

Analysis of the Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction at Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the key factors influencing customer satisfaction at Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou. The research targets customers of this brand, employing a questionnaire survey method to collect data and utilizing structural equation modeling in conjunction with the China Customer Satisfaction Index (CCSI) model for empirical analysis. The study examines potential variables such as brand image, customer expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The findings indicate that brand image, customer expectations, and perceived quality have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction, with brand image directly influencing customer expectations and perceived quality, while customer expectations have the greatest effect on customer satisfaction. Perceived value serves as a partial mediator between brand image, customer expectations, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the level of customer satisfaction significantly affects customer loyalty. Based on these findings, we recommend that catering enterprises focus on enhancing brand image, improving customer expectation management, continuously optimizing service quality and food taste, and increasing perceived value to achieve dual improvements in customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction; Song Chongqing Hotpot; CCSI; SEM; Customer Expectations; Brand Image

1. Introduction

James et al. suggests that there is a close relationship between customer loyalty and profit, stating that customer loyalty directly determines profit, with loyal customers bringing substantial profits to the enterprise. Customer loyalty is

formed through customer satisfaction, indicating a correlation between the two. To enhance customer loyalty, it is crucial to first improve customer satisfaction.[1] Hallowell's empirical research reveals a connection between customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as a reciprocal relationship between customer loyalty and profitability, with customer satisfaction being a predictor of a company's profitability and performance levels. [2] Numerous studies, including those by Anderson [3] and Heskett [4], show that customer satisfaction is closely related to the financial and market performance of enterprises. Fourier argues that by understanding customer expectations for products or services, small and medium-sized enterprises can adjust their offerings accordingly to meet customer needs, thereby increasing customer satisfaction.[5]

In today's highly competitive restaurant market, customer satisfaction has become one of the key factors for business success. Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou, as a well-known hotpot brand, attracts a large number of customers with its unique flavors and high-quality service. However, due to ongoing market fluctuations and increasingly diverse customer demands, maintaining and improving customer satisfaction has become a significant challenge for the brand. This study aims to analyze customer satisfaction at Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou, revealing the key factors that influence customer satisfaction and providing empirical evidence and management recommendations. The research enriches the theoretical framework of the restaurant industry and deepens the application of service quality management theories. Practically, it offers decision-making support for restaurant enterprises, helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses, formulate appropriate strategies, and promoting overall development in the restaurant industry, enhancing service levels and product quality to achieve sustainable development.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research on the Definition of Customer Satisfaction

Cardozo was the first to propose the concept of customer satisfaction, suggesting that it is influenced by the relationship between the value customers invest and their expectations of the product or service.[6] Since then, scholars from various countries have defined and supplemented the concept of customer satisfaction from different perspectives. Oliver posits that customer satisfaction refers to the overall psychological state of customers when their prior perceptions and emotional expectations are unmet.[7] Zeithaml et al. define customer satisfaction as the feelings generated when customers evaluate whether a product or service meets their needs and expectations.[8] For example, in the restaurant industry, if customers feel that the taste of the dishes, freshness of the ingredients, timeliness of service, and the restaurant environment meet or exceed their previous expectations after dining, they will feel satisfied with their dining experience.

2.2 Research on the Current Development of the Hotpot Industry and Customer Satisfaction

The average employee turnover rate in China's catering industry is 28.6%, while Haidilao maintains a turnover rate of less than 10%. Moreover, Haidilao boasts a customer return rate of 50%, with its customer satisfaction and reputation significantly surpassing its competitors.[9] Currently, several large hotpot enterprises have emerged in the domestic market, such as Song Hotpot, Xiao Long Kan, De Zhuang, and Little Sheep, with many brands rapidly occupying the market through chain operations. However, some enterprises have failed to establish their own characteristics and have followed trends blindly, ultimately leading to market exit.[10] Liu examined the performance and characteristics of the Chinese hotpot industry across various dimensions, including development scale and growth rate, operating models and profitability, evolution of business types, and regional distribution, based on the series of documents published in the "China Catering Industry Development Report" from 2011 to 2015, along with authoritative data from relevant statistical yearbooks.[11] The

