

The Power of Brand Awareness and Association: How Service Quality Shapes Brand Equity and Brand Loyalty in Odisha's Restaurant?

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ABSTRACT

Odisha is now witnessing remarkable growth in food industry driven by tourism, urbanization, changing lifestyles, and the popularity for regional cuisine. Traditional Odia foods such as Seafoods, Millet-based dishes, sweets, staple foods are gaining recognition across India. The Indian restaurant and food service industry is multiplying rapidly because people are earning more and maintaining luxurious lifestyle by eating out in restaurants, cafes etc. It has become more common now a days. This study analyses on restaurants in Odisha and examines how service quality affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, with brand equity acting as a connecting factor. Brand equity mainly signifies how well customers recognize a restaurant brand and how it positively impacts to restaurant Brand Awareness and Association. In this study, a descriptive research design was used, and the population was customers who used the services of restaurants located in various major cities throughout Odisha. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, was used in this investigation. Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, is the purposeful selection of a participant based on the participant's characteristics. The study incorporated both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from the organization's journals, magazines, books, research journals, and articles. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. This study employed a total of ten constructs. Tangibles, pricing value, assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and food quality are the six sub-dimensions of service quality. Brand equity, on the other hand, has two sub-dimensions: brand awareness and brand association. At last, the questionnaire incorporated multi-items measures for customer satisfaction and loyalty which were considered to be two exogenous variables in this study. A pilot study was carried out with a few restaurants in Bhubaneswar. To ensure the substance and interpretation of the questionnaire, it was disseminated to customers, managers, and senior marketing faculty. A few questions were changed in response to restaurant managers' and faculty members' comments. Customers' replies that were similar in nature were removed from the study. In order to analyse the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version and AMOS 20.0 version were employed. According to the findings, the application of four crucial criteria, including service quality, brand equity, variables, have a substantial relationship with one another. The findings of past studies on their link still hold true, with the emphasis that as service quality improves, so does brand equity, which in turn improves customer happiness and loyalty in Odisha restaurants.

Keywords: Restaurants, Service Quality, Brand Equity, Brand Loyalty, SPSS, AMOS, SERVQUAL

INTRODUCTION

Food retailing is the most dominant business in India. Though, various types of fast-food retail formats have existed in India, the global restaurants currently play a vital role as well. Service quality measures currently available do not adequately capture customers' perceptions towards global fast-food restaurants in the Indian scenario. Based on the above discussions it can be observed that the trend of eating out is on the rise and consumers are approving various restaurants. This has led to the unprecedented growth of restaurant industry in India. Restaurants have shown steady progress and offer adequate scope for expansion in the coming years. Further, today's consumer seeks for a 'wholesome dining experience', not just the tasty food and table service. Due to higher incomes associated with high standard of living and having travelled abroad often, they are ever demanding of sensory experiences. The efforts are been made by the restaurants to influence customer dining experiences which can increase their level of satisfaction and loyalty. Studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between service quality and brand equity in various service industries besides food retail sector. Service quality is considered to be an important and direct antecedent of consumer-based brand equity, as it provides a reason for customers to differentiate a brand from its competitors (Pappu et al., 2005). Past studies revealed that service quality had a positive effect on brand equity dimensions, such as brand awareness (Ishaq et al., 2014; Rostami et al., 2014) and brand association (Abd-El-Salam et al., 2013; Saleem & Raja, 2014). Torres and Tribo (2007) have shown that there is a strong and positive relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction. They've seen that companies with higher brand equity also have higher customer satisfaction. This satisfaction eventually leads to higher sales and higher profitability. Study has also supported that besides advantages of awareness and image, brand equity results from marketing efficiency, is an important antecedent for enhanced performance, and long- customer loyalty (Prasad & Dev, 2000). As brand equity increases, customers are more willing to continue to buy the brand's products and to pay higher prices for them (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, the functions of establishing relationship equity are to understand various customer needs, to provide differentiated services, to make customers appreciate the service experiences, and to increase intentions for repeat purchase (Alrubaiee and Nahla, 2010). Loyalty programs are becoming more and more popular among businesses and especially in hotels.

