











Customer and Employee Satisfaction in the “Burger” Fast-Food Chain: Implications for Sustainable Development and Urban Planning

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ABSTRACT

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For modern urban planning, it is crucial to consider how fast-food businesses shape the urban food environment and whether their practices align with sustainable development and social responsibility. This study examines the factors influencing restaurant choice and perceived service quality among customers and employees of the “Burger” fast-food chain in Moscow, Russia. A structured survey design was applied: two anonymous questionnaires were administered in February 2025 across seven “Burger” restaurants (n = 98 customers; n = 50 employees). The instrument was based on an adapted SERVQUAL/DINESERV framework and used 5-point Likert scales to assess perceived service quality and satisfaction, complemented by a set of restaurant-choice factors evaluated for relative importance. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and between-group comparisons, and internal consistency was assessed via Cronbach’s alpha. The results indicate that customers prioritize practical aspects of the dining experience (e.g., price, cleanliness, and convenience), whereas employees place greater emphasis on product safety and professional service standards. Environmental and “green” aspects received comparatively lower importance, suggesting a gap between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 8, 11, and 12) and everyday stakeholder priorities in the metropolitan fast-food context. The findings provide managerial and urban-policy implications for improving transparency of nutritional information, accessibility and comfort of food-service spaces, and working conditions, while making sustainability measures more visible and meaningful to both customers and staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

The food service sector is characterized by rapid development [1]. The scale and structure of the food service industry directly depend on consumers, whose purchasing power and available leisure time are increasing [2]. Scholars claim that people have become more inclined to spend money on food service [3]. Demand for the development of the food service market is linked to the economic development at the macroeconomic level (gross domestic product, unemployment rate, etc.) and the microeconomic level (income levels, expenditure structure, including food, socio-demographic and cultural changes, etc.) [4]. The staff (especially those whom customers meet first) have a significant influence on shaping the food service and its attractiveness. This phenomenon also

applies to fast-food establishments, which are striving to become meeting places for city residents rather than merely places for a quick bite with minimal service.

From the perspective of sustainable urban design, fast-food restaurants can function not only as commercial food outlets but also as semi-public “third places” embedded in the everyday mobility and social routines of city residents [5, 6]. In dense metropolitan areas, such venues may complement the public realm by providing affordable indoor seating, basic amenities, and a social environment for interaction (e.g., short meetings, family lunches, or breaks between activities). It is really important for such places to support urban sustainability goals (SDG 11) and implement special requirements. It should be primarily pedestrian- and transit-oriented; the space is inclusive and comfortable, and the offer is compatible with

public-health and environmental priorities. The venue can contribute to social cohesion and everyday urban livability [7, 8]. Conversely, if the “third place” function is achieved at the expense of health outcomes (limited healthier options, low transparency of nutritional information) or environmental performance (high waste, low visibility of green practices), it may conflict with broader sustainability objectives despite its social popularity.

Additional factors stimulating demand for food service and increasing its social significance include industrialization and urbanization, along with all related social changes, such as changes in family structure; the growing number of people working outside the home; new approaches to time management; heavier workloads and studying away from home; and the physical distance between work and residence [9, 10].

Alongside these structural drivers, the criteria by which urban residents evaluate restaurants have expanded beyond convenience and price to include signals of corporate responsibility and environmental performance (e.g., waste and packaging reduction, responsible sourcing, and health-oriented options) [11-13]. Recent comparative evidence from 2024–2025 indicates that sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices can contribute to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty-related outcomes, most often indirectly—through perceived value, trust, and brand/restaurant image—while the strength of these effects varies across consumer segments (e.g., gender/age) and across CSR dimensions [14]. In the fast-food segment specifically, sustainability communication by chains (for example, on social media) has been shown to stimulate more eco-conscious consumer behavior, suggesting that visible and credible sustainability cues can support favorable evaluations when they do not conflict with core expectations such as taste, speed, and price–value [15].