research by Du and Gong indicates that restaurant consumption has played an important role in driving national consumption growth in recent years. Particularly with the advancement of the internet and information technology, the chain operation model has become the mainstream development trend in the catering industry, providing a favorable market environment for the expansion and innovation of hotpot enterprises.[12] Yu and others note that hotpot features relatively simple products, fewer production and processing stages, and the ability to uniformly prepare base ingredients and seasonings. These characteristics ensure the stability and consistency of hotpot products in quality, making hotpot one of the more standardized categories in Chinese cuisine, thus becoming a key support for the vigorous development of the Chinese catering industry.[13] Luo and Wei conducted a survey on customer satisfaction at Haidilao in Jiaying through random sampling, assessing customer satisfaction with service quality.[14] These studies provide important theoretical foundations and practical references for this paper's analysis of the factors driving customer satisfaction at Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou.

2.3 Research on Customer Satisfaction Index Evaluation Model Theory

As an important area of research, customer satisfaction has seen the establishment of various evaluation models in Europe and the United States to explore the factors influencing it. Among these, the Customer Satisfaction Index Model (SCSB), first created by Swiss scholars and also known as the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Index Model, includes five key variables: customer expectations, customer value, customer satisfaction, customer complaints, and customer loyalty.[15] This model provides a foundation for subsequent research on satisfaction. The American Customer Satisfaction Index Model (ACSI) extends the SCSB model by incorporating perceived quality as a preceding variable, making the model more comprehensive in considering various factors that affect customer satisfaction.[16] This improvement enhances the logicity and practicality of the ACSI model, helping managers better identify and understand the driving factors of customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the ECSI model, jointly constructed by the European Organization for Quality and

the European Foundation for Quality Management, adjusts the ACSI model to suit the characteristics of the European market. This model removes the customer complaints variable and adds the corporate image variable, emphasizing the impact of corporate image on customer satisfaction and loyalty. [17]

2.4 Research on the CCSI Model and Its Influencing Factors

The CCSI model, or Chinese Customer Satisfaction Index model, is constructed based on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model, integrating China's national conditions and market characteristics. This model mainly consists of six structural variables: brand image, expected quality, perceived quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty.[18] Zeithaml et al. found that, in addition to the factors involved in the CCSI model, employee quality and corporate culture are also considered important factors influencing customer satisfaction.[19] Employees' professional skills, service attitude, and communication abilities directly impact customers' perceived quality and service experience. Jones et al. discovered that customer satisfaction can dynamically change over time and across different consumption contexts.[20] Customers' expectations and needs for products or services may vary at different stages of consumption; therefore, businesses need to continuously monitor trends in customer satisfaction and adjust their operational strategies in a timely manner.

2.5 Application of the CCSI Model in Various Industries

In recent years, the CCSI model has been widely applied across multiple industries. Fu et al. established a CCSI model for logistics delivery services, finding that perceived service quality and costs significantly impact customer satisfaction, while brand image also plays a role, and satisfaction determines loyalty.[21] Wang used the CCSI model and SPSS to analyze customer satisfaction indicators in the dairy industry, proposing suggestions to enhance customer satisfaction.[22] Zhou and Wang applied the CCSI model in the tourism industry, utilizing structural equation modeling to explore factors affecting satisfaction in tourism live broadcasts.[23] Additionally, Lu and Hu researched satisfaction in express delivery

services using the CCSI model,[24] while Wu and Wang examined the impact of university image on corporate enthusiasm in the context of school-enterprise cooperation.[25]