Teich (1997) mentioned that loyalty is developed over a period of time from a consistent record of meeting, and sometimes even exceeding customer expectations. Customer loyalty can therefore be achieved in some cases by offering a quality product with a firm guarantee or through free offers, coupons, low interest rates on financing, high value trade-ins, extended warranties, rebates, and other rewards and incentive programs. The ultimate goal of these is to develop happy customers who will return to purchase again and persuade others to use that company's products or services. This equates to great cost savings and profitability to the company through the keeping of current customers as against attracting new ones (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). In the present study, Service Quality in restaurants is assessed, together with the five broad constructs namely Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy, it was appropriate to bring in two more constructs of service quality, namely perceived value and Food Quality. The intent of this study is to ascertain the service quality and its direct effect on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through mediating variable i.e. brand equity in Odisha. After reviewing the current literature, study findings revealed that the quality of service received by consumers at restaurants has a significant impact on brand equity, customer happiness, and customer loyalty. This study will determine whether service quality aspects play a significant impact in establishing brand equity, customer happiness, and customer loyalty in chosen Odisha restaurants. This type of study is critical for evaluating and improving restaurant service since

it provides managers with data to utilise in forming assumptions about consumers (Wilson et al. 2006). Thus, academics, companies in the field of marketing, and management studies of customer satisfaction and service quality, particularly in service sector businesses, should find the findings of this study beneficial. The outcomes of this study serve as a baseline for service quality, resulting in customer happiness, repurchase, and, ultimately, increased profit and market share for restaurants.

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Study Area

Known as the gem of the eastern part of India, Odisha has a rich culinary heritage, which includes cultural heritage, coastal resources and unique flavors. The Odia Cuisine is a cuisine that is simple yet delicious in its preparation with perfect balance of spices, delicacies of seafood and traditional ingredients like panch phutan, mustard oil and cow ghee. The dishes like Pakhala Bhata, Dalma, Chhena Poda, Dahi Bara Aloo Dum, and different varieties of sea food preparations have been the icons of the food identity of the state. Food plays a crucial role in the cultural significance, and its association with temples, hospitality and family traditions is very much alive, especially at places like Puri, where Lord Jagannath is offered the famous Chhappan Bhog.

The traditional Odia delicacies from various districts like Mutton Mutton from Baripada, Chhena Jhili from Nimapara and Rasabali from Kendrapada are now popular, with restaurants and cafés offering these dishes, tourism and food festivals promoting them and social media spreading the word. Consumers, particularly the younger generation, are increasingly seeking out traditional foods that are served in a modern and fusion format. With the popularity of these, there is a great opportunity in Odisha for the proliferation of cafés and restaurants. In a recent development, Odisha government has announced financial support for setting up premium restaurants with authentic Odia cuisine in major Indian cities and tourist hotspots to promote the culinary heritage of Odisha (Bisoi, 2026). As the fusion of Odia cuisine develops, it reflects that the culture of regional cuisine is an effective differentiating factor in the competitive hospitality and restaurant sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Equity in Hotel Industry

According to Tassneem and Manjunath (2025), in the study of top five restaurants in Ballari, it was concluded that customer-based brand equity plays a significant role in the service branding of the hospitality sector and provides the empirical evidence for Brand management in regional restaurant industry. Brand equity has increasingly become an important concern within the hospitality industry. Hilal and Mubarak (2016) categorized the dimensions of customer-based brand equity in tourist hotels as major components includes brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty. Lin et al. (2015) discussed the customer-based brand equity and its impact on the repurchase intention of hotel customers. Latif et al. (2015) indicated that brand image is one of the factors that gives a competitive advantage to the hospitality products and services. Petrevska and Cingoski (2018) stressed the importance of the successful tourism branding in the context of green tourism in hotel. Nam et al. (2018) expanded on the connection between brand association and ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence and argued that a successful restaurant brand should meet the functional and symbolic needs of consumers. Service quality has been identified as an important antecedent to customer-based brand equity as it helps the customers distinguish a brand from its competitors. Previous research also revealed that service quality is a significant factor affecting brand image and other aspects of brand equity (Abd-El-Salam et al., 2013; Saleem & Raja, 2014). Also, Ishaq et al. (2014) confirmed that there is positive effect of service quality on brand image and Wu et al. (2011) stated that the quality of a brand's service has a significant role in building the brand's image.