In this study, we treat the “meeting place” dimension as a social-infrastructure indicator within the urban food environment and examine it together with other design-relevant aspects of sustainability, including accessibility and inclusiveness (adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities), perceived suitability for family use, and transparency of nutritional information as a prerequisite for responsible consumption [16]. By comparing customer and employee perceptions in the “Burger” fast-food chain in Moscow, we assess not only which factors drive restaurant choice and satisfaction but also whether stakeholders perceive these restaurants as spaces that align with the practical expectations of a sustainable and inclusive urban environment.

The focus of our attention is improving the efficiency of services and satisfaction in the fast-food sector from the perspective of sustainable business and social development. Commitment to sustainable development implies that business is oriented not only toward profitability but also toward the satisfaction of key stakeholders (consumers and employees) and responsibility to society and the environment. Within the framework of this study, we also aim to highlight the social factor (quality of labor and services) and the economic factor (service efficiency) since these factors in the fast-food sector are of decisive importance and are based on the fundamental principles of sustainability. In addition, we considered the environmental factor in the food service business as its inclusion in the fast-food industry is significant (for example, service efficiency can indirectly contribute to reducing food loss and waste).

The article aims to identify the directions that determine the selection and satisfaction of customers and employees of fast-food restaurant chains in Moscow, Russia, for the development of sustainable urban nutrition, the strengthening of social responsibility, the implementation of sustainable practices, and the promotion of a culture of responsible consumption.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Using food service, especially in large cities, is part of the lifestyle, which increases the importance of customer loyalty. The concept of customer loyalty is understood in different ways. Until recently, it was assumed to be related to repeated purchases from the same provider. However, it is more accurate to define a loyal consumer as someone who frequently makes purchases from the same provider and has a positive opinion of them.

A loyal restaurant customer can be characterized as follows: makes regular and repeated purchases in the chosen food service establishment; purchases a variety of dishes offered by the establishment; spreads positive information about the establishment’s offerings; spreads positive information about the quality of services provided by the establishment, including customer service; remains resistant to actions and promotions undertaken by competitors; clearly expresses the intention to visit the establishment again. Loyalty is not only about making a purchase; true loyalty can be demonstrated only by customers who are strongly attached to the service provider, and customer satisfaction serves as an indicator of loyalty.

The basis for understanding loyalty is the analysis of customer satisfaction factors. Satisfaction with service in the food sector is essential for shaping a loyal attitude among guests. Customer satisfaction is usually the result of an overall assessment of service quality. Meeting or exceeding customer expectations in terms of service quality, which in the case of fast food includes food, service, and the design of the establishment [17], forms the foundation of satisfaction and can lead customers to return to the same establishment [18]. Given that the focus of our study is primarily the development of fast food in metropolitan areas, it is necessary to highlight the impact of fast food on the environment and health, as well as the growing expectations of social and environmental responsibility in the restaurant business.

In the case of food service, the overall assessment of quality includes the following factors: the quality of food products, the setting in which the service is provided (the environment and atmosphere), and the level of service. Food quality is determined by many factors related to the sensory evaluation of food or its freshness, as well as to its nutritional value, presentation, the price-quality ratio, and portion size.

Another element influencing the quality of food service is the physical environment, including material elements such as equipment and décor, as well as intangible elements such as music, scent, room temperature, etc. [19]. The appearance and atmosphere of the space are important factors in determining loyalty and satisfaction, especially in the case of restaurants.

The specifics of food service lie in the fact that an important group of factors influencing its quality and customer satisfaction are elements related to service [20]. The factors that determine service quality include staff characteristics such as knowledge, professionalism, empathy, and communication

style, as well as elements related to payment methods, speed, and volume of services [21].

The knowledge of employees in food service enterprises should not be limited only to their direct responsibilities in customer service. Frontline staff recognize both their role in the customer service process and the importance of other components. Increasing staff awareness of customer satisfaction factors is supported by employee evaluations and the growing use of mystery shopper surveys [22]. In addition, customer satisfaction is reflected in the amount of tips and increases responsiveness to sales promotion actions, such as upsizing or discounting orders.