Despite the widespread application of the CCSI model in various fields such as manufacturing, tourism, and logistics, research in the restaurant industry remains relatively limited. Therefore, given the necessity of analyzing the driving factors of customer satisfaction, this paper will take Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou as a case study to explore the main driving factors of its customer satisfaction, providing empirical evidence and management recommendations for the industry.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Object

Song Chongqing Hotpot is a brand under Jiumaojiu (Guangzhou) Holdings Co., Ltd., established in 2020 in Guangzhou. This brand continues the style of Tai Er, focusing on freshly sliced beef and offering a unique spicy broth with vegetable options. The brand manager, Liu Yuxiong, emphasizes that Song Hotpot aims to be the "happiness factory" for young people, striving to provide a joyful dining experience through hotpot. In recent years, Song Chongqing Hotpot has rapidly gained popularity in Guangzhou, attracting a large number of young consumers with its distinctive dishes and dining experience.

In Guangzhou, Song Chongqing Hotpot enjoys widespread popularity, often leading to queues for dining, especially at locations in bustling commercial areas such as R&F Haizhu City. During peak holidays like the Spring Festival, reservations are particularly high, reflecting consumer recognition of the brand. The brand is frequently discussed and recommended on social media, with its unique décor, engaging service model, and delicious dishes becoming popular choices for young people to check in and share. Moreover, special activities such as dance performances in the restaurant enhance customer interaction and engagement. Customer feedback indicates that Song Chongqing Hotpot receives high ratings for ingredient quality, broth flavor, and service quality, with its freshly sliced beef and specialty broth being particularly favored by diners. This phenomenon provides an important practical case for studying customer satisfaction, helping to understand current market trends and

consumer preferences in the hotpot industry. Song Chongqing Hotpot has received high evaluations in terms of customer satisfaction. Analyzing its success factors can provide feasible references and strategies for other hotpot enterprises, thus enhancing the overall service quality in the industry. The brand has innovated its service model and brand image by enhancing customer experiences through interactive activities and a unique dining environment. These innovative practices provide rich case material for studying customer satisfaction. As a cross-regional brand, the success of Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou reflects the combination of local and global elements in hotpot culture, illustrating the development dynamics of the Chinese restaurant industry in the process of internationalization. Guangzhou, as China's culinary capital, possesses rich market research data and customer feedback, providing a reliable empirical basis for the study and aiding in the in-depth analysis of the driving factors of customer satisfaction.

In summary, Song Chongqing Hotpot is not only representative in the market but also offers valuable case references for this research through its practical experiences in customer satisfaction.

3.2 Scale Development

As a comprehensive customer satisfaction assessment tool, the CCSI model can assist Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou in gaining insights into customer perceptions and expectations regarding its products or services, thereby identifying the main influencing factors

of customer satisfaction. The CCSI model comprises six latent variables: Brand Image (BI), Expectation Quality (EQ), Perceived Quality (PQ), Perceived Value (PV), Customer Satisfaction (CS), and Customer Loyalty (CL). The relationships among these variables are illustrated in Figure 1.

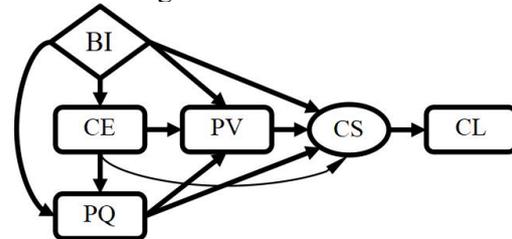


Figure 1. CCSI Model

The evaluation system studied in this paper primarily references existing research findings from previous scholars and modifies them in accordance with the characteristics and attributes of Song Hotpot, ultimately forming the customer satisfaction evaluation index system for Song Hotpot. This is shown in Table 1.

3.3 Sample Distribution

The survey questionnaire for this study consists of two parts. The first part collects basic customer information, including gender, age, and highest education level. The second part sets up scales for the six latent variables related to customer satisfaction at Song Chongqing Hotpot, as outlined in Table 1. This part uses a five-point Likert scale for the measurement items, categorized into five levels: "Very Satisfied (Very High)", "Satisfied (High)", "Generally Satisfied (Moderate)", "Dissatisfied (Low)", and "Very Dissatisfied (None)".