Brand Awareness

According to Aaker (1991), brand awareness is the capacity of a would-be customer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product class. Huang & Sarigöllü (2012) demonstrated the association between brand awareness and consumer preference for the brand and brand result. Busen & Mustaffa (2014) assessed the major part of interactive advertisement in mounting brand equity mainly in the product market and rationalize the connection between advertising & brand equity. Thakor & Lavack (2003) reviewed that the country of origin & brand name (awareness) is helpful in determining the consumer perceptions regarding perceived brand origin. Krupka et al. (2014) evaluated the impact of perceived country of origin on price premium consumers want to pay for the brand. If consumers are fully conscious about the products, they can easily formulate their preference and willing to pay high price.

Brand Association/Image

According to Işoraitè (2018), product distinctiveness plays major part in the development of brand image. Panda & Misra (2014) identified that brand 's country-of-origin image & its brand equity are interconnected and confirmed the effects of former on latter. Korchia (2004) assessed that the characteristics of brand associations (unique & favorable) are used to create brand equity and brand interest. Zhang (2015) reviewed the influence of brand image on customer equity and consumer behavior (including consumer satisfaction and loyalty). Almutlaq (2016) identified the importance of brand image in term of discovering the connection between brand image & consumer buying decision. Malik et al. (2012) described that brand image is the amalgamation of five major groups of concepts of brand image (generic notions, meanings/ messages, symbolic notions, personality-based notions, & cognitive/ psychological notions). Shamsheer & Chowdhury (2012) explored that tourists associate the brand image with demographic perspective on consumer decision making. Manesh & Hozouri (2013)

extended the knowledge by explaining that penetrating strategy, infrastructure, competitive strategy, target market strategy, communication strategy & crystal-clear features are brand images to get the loyalty. Momeni et al. (2018) concentrated on the factors (advertisement and service quality) influencing brand image. French & Smith (2013) explained McDonald 's brand concept mapping (BCM) approach (including positive and negative attitude of respondents) to enhance brand association strength (BAS). Wang (2015) described that brand equity and brand associations are interactive. Westre (2016) provided valuable insight into the brand associations of Disney that the Disney is a fun, family oriented and magical brand. Ansary & Hashim (2017) acknowledged that brand image and drivers of brand equity (brand attachment, brand attitude, brand awareness) are important in building strong brand equity. Cunningham (2017) examined that color (brand associations) influences consumers' perception. Lu & Chen (2017) investigated that consumer knowledge, brand image, involvement & openness to experience affect consumers to purchase products. Latif et al. (2015) summarized the notions based on brands that will permit consumers to indicate the antecedents (awareness, resonance, corporate social responsibility, affection, superiority, association) of brand image/associations. Dias & Dias (2018) addressed a new way of applying storytelling in marketing, used it to extend products.

Service Quality

Oakland (2000) defined quality is a process of supervising industry to ensure complete satisfaction at all levels of business. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) defined service quality of a firm can be evaluated by the difference between customer perception and customer expectation. Service Quality (SQ) = Perception (P) – Expectation (E) According to Syed Saab Andaleeb "customer satisfaction is only one photo of an album and service quality could be a complete family album of a restaurant performance". According to David Garvin's a product or service is called qualify if it meets standards or we should say that it gets the highest standard.