Summarizing the description of factors, scholars note the following trend: many international fast-food chains incorporate these factors into their sustainability strategies. A sustainability strategy covers areas ranging from the use of local products and eco-friendly packaging to energy efficiency programs aimed at reducing negative environmental impacts. Within this framework, particular importance is given to adhering to the principles of social responsibility, which in the case of restaurants includes caring for customers (visitor health, transparency of nutritional information) and for employees (decent working conditions). Fast-food restaurants actively employ the concept of the Triple Bottom Line or Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) standards, where the “S” (Social) component is evaluated through customer satisfaction, service quality, and employee engagement [23]. Thus, consumer satisfaction is considered a key factor in the long-term sustainability of business: entrepreneurs acknowledge that positive customer feedback affects the sustainable operation of fast-food restaurants in the long run [24], which directly links satisfaction with the concept of sustainable operational activity.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research design

In 2024, we conducted a study using mixed methods that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection. This empirical research aimed to compare the factors influencing the selection and satisfaction of consumers and employees in the “Burger” restaurant chain (accounting for 7% of the total number of chain restaurants in Russia) in terms of the services provided and product quality. The study further sought to identify which factors have the greatest impact on the selection and satisfaction of both customers and staff in such establishments. An important feature of our research was its focus on promoting sustainable practices in the fast-food industry, enhancing social responsibility toward employees and consumers, improving the quality of the urban consumer environment, and thereby contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. The study addressed SDG 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth” through improved working conditions for employees; SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” through enhanced quality of urban food services; SDG 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production” through raising consumer awareness and satisfaction, ultimately encouraging more conscious consumption.

It is worth mentioning the specific characteristics of the modern food service sector in Russia, which help to explain the choice of methods and tools applied in this research. Fast food in Russia combines national specificities with global trends. Over the past two decades, the Russian food service

market has undergone significant changes influenced by so-called megatrends, i.e., global phenomena and economic, social, political, or cultural processes that strongly affect the nature and direction of economic development across most countries, shaping industry patterns and growth mechanisms [25]. Rising household incomes and the availability of greater leisure time have led urban Russians to dine out more frequently, while the increasing importance of tourism has expanded demand for food services during travel [26]. As a result, new chains of bars and restaurants have emerged, accommodation infrastructure has developed, and gastronomic offerings have diversified. The growth of the food service sector has had a significant impact on household management, eating habits, and changes in leisure structures. Food services positively contribute to the standard and quality of life [27].

The level of awareness regarding the factors that determine the quality of food service and customer satisfaction differs between clients and employees. Customers primarily rely on expectations and prior experiences, whereas frontline staff possess knowledge gained through their professional practice [28].

3.2 Tools

The main research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of two anonymous survey forms: one designed for consumers and the other for food service employees, aimed at assessing the quality of services in “Burger” restaurants. In designing the questionnaire, we considered standardized approaches to measuring service quality: the structure and content of the questions were based on the SERVQUAL concept, adapted to the restaurant industry through the DINESERV model. This allowed us to cover the key dimensions of perceived service quality and satisfaction. Each indicator was evaluated by the respondents primarily using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”), providing a quantitative assessment of perceived service quality and satisfaction levels. Prior to the main stage of the study, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted on a small group of respondents to verify the clarity of the wording and introduce the necessary adjustments.

The main consumer survey was conducted in February 2025 in Moscow with a sample of 98 participants (all aged over 18), each of whom had visited “Burger” restaurants at least once. A similar questionnaire was distributed among 50 employees of the same establishments.

The empirical stage of this study was intentionally conducted as a pilot cross-sectional wave in February 2025 in Moscow. The primary purpose of this first wave was to (i) test the feasibility of simultaneous surveying of customers and employees across multiple outlets, (ii) validate and fine-tune the adapted SERVQUAL/DINESERV-based instrument in the local fast-food context, and (iii) establish a baseline for further monitoring. Therefore, the February snapshot is reported as an exploratory benchmark rather than a claim of full-year-round representativeness. Building on the pilot findings, the study design is intended to be extended into a monitoring format (repeated waves across different seasons and/or a longitudinal panel design) to examine temporal stability, seasonal effects, and the relationship between satisfaction and repeat visitation.

