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When the Restaurants' Customers Respond: A Netnographic and Empirical Inquiry of Satisfying Factors

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Social customer is relatively a new phenomenon which needs to be explored and explained in every dimension. This study strived to investigate and empirically test the satisfying factors of social customers for restaurants. Mix method was applied to achieve the purpose, and two studies were conducted. The first study was qualitative in which netnography methodology was applied, and 6076 comments of social customers were studied from social media pages of 20 restaurants, and, with content analysis, most satisfying factors were identified. In the second study, those satisfying factors were empirically tested with adopted instruments. For that, data was collected from a sample of 1529 customer and analyzed with regression technique. In-depth qualitative Netnographic analysis unearthed three most satisfying factors, food, service, and price. Food quality, food taste, and food quantity were commented most on, and service of staff and ambiance were also tended to be most liked, price and affordability was also the factor which seems to be luring customers towards restaurants. The empirical analysis of considerable sample substantiated the findings of a qualitative study, and food quality remained the top-notch for customers, followed by service quality. This study reinforced previous findings with qualitative and empirical data from the social customer in the local context. Moreover, these factors add the results from the restaurant industry. Restaurant industry is booming in Pakistan, and social media plays a pivotal role in customer guidance. This study facilitates restaurant businesses to know the factors, from multi-dimensions, which causes utmost satisfaction to customers and create customer retention. The study is also for marketers to understand the trend of social customers. This is the maiden Netnographic investigation of social customers of restaurants in Pakistan. It provides a complete understanding of their satisfying factors and reasons for visiting the restaurants.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention, Netnography, Customer Response