Service Quality Dimensions

SERVQUAL is a measuring tool to determine the gap score between the perceptions and expectations of customers about the services of restaurant. Service quality can be categorized in to ten service quality determinants. Ten service quality attributes were reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, understanding / knowing the customer and access. These dimensions act as the vital composition of service quality and these came from the 'SERVQUAL' scale Parasuraman et al. (1985). In a subsequent work the same authors Parasuraman et al. (1988) tested the variables and reduced the 10 dimensions to five and condensed the 34 statements to 22 in these five factors such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The author presented a refined scale called as 'SERVQUAL' with 22 items spread among five dimensions. Empathy and assurance dimensions constitute with seven original dimensions such as competence, courtesy, communication, credibility, understanding and knowing customers, security, and access. After merger of these seven dimensions in to empathy and assurance than 'SERVQUAL' has only five dimensions like reliability, accessibility, tangible, empathy and assurance. SERVQUAL scale has total of 44 items (22 for expectations and 22 for perceptions).

Service Quality in the Restaurant Industry

According to (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Grönroos., 1990) the concept of service quality is described as the overall distinction among customers' perceptions of the service experience and expectations. Zeithaml & Bitner (2003) stated that expectations are an attitude about service procedure and actual service performance will be judge against the set standards. In reality expectations is all about what

customers feel a restaurant should offer. Dulen (1999) investigated factors that influenced service quality in restaurants such as food quality, physical environment and service (Susskind & Chan, 2000). Sulek & Hensley (2004) stated that there are some others factors that also influenced service quality but food quality is an important determinant of the customers' experience. In addition (Kivela et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2009) all these authors agreed that high level of service quality is the most significant dimension of customer satisfaction and return patronage of customers in restaurant industry.

REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a descriptive research design was used, and the population was customers who used the services of restaurants located in various major cities throughout Odisha. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, was used in this investigation. Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, is the purposeful selection of a participant based on the participant's characteristics. The study incorporated both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was gathered from the organization's journals, magazines, books, research journals, and articles. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. After minor modifications to suit the restaurant setting of the study area, multi-item measures from the literature that had already been validated and widely adopted were discovered and used. Brand equity, on the other hand, has two sub-dimensions: brand awareness and brand association. At last, the questionnaire incorporated multi-items measures for customer satisfaction and loyalty which were considered to be two exogenous variables in this study. A pilot study was carried out with a few restaurants in Bhubaneswar. To ensure the substance and interpretation of the questionnaire, it was disseminated to customers, managers, and senior marketing faculty. A few questions were changed in response to restaurant managers' and faculty members' comments. Customers' replies that were similar in nature were removed from the study. In order to analyze the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version was employed. Many statistical methods were used to determine the study's outcomes are frequency distribution table and structural equation modelling for hypotheses testing.

DATA ANALYSIS

The respondents' demographic profile has been depicted in the table. The information collected on respondents' gender, age, occupation, annual personal income, and education level is presented in the table 1. Out of the total 502 respondents, it was found that 53% of them were male respondents and rest 47% respondents were female. An analysis of the age of the respondents show that the age group of the respondents ranges from less than 20 years to more than 61 years. Age group < 20 years comprised of 21.1 percent of the sample whereas people above 60 years of age comprised of only 16.1 percent of the sample. The major concentration was between 21 to 40 years of age which comprised of about 36.5 % in aggregate of the sample size.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	278	55.4
	Male	224	44.6
Age Group	Below 20 Years	103	20.5
	21-40 Years	196	39.0
	41-60 Years	120	23.9
	Above 61	83	16.5
Educational Qualification	High School	38	7.6
	Under Graduate	102	20.3

	Graduate	139	27.7
	Post Graduate and Above	223	44.4
Occupation	Student	193	38.4
	Businessman	65	12.9
	Employed	152	30.3
	Retired Employee	70	13.9
	House wife	22	4.4
	Monthly Income in INR	Below INR. 24,999	271
INR. 25,000-49,999		87	17.3
INR. 50000-74,999		56	11.2
INR. 75000-99999		39	7.8
INR. 1000000-149,999		31	6.2
INR. 150000 and above		18	3.6