Table 1. Customer Satisfaction Index System

Latent Variable	No.	Measurement Items
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	Overall image perception
	BI2	Awareness perception
	BI3	Reputation perception
Perceived Quality (PQ)	PQ1	Dining environment perception
	PQ2	Employee service attitude perception
	PQ3	Service efficiency perception
	PQ4	Dish flavor perception
	PQ5	Supporting facilities perception
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	Degree of alignment between service quality and pricing
	PV2	Degree of alignment between dish quality and pricing level
	PV3	Perceived value of additional products
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	CS1	Degree of service meeting expectations
	CS2	Comparison of service quality with other hotpot brands
	CS3	Overall quality of service perception

Customer Expectation (CE)	CE1	Overall expectation of service quality
	CE2	Expectation of attentive service during dining
	CE3	Expectation of providing value for money services
Customer Loyalty (CL)	CL1	Likelihood of continued dining
	CL2	Likelihood of recommending to others
	CL3	Likelihood of choosing this brand even with a price inc

As of October 2024, Song Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou has a total of 18 branches. This study recruited 186 customers as survey participants, with 173 valid questionnaires returned. The remaining 13 were excluded due to incomplete responses or other errors. The collected sample data shows that the male proportion in the sample group is 44.51%, while females account for 55.49%, resulting in a gender ratio close to 1:1. Additionally, nearly 80% of the respondents are aged 18-23 and hold a bachelor's degree, aligning well with the market positioning of Song Chongqing Hotpot, indicating that the sample distribution is quite reasonable.

3.4 Data Validation

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, this study employed SPSS 26.0 to conduct a reliability analysis of the survey results. The results of the reliability analysis are shown in Table 2.

The reliability analysis results in Table 2 indicate that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six variables in the questionnaire are all greater than 0.7, with the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient being 0.978. This suggests that the scale is well designed, and thus this study concludes that the questionnaire has good reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
BI	BI1-BI3	0.91
PQ	PQ1-PQ5	0.927
PV	PV1-PV3	0.908
CS	CS1-CS3	0.894
CE	CE1-CE3	0.871
CL	CL1-CL3	0.935

To verify the validity of the questionnaire, specifically whether the questionnaire items align with the research objectives, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the data from 173 questionnaires. In this process, the KMO value and Bartlett's test are two important statistical indicators. The validity analysis results of this study are presented in Table 3.

A KMO value greater than 0.6, along with a Bartlett's test of sphericity significance less than

0.05, indicates that the structure of the questionnaire has good explanatory validity. The results in Table 3 show that the KMO values for each item are all greater than 0.7, with an overall KMO of 0.953. Additionally, the significance of the Bartlett's test is less than 0.05, indicating that the structure of the questionnaire has good explanatory validity.

Table 3. KMO Test

Variable	Items	KMO
BI	BI1-BI3	0.735
PQ	PQ1-PQ5	0.859
PV	PV1-PV3	0.755
CS	CS1-CS3	0.731
CE	CE1-CE3	0.716
CL	CL1-CL3	0.744

4. Data Analysis and Model Validation

The CCSI model analyzes the relationships among various structural variables and their impact pathways and degrees on customer satisfaction and loyalty through the establishment of a structural equation model. By measuring these variables, businesses can gain insights into customer evaluations and attitudes toward their products or services, identify the key factors influencing customer satisfaction, and make targeted improvements and optimizations.

4.1 Model Fit Validation

This study employs AMOS 26.0 software to construct the CCSI model for Guangzhou Song Chongqing Hotpot and conducts an overall model fit assessment. The indices used to evaluate the fit include the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and normed fit index (NFI). Table 4 presents all the indices used for fit evaluation, and since all indices meet the required standards, it can be concluded that the model's fit is within an acceptable range.