The study included seven “Burger” restaurants located in different districts of Moscow; these venues are characterized

by high customer traffic, strategically significant locations (e.g., proximity to the city center), and a diverse customer base (including a substantial share of tourists). In each selected restaurant, 10-14 visitors and 6-8 employees were surveyed, with participation being voluntary and anonymous.

The collected data were processed using descriptive statistical methods: mean values of indicators and percentage distributions of responses were calculated to summarize the results. To identify differences in evaluations between the two respondent groups (customers and employees), a comparative analysis was carried out: mean differences were computed, and the statistical significance of these differences was tested using the independent samples Student's t-test. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, confirming the internal consistency and robustness of the applied scales.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the factors influencing restaurant choice using a 5-point importance score (higher values indicate higher importance); positive differences indicate higher importance among customers, while negative differences indicate higher importance among employees. The largest differences between the two groups were observed for "Taste and quality of the offered products" and "Availability of healthy food options, environmentally friendly cooking technologies" (0.29 for both), meaning that customers assigned higher importance to these criteria. A notable gap was also found for "Quality of customer service" (-0.29),

which employees considered more important, potentially reflecting a high self-assessment of service performance. Smaller differences were recorded for "Product safety" (-0.16), "Order processing time" (-0.13), "Restaurant cleanliness" (-0.13), as well as "Price level" (0.07) and "Well-known brand" (0.09). The smallest differences were observed for "Restaurant location" (-0.03) and "Interior design" (-0.03) (Table 1).

When assessing the statements of customers and employees regarding service quality in "Burger" establishments, the largest discrepancies were observed in the availability of information on nutritional value (-0.48), whether "Burger" restaurants can be considered meeting places (-0.38), and the adaptation of premises to the needs of people with disabilities (-0.37). Smaller differences were noted in the evaluation of the quality of services provided and the family atmosphere in "Burger" restaurants (-0.26 and -0.30, respectively), which may reflect differences in perspectives between employees and customers. The smallest discrepancies were identified in relation to a satisfactory level of in-restaurant service and politeness of customer service (0.11 each), as well as the variety of dishes offered (-0.15); these factors were rated higher by employees. Differences in the adequacy of price levels relative to the quality of dishes and services (0.03) and order delivery times (0.08) were minimal, with customers rating these factors slightly higher. Overall, the results indicate substantial consistency between consumer and employee opinions regarding the services provided by "Burger", in terms of the factors influencing customer satisfaction (Table 2).

Table 1. Comparison of ranking factors influencing restaurant choice in "Burger" between customers and employees

Selection Factor	Average Customer Rating*	Average Employee Rating*	Difference (Customers – Employees)
Taste and quality of the offered products	3.72	3.43	0.29
Availability of healthy food options, environmentally friendly cooking technologies	3.25	2.96	0.29
Restaurant location	3.23	3.26	-0.03
Price level	3.21	3.14	0.07
Order processing time	3.08	3.21	-0.13
Safety of the offered products	2.90	3.06	-0.16
Cleanliness of the restaurant	2.85	2.98	-0.13
Quality of customer service	2.79	3.08	-0.29
Well-known brand	2.52	2.43	0.09
Interior design	2.39	2.41	-0.03

*Mean ranks were coded to a 5-point importance score (1 = least important; 5 = most important). Source: our own research.