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA is a theory focused confirmatory technique (Schreiber et.al.2006). This analysis is appropriate when the researcher wants to examine the theoretical relationship between observed measures and the latent variables/factors. CFA is a hypothesis driven techniques and the researcher uses a hypothesized model to evaluate a population covariance matrix (Brown T. A., 2015). Apart from this CFA are also used developing sound and valid psychometric measures and testing causal effects. Through the confirmatory process, the researcher primarily wants to reduce the difference between the estimated and observed variables. A variety of goodness-of-fit indices are used for each latent variable as a separate structural model. Therefore, the researcher needs to have a prior sense based on past evidence and theory of factors exists in the data. In the confirmatory factor analysis, first a theoretical model was constructed for each factor, a path diagram of casual relationships was then constructed and, the parameter estimated in the model were examined based on the goodness of fit measures available in AMOS output.

Table 2. Measurement Model Fit Indices

GOF Index	Actual values	Recommended values
Chi-square	2046.65	-
Degrees of freedom	961	-
CMIN/DF	2.13	Less than 3
GFI	0.849	Greater than 0.90 or >0.80
RMSEA	0.048	Less than .09
CFI	0.92	Greater than 0.90
AGFI	0.823	Greater than 0.90
TLI	0.909	Greater than 0.90
IFI	0.920	Greater than 0.90

The measurement model had acceptable and satisfactory fit with the data collected. The value of CMIN/DF was 2.13, less than the recommended value of 3.0, suggesting a good model fit. In addition, the comparative fit indices (CFI = 0.920, TLI = 0.909, and IFI = 0.920) were greater than the recommended value of 0.90, indicating good model fit. The GFI (0.849) and AGFI (0.823) values were also acceptable (values > 0.80 are considered acceptable). Furthermore, the RMSEA of 0.048 was lower than the suggested cut-off of 0.06, which reflects a very good fit of the model. Overall, these fit indices provide evidence that the measurement model used is a good fit for the observed data. The measurement model assessment included assessment of constructs' reliability, convergent as well as discriminant validity. All the factor loadings were above the recommended value of 0.50, which means that the items

had good reliability. All constructs had Composite Reliability (CR) values > 0.70, which is considered the threshold for internal consistency reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were greater than 0.50, indicating that each construct accounted for more than 50% of the variance of its indicators (please refer table 3). Hence, the results indicated that the factor structure had a satisfactory convergent validity. Discriminant Validity of the Factor Structure confirms as values depicted in the table 4 satisfy the condition. According to Hair (2006), nomological validity is tested by examining the correlation between the construct in the measurement model. The correlation values shows that constructs are positively related to each other and support the nomological validity of the model.

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability
Tangibles	0.575	0.924
Food Quality	0.817	0.893
Responsiveness	0.753	0.924
Assurance	0.448	0.829
Empathy	0.503	0.834
Price Value	0.59	0.811
Reliability	0.712	0.925
Customer satisfaction	0.679	0.864
Customer loyalty	0.586	0.809
Brand association	0.719	0.884
Brand Awareness	0.503	0.75