4.2 Path Relationship Verification of the Model

After confirming the model's satisfactory fit with

the data, the significance of the path coefficients between the latent variables can be assessed to determine their relationships. The path coefficients reflect the interactions among the latent variables, with values that can be either positive or negative. A positive value indicates a positive correlation, while a negative value suggests a negative correlation. The significance of the path coefficients can be evaluated using

the Critical Ratio (C.R.) and the P-value. Specifically, the C.R. is the ratio of the estimated path coefficient to its standard error; an absolute value exceeding 1.96 indicates significance. Meanwhile, the P-value reflects the likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis, with values less than 0.05 suggesting that the path relationship is statistically significant.

Table 4. Model Fit Assessment Results

Evaluation Index	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	NFI	IFI
Criteria	<3	<0.05	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Fit Results	0.154	0	1	0.999	1	1
Evaluation Effect	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

Table 5. Model Path Relationships

No.	Path Coefficient	C.R.	P	Path Relationship
H1	0.784	16.949	***	Brand image positively influences customer expectations
H2	0.271	5.373	***	Brand image positively influences perceived quality
H3	-0.149	-2.908	0.004	Brand image negatively influences perceived value
H4	0.145	3.529	***	Brand image positively influences customer satisfaction
H5	0.685	13.539	***	Customer expectations positively influence perceived quality
H6	0.469	6.872	***	Customer expectations positively influence perceived value
H7	0.238	3.943	***	Customer expectations positively influence customer satisfaction
H8	0.601	8.393	***	Perceived quality positively influences perceived value
H9	0.149	2.24	0.025	Perceived quality positively influences customer satisfaction
H10	0.478	8.006	***	Perceived value positively influences customer satisfaction
H11	0.776	17.169	***	Customer satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty

Note: *** indicates statistical significance at the 0.001 level.

The results of the model testing are presented in Table 5. The path coefficient for brand image (BI) affecting perceived value (PV) is -0.149, indicating a negative influence. This may be attributed to certain aspects of the brand image (such as a high-end positioning) that lead customers to have higher expectations regarding the alignment between price and value, thereby resulting in a relative decrease in perceived value.

All other path relationships exhibit positive coefficients, indicating a positive influence between the variables. Furthermore, since the absolute values of the C.R. are all greater than 1.96 and $P < 0.05$, these path relationships are

statistically significant.

4.3. Structural Equation Model

The structural equation model (SEM) for customer satisfaction at Guangzhou Song Chongqing Hotpot is illustrated in Figure 2. This diagram presents the CCSI model, which is crucial for a thorough understanding and analysis of the key factors influencing customer satisfaction. Through this model, we can systematically investigate how various latent variables—such as brand image, customer expectations, perceived quality, and perceived value—interact with one another and ultimately impact customer satisfaction and loyalty.

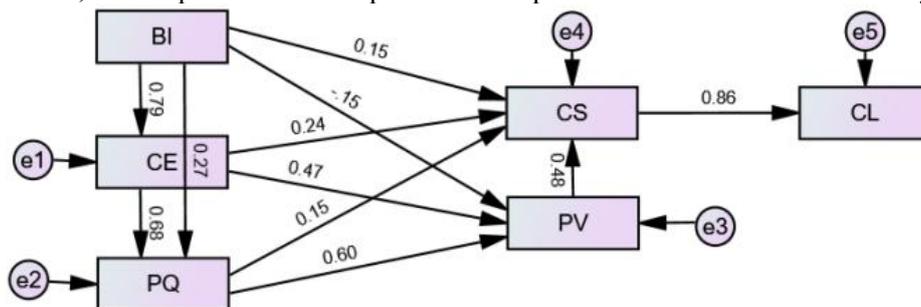


Figure 2. The Structural Equation Model

To explore the key factors affecting customer satisfaction at Guangzhou Song Chongqing Hotpot, we need to calculate the impact effects of the four latent variables—brand image, customer expectations, perceived quality, and perceived value—on customer satisfaction within the structural equation model.