Table 2. Comparison of customer and employee evaluations of service quality in "Burger" restaurants

Service Quality Indicator	Customer Rating*	Employee Rating*	Difference (Average Customer Rating – Average Employee Rating)
I rate the level of service in "Burger" restaurants as satisfactory	3.74	3.85	-0.11
The range of dishes offered by "Burger" restaurants is very diverse	3.53	3.68	-0.15
The quality of catering services provided by "Burger" establishments is very good	3.42	3.68	-0.26
The price level in "Burger" establishments corresponds to the quality	3.47	3.44	0.03
Burger's restaurants are very well adapted to the needs of people with disabilities	3.54	3.91	-0.37
Information about the nutritional value (energy value, amount of protein, fat, etc.) of the products offered by "Burger" is easily accessible	4.07	4.55	-0.48
Burger's restaurants can be called meeting places	3.71	4.09	-0.38
"Burger" restaurants are a place where you can have lunch with your family	3.46	3.76	-0.3
The time it takes to fulfill orders at "Burger" restaurants corresponds to the time it takes to fulfill orders at fast food restaurants	3.98	3.9	0.08
The service at "Burger" restaurants is courteous to customers	3.91	4.12	-0.11

*Ratings were given on a 5-point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Source: our own research.

The greatest divergence concerned the availability of nutritional information in “Burger” restaurants. This finding may suggest that employees are more aware of such information in the establishments. Similarly, for the statements Burger can be considered meeting places” and “Polite service”, employees gave higher ratings than customers, which may indicate that employees are more familiar with marketing messages used in mass media.

When evaluating the performance of “Burger” restaurants, the greatest divergence in opinions between employees and customers concerned the price factor (0.76), which customers rated significantly higher than employees. This may be explained by the absence of special offers for employees and the availability of discount programs targeted at consumers. Smaller discrepancies were observed in factors such as the use of environmentally friendly technologies (-0.23), healthy products on the menu (-0.22), service (-0.16), appearance (-0.05), and atmosphere (-0.06), all of which were rated higher by employees. The smallest differences were found in factors

such as promotions and contests (0.20), the menu (0.08), taste of dishes (0.12), and cleanliness of the premises (0.13), all of which were rated higher by customers (Table 3).

When asked about the most important aspects of quality in Burger’s food service establishments, both customers and employees most frequently mentioned product price and taste. The greatest divergence between customer and employee assessments concerned professionalism of service: among employees, this factor ranked third in importance, whereas among customers it received 3.8% fewer mentions and ranked only fifth, after cleanliness and comfort. Employees more often highlighted the importance of such aspects as interior design and color scheme (2.7% more responses) and atmosphere/climate (1.2% more responses). For customers, factors such as convenience (2.5% more responses), set meal composition (mentioned only by customers), and product appearance and nutritional value (1.8% more responses) were more important than for employees (Table 4).

Table 3. Comparison of “Burger” restaurant evaluations by employees and customers

Indicator	Customer Rating*	Employee Rating*	Difference (Average Customer Rating – Average Employee Rating)
Exterior of the premises	4.23	4.18	0.05
Cleanliness of the premises	4.17	4.04	0.13
Promotions/contests	4.12	3.92	0.2
Service	4.04	4.2	-0.16
Atmosphere	4.02	4.08	-0.06
Quality and taste of food	3.98	3.86	0.12
Menu	3.94	3.86	0.08
Healthy foods on the menu	3.94	4.16	-0.22
Price	3.86	3.1	0.76
Use of environmentally friendly technologies	3.71	3.94	-0.23

*Ratings were given on a 5-point scale, where 1 = the lowest rating and 5 = the highest. Source: our own research.

Table 4. Comparison of the respondents’ evaluations of the most important quality aspects in “Burger” restaurants

Specification	% Customer Responses*	% Employee Responses*	Difference (% Customer Responses – % Employee Responses)
Price	19.8	18.0	1.8
Taste and quality	15.0	16.0	-1.0
Cleanliness	9.6	8.0	1.6
Comfort	9.2	6.7	2.5
Professional service	8.9	12.7	-3.8
Clean toilets	6.8	6.7	0.2
Health benefits	6.5	4.7	1.8
Atmosphere/climate	5.5	6.7	-1.2
Nutritional value	5.1	3.3	1.8
Variety of ingredients and menu items	4.8	5.3	-0.6
Gadgets for sets (e.g., toys)	2.4	0.0	2.4
Adaptation to the needs of people with disabilities	1.0	2.0	-1.0
Interior design/color scheme	0.7	3.3	-2.7

*Up to three factors could be indicated. Source: our own research.