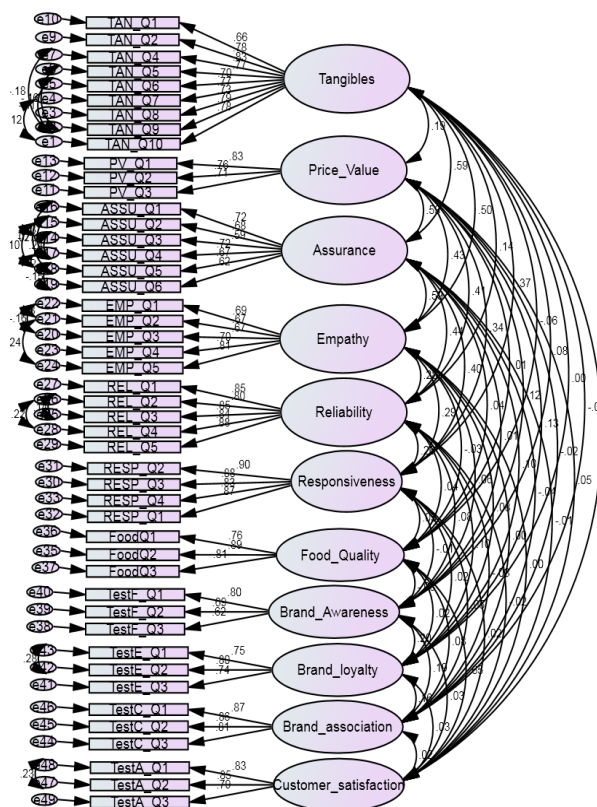


FIGURE 1. Measurement Model (Source: AMOS output)

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	TAN	PV	ASSU	EMP	REL	RESP	FQ	BAW	BAS	CSAT	BL
TAN	0.76										
PV	0.19	0.77									
ASSU	0.59	0.53	0.67								
EMP	0.50	0.43	0.59	0.71							
REL	0.14	0.42	0.44	0.28	0.82						
RESP	0.37	0.34	0.40	0.29	0.26	0.87					
FQ	-0.06	0.01	0.04	-0.03	0.04	0.05	0.90				
BAW	0.09	0.12	0.01	0.06	0.08	-0.01	-0.03	0.71			
BAS	0.00	0.13	0.10	0.08	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.20	0.85		
CSAT	-0.05	-0.02	-0.04	0.00	-0.03	0.05	0.08	0.19	0.16	0.77	
BL	-0.05	0.65	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.02	0.65	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.84

Regression weights between each sub-dimension and its second order construct i.e. service quality

The regression coefficient (β) values for each of the sub-dimensions with perceived service quality respectively are highlighted in the table given below.

Table 5: Regression weights between each sub-dimension and its second order construct i.e. service quality

Path			Estimate	P-value
Tangibles	<---	Service Quality	0.525	***
Price Value	<---	Service Quality	0.663	***
Assurance	<---	Service Quality	0.892	***
Empathy	<---	Service Quality	0.659	***
Reliability	<---	Service Quality	0.539	***
Responsiveness	<---	Service Quality	0.458	***
Food Quality	<---	Service Quality	0.506	***

All the seven sub-dimensions were found to be having significantly loading towards their higher order construct i.e. perceived service quality. The beta coefficient of sub-dimensions like tangibles ($\beta=0.525$), reliability ($\beta=0.539$), assurance ($\beta=0.892$), responsiveness ($\beta=0.458$), empathy ($\beta=0.659$), price value ($\beta=0.663$), and food quality ($\beta=0.506$). In case of restaurants as a part of food industry, the dimensions like assurance, price value and empathy are found to more imperative when it comes to enhancing satisfaction level of the customers.

Regression weights between each sub-dimension and its second order construct i.e. brand equity

The regression coefficient (β) values for two sub-dimensions i.e. brand awareness and brand association with brand equity respectively are demonstrated in the table given below.

Table 6: Regression weights between each sub-dimension and its second order construct i.e. brand equity

Path			Estimate	P-value
Brand Awareness	<---	Brand Equity	0.406	***
Brand Association	<---	Brand Equity	0.334	***

The above table has also measured the beta coefficient values for relationship of each sub-dimension with brand equity. It can be viewed that all the two dimensions of were having significantly and positive loading towards brand equity with brand awareness ($\beta = 0.406$), and brand association ($\beta = 0.334$). Based on the β values representing the relationship of each dimension with it can be inferred that brand awareness is the most important primary dimension of brand equity in restaurants industry

