed. However, respondents disagreed with the statement that customer often complaint about the menu placed in restaurants of the sampled hotels with an average mean of 1.57 and 0.568 standard deviation. They also agreed that the concept of the hotel restaurants is reflected by the design on the menu with an average mean of 3.10 and 0.305 standard deviation. Similarly, they were in agreement that customers are always satisfied with the restaurant service quality. From the above table, we can therefore conclude that the management/staff of the sampled hotels have good knowledge of menu design.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of menu design on customers' satisfaction in hotels within Makurdi Metropolis. Results and findings from the study revealed that menu design has positive impact on customers' satisfaction in the hotels under study. The study concludes that menu design assist customers in making more informed choices; also, menu design facilitates customers' perception on the attractiveness, visual appeal,

communicative and descriptive nature of menus and menu design attributes and menu item description (MID) positively affects customers' satisfaction. The study recommends that menu should convey enough information to customers to enable them properly choose their menu items. In order to be competitive in the industry, hospitality professionals should pay more attention to menu design attributes in all segments of the industry by improving on their menus as they are major marketing tools in the restaurant industry. Much attention should be given to the attributes as a background for formulating management strategies in the restaurant business. Management actions should therefore be planned and employed to improve and increase the attractiveness of menu items relying on the various menu design attributes.

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