5. DISCUSSION

We consider it necessary to discuss the findings through the lens of sustainability. The differences in the perception of key factors between employees and customers can be interpreted in the context of sustainability principles. According to our data, employees place greater value on product safety and professional service, i.e., on social working conditions and service quality that meet high standards (which corresponds to SDG 8). Customers value cleanliness and convenience to a greater extent, ensuring a comfortable and healthy

environment in the restaurant, as well as access to information about the nutritional value of dishes. These preferences correspond to the goals of responsible consumption (SDG 12) and public health promotion (SDG 3).

Recent evidence suggests that environmental and sustainability practices can affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty, but the effect is usually indirect and contingent on visibility and perceived authenticity. Empirical studies of green restaurants report that sustainable practices (e.g., food safety, food sustainability practices, and environmental sensitivity) positively predict satisfaction and revisit

intentions, with perceived value and willingness-to-pay acting as important boundary conditions [29]. At the same time, analyses of online reviews indicate that “green” attributes tend to have weaker effects on satisfaction than core attributes such as taste and service unless customers notice and interpret these initiatives as relevant benefits [11].

The results show that both customers and employees are consistent in their statements regarding the factors of selection and satisfaction. The observed differences mainly concern aspects related to service, which employees rate more highly. Customer opinions are more rational and polarized, with clear distinctions between the most and least important factors. Employees, by contrast, tend to view the factors of selection and satisfaction more broadly, which is reflected in smaller differences in their assessments of individual factors. Scholars argue that employees often evaluate the reasons for customer selection and satisfaction more objectively, based on their observations, whereas customer evaluation is always subjective.

Improving convenience for visitors and enhancing their awareness (for example, by clearly providing information on the nutritional value of dishes) can encourage more responsible consumer behavior, e.g., choosing healthier food options and reducing food waste. Greater attention to employee safety and satisfaction supports the social stability of the organization, reduces staff turnover, and aligns with the principles of CSR. Thus, a dual focus on customer satisfaction and employee well-being reflects the implementation of the ESG approach in the restaurant business, where the social component is directly linked to long-term effectiveness. In fact, the results confirm that positive customer feedback and high loyalty are key conditions for the long-term sustainability of food service enterprises. This conclusion fits into the concept of the Triple Bottom Line, which implies balancing economic goals with people’s satisfaction and the environmental responsibility of business [30].

Recent research also highlights that sustainability can enrich the dining experience by adding authenticity, meaning, and trust – mechanisms that then support loyalty outcomes. For example, sustainable practices in Michelin Green Star restaurants have been linked to more memorable customer experiences via locally rooted sourcing, waste-reduction routines, and transparent storytelling [31]. In the green restaurant segment, responsible consumption cues and food/waste-reduction practices can shape customers’ affective responses, which in turn strengthen revisit intentions [32].

However, the survey results show that both customers and employees place less emphasis on environmental factors (and green initiatives such as waste reduction, eco-friendly packaging, etc.) among quality priorities. This can be explained by several reasons.

First, in the Moscow context, fast food is perceived primarily as a quick, affordable, and convenient way of eating; therefore, attention is focused on price, taste, and speed of service [33].

Second, the environmental initiatives of restaurants often remain invisible to visitors and staff: waste sorting, energy-efficient technologies, or eco-packaging are not always directly associated with service quality [34]. Prior research suggests that when green initiatives are largely “back-of-house” (e.g., energy efficiency, procurement standards, waste sorting), customers may not incorporate them into satisfaction judgments because they lack observability. This helps explain why environmental factors can be rated as less important even

when restaurants are actively implementing them [29]. Consumer studies further indicate that sustainability cues influence satisfaction mainly when they are perceived as credible and authentic; otherwise, customers may remain indifferent or skeptical. Accordingly, transparency (e.g., clear in-store explanations and consistent online communication) is a practical lever for building trust and loyalty from sustainability initiatives [35].