Path Analysis and Testing of Hypotheses

According to Wright, L. T. (1921), structural equation modeling has its roots in path analysis, which was invented by the geneticist Sewall Wright. For Gerpott, L., et al. (2001), a structural equation model reflects the cause-and-effect relationships between the latent constructs. Structural equation modeling is used to test the hypotheses. Accordingly, a structural model was constructed on AMOS 20.0 (figure 2), which indicates the determinants of customer satisfaction and loyalty with services provided in restaurant industry. In the research model, service quality is the independent variable that have seven sub-dimensions i.e. tangibles, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, food quality and price value. Further, brand equity as an intervening variable has two sub-dimensions i.e. brand association and brand awareness. Customer Satisfaction and customer loyalty are the two dependent variables were impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. The research models consist of four main constructs: service quality, brand equity, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Based on the Goodness of Fit of the hypothesized model, the hypotheses are tested and conclusions are given in table.

Table 7: Testing of Hypothesized Model Using Path Regression

Path			Estimate	P-value
Brand Equity	<---	Service Quality	0.503	***
Customer satisfaction	<---	Brand Equity	0.121	0.046
Customer loyalty	<---	Brand Equity	0.157	0.039
Customer loyalty	<---	Customer satisfaction	0.652	***

The results indicate that the structured regression rate of the relationship between Service Quality and brand equity is 0.503 and is found to be significant ($p=0.000$). Hence, with the 95% confidence level the null hypothesis (H1) “*There is no impact of service quality on brand equity in restaurants*” cannot be accepted. Hence, it can be concluded that the service quality in restaurants have a positive and significant impact on brand equity in restaurants of Odisha. Similarly, the cause-and-effect relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction is 0.121(β) and is found to be significant ($p=0.166$). Hence, with the 95% confidence level the null hypothesis (H2) “*The brand equity does not have any impact on customer satisfaction in restaurants*” is also not accepted. Further, it can also be concluded that the brand equity in restaurants have a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction. The

path between the two constructs; brand equity and customer loyalty is also statistically significant ($\beta=0.157, p<0.039$). The research hypothesis (H3) stating that “*The brand equity has no influence on customer loyalty*” is not accepted as $p<0.05$. Therefore, it may be said that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the constructs of brand equity and customer loyalty.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study aims to explore the correlation between service quality, brand equity, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the restaurant sector. Several managerial implications are suggested based on the findings of the study. As brand equity showed a relatively small impact on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, restaurants need to implement more customer-centric strategies to improve the overall dining experience and build long-term customer relationships. A warm, welcoming and emotionally connected environment can play a major part in enhancing customer satisfaction and affinity to the restaurant brand. The key for restaurant managers is to create personalized interactions with customers throughout the service encounter. First impressions and perceptions of the restaurant dining experience are heavily influenced by the initial encounter with the restaurant staff, especially the hosts, hostesses and servers. Emotional connections and customer experiences can be positively shaped by friendly communication, attentiveness and a genuine interest in customers' preferences. Moreover, the younger generation of consumers are becoming more and more tech-savvy, and restaurants must embrace digital platforms and technology-driven services to enhance customer interaction and streamline service. Social media, online feedback systems, mobile apps and digital customer support services can help restaurants gain a deeper insight into customer expectations and respond quickly to service issues. These efforts can lead to improved customer satisfaction, a stronger restaurant brand, and help build long-term customer loyalty.