Third, under conditions of high competition and limited time among city residents, factors related to sustainable consumption (such as the health value of food or environmentally friendly cooking technologies) give way to more pragmatic criteria [36].

Thus, low ratings of environmental aspects do not indicate their insignificance but rather reflect a gap between the strategic goals of sustainable development (SDG 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production” and SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities”) and the everyday practices of consumers and employees.

From a practical perspective, the results help develop recommendations for “Burger” and similar chains.

First, it makes sense to inform customers more actively about the nutritional value of dishes and their ingredients. This will help bridge the identified perception gap and support the principles of responsible consumption.

Second, it is necessary to maintain high standards of hygiene and comfort in restaurants since these aspects directly affect customer satisfaction.

Third, management should invest in staff development and decent working conditions. Motivated and well-trained employees will deliver higher-quality service.

Fourth, the identified discrepancy in the evaluation of pricing policy signals the need to reconsider internal incentive programs. For example, introducing special discounts for staff would increase their satisfaction. Implementing these measures will lead to a closer alignment of expectations between customers and employees and strengthen the restaurant’s contribution to achieving the SDGs, from economic viability to social responsibility and public health.

Fifth, the company should propose initiatives to city authorities for joint programs in developing green projects. This implies the need to make environmental measures more visible and valuable to the audience through transparent communication, labeling of healthy dishes, demonstration of green technologies in restaurant spaces, and staff engagement programs.

Evidence from recent restaurant studies suggests that green practices can strengthen a restaurant’s ecological image and support revisit intentions when communicated through tangible, customer-visible cues (eco-labels, visible waste-reduction programs, and clear explanations of packaging choices), and these effects may vary across demographic segments and willingness to pay [33]. Therefore, making sustainability measures more “experienceable”—for instance, linking waste-reduction routines to customer benefits such as portion transparency, right-sized meals, and eco-friendly takeaway options—can help translate environmental performance into satisfaction and loyalty outcomes [37].

We would like to emphasize that the results have not only marketing significance but also sustainable value. For instance, improving convenience and customer awareness can encourage more responsible consumer behavior, while increasing attention to workplace safety supports the social stability of the organization.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study allowed us to identify significant differences in the perception of choice and satisfaction factors between customers and employees of a fast-food restaurant chain. The analysis showed that customers focus on basic characteristics (price, taste, cleanliness, and convenience), while employees place greater emphasis on product safety, professionalism of service, and service atmosphere. These differences reflect the distinct roles of participants in the consumer experience: customers are guided by immediate expectations and personal comfort, whereas staff evaluate the process through professional duties and organizational standards.

From a practical perspective, the results highlight the need to align the interests of two key stakeholders. For restaurant business management, it is important to strike a balance between customer needs and employee expectations as this creates a sustainable operation model. The systematic improvement of service quality and the creation of decent working conditions directly support the social sustainability of companies (SDG 8). An emphasis on cleanliness, awareness, and the health value of food contributes to sustainable consumption and public health (SDG 12, SDG 3).

Particular attention should be given to the fact that environmental factors were rated as having low significance by both groups. This result reflects the existing gap between the strategic goals of sustainable development and everyday practices in a metropolitan context. In Moscow, where the fast pace of life and strong competition make price and convenience top priorities, the environmental initiatives of restaurants remain in the background. This confirms the need to increase the visibility of green practices: the introduction of eco-friendly packaging, energy-efficient technologies, waste sorting, and labeling of healthy dishes should be accompanied by transparent communication with customers and the engagement of employees. We emphasize the institutional limitation of the study (a single restaurant chain). Because data were collected in one month (February) and in one city (Moscow), the reported levels of perceived importance and satisfaction may be influenced by seasonal and contextual factors and should not be interpreted as representing the entire year. Further research is possible and necessary in several directions: expanding the geographic scope, including other establishments (such as family restaurants or cafés), and differentiating by demographic characteristics of customers and employees. This will allow for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of satisfaction formation and support the development of more targeted management solutions for advancing the principles of sustainable development and social responsibility in the rapidly changing food service environment.

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