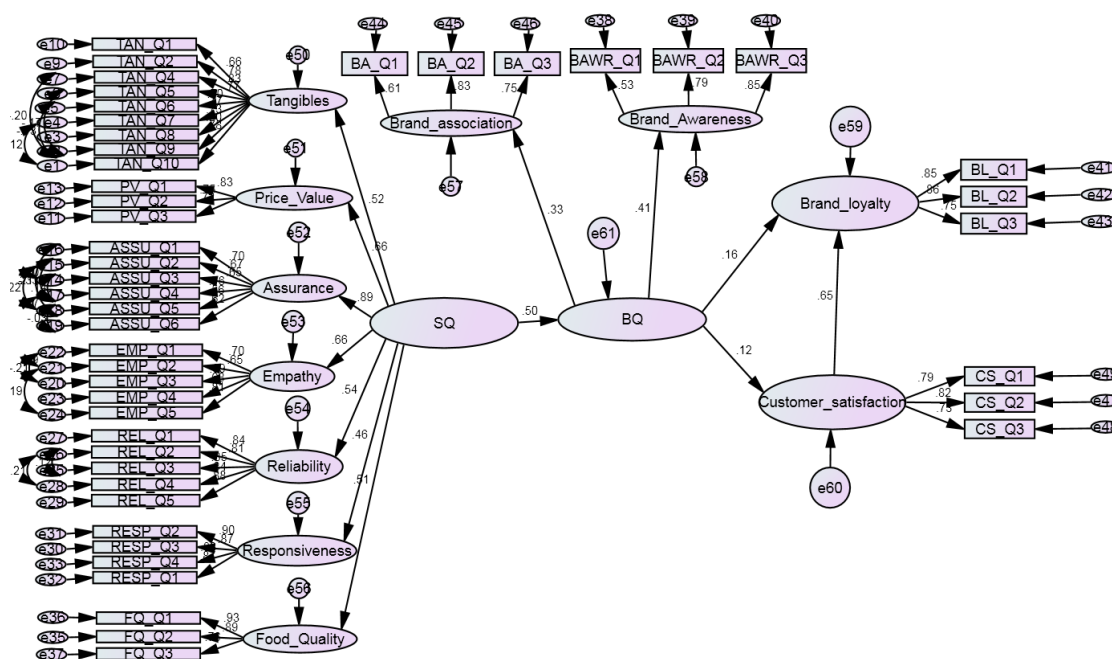


FIGURE 2. Structural Equation Model (Source: AMOS output)

Serving high-quality cuisine can help your restaurant gain a positive image and encourage customers to return for more. They should use and promote branded foods, work on their preparation, offer premium ingredients, focus on good-for-you ingredients, eliminate artificial ingredients, and make freshness a priority in order to improve food quality. It is also recommended to give good attention on improving

the customers brand association by improving the aspect of the brand image when compared to other competing brands, by making their logo easily to recall and that can be associate with way of life and also, they should give a huge attention for brand loyalty of customers towards the brand because customers have to be satisfied to be loyal. It is also recommended that they pay close attention to improving customer brand association by improving the aspect of the brand image when compared to other competing brands, by making their logo easy to remember and that can be associated with a way of life, and by paying close attention to customer brand loyalty because customers must be satisfied in order to be loyal. Managers can raise their hotel's brand awareness through various marketing efforts such as advertising, direct mail, trade press, word-of-mouth communication, and promotion activities, and as a result, they can improve their customers' service quality, loyalty, and image, as well as their organization's profitability.

CONCLUSION

Using the SERVQUAL model, this study explored the effects of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty through brand equity for restaurants in Odisha's major cities. According to the findings, the application of four crucial criteria, including service quality, brand equity, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty variables, have a substantial relationship with one another. The findings of past studies on their link still hold true, with the emphasis that as service quality improves, so does brand equity, which in turn improves customer happiness and loyalty in Odisha restaurants. While customer satisfaction is an important component of brand equity, businesses frequently underdeliver on service. Improving a service aspect can be costly; in many cases, it necessitates a substantial restructuring of a company. As a result, in this competitive industry, where restaurants provide identical services and face rising competition, restaurants can ensure their sustainability by focusing upon incorporating strategies that can maximize customer satisfaction and loyalty. Companies must, however, devote a major portion of their resources to obtain customer satisfaction, and once high levels of service delivery are reached, loyalty may be maintained, resulting in customer retention. The future research should attempt to examine the inverse relationship i.e. impact of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty on brand equity. This will give the opportunity to understand the how customer satisfaction and loyalty will affect brand equity in restaurants. Also, the results of this study will be more representative if the research is conducted through probability sampling method. It should also be noted that no moderation and mediation effect have been examined here. Including a mediation or moderator will further strengthen this study. The study can also include variables like customers' intention to retain or intention to re-visit in the model which will measure the impact of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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