The direct effect reflects the immediate influence of each latent variable on customer satisfaction, represented by the corresponding path coefficient values. The indirect effect refers to how brand image, customer expectations, and perceived quality each influence the perceived value variable, which in turn indirectly affects customer satisfaction. This is calculated by multiplying the relevant path coefficients. If multiple indirect effect paths exist, the total indirect effect is the sum of the indirect effects from each path.

Table 6. Impact Effects of Each Latent Variable on Customer Satisfaction

Latent Variable	BI	CE	PQ	PV
Direct Effect	0.15	0.24	0.15	0.48
Indirect Effect	0.28	0.52	0.29	-
Total Effect	0.43	0.76	0.44	0.48

The results in Table 6 indicate that customer expectations (with an effect size of 0.76) have the most significant total impact on customer satisfaction at Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou, making it the primary influencing variable. Perceived value (with an effect size of 0.48) ranks second and serves as a mediating bridge between customer expectations and satisfaction. Brand image (with an effect size of 0.43) and perceived quality (with an effect size of 0.44) have comparatively smaller overall impacts on customer satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

This study uses Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou as a case study and employs the CCSI model to conduct an in-depth analysis of customer satisfaction. The aim is to reveal the key factors influencing customer satisfaction and to provide empirical evidence and management recommendations for the restaurant industry.

5.1 Key Findings

By referencing previous research and considering the unique characteristics of Chongqing Hotpot, this study developed a customer satisfaction evaluation index system for the restaurant. Reliability and validity analyses were conducted on the survey using

SPSS 26.0, which indicated that the questionnaire has good reliability and explanatory validity. A structural equation model for the CCSI was constructed using AMOS 26.0, and an overall fit assessment was conducted, with all indicators meeting the required standards. The model fit was within an acceptable range, and the significant tests of path coefficients confirmed the relationships among the latent variables.

When calculating the impact effects of each latent variable on customer satisfaction, the results showed that customer expectations (0.76) have the greatest total impact effect on customer satisfaction at Chongqing Hotpot in Guangzhou, making it the primary influencing variable. This was followed by perceived value (0.48), which serves an important mediating role, while brand image (0.43) and perceived quality (0.44) have relatively smaller combined effects on customer satisfaction.

5.2 Implications for the Restaurant Industry

Restaurant enterprises should prioritize the management of customer expectations. During marketing and promotional activities, it is essential to ensure that the information conveyed is accurate and truthful, avoiding over-promising that could lead to inflated customer expectations. Additionally, businesses should continuously monitor changes in customer needs and adjust their operational strategies accordingly. For instance, Chongqing Hotpot can engage with customers through interactive means, such as placing suggestion boxes in-store or conducting online surveys, to gather information about customer expectations and needs, thereby optimizing dishes, services, and the dining environment.

Moreover, companies should focus on enhancing the perceived value for customers. This can be achieved by improving the quality of dishes, optimizing service levels, and implementing reasonable pricing strategies. For Chongqing Hotpot, maintaining the high quality of signature dishes like freshly sliced beef and consistently introducing new specialty items would be beneficial. On the service front, further training for staff can improve efficiency and quality. Pricing should take into account both costs and market competition to ensure customers perceive good value.

Brand image also significantly affects customer satisfaction. Restaurant enterprises should

concentrate on building their brand image, encompassing aspects like brand awareness, reputation, and word-of-mouth. Chongqing Hotpot can enhance its brand image in customers' minds through unique decor, engaging service models (such as in-store dance performances), and active participation in social welfare activities, thereby increasing customers' sense of identification and belonging.

5.3 Contributions and Limitations of the Study

Theoretically, this study enriches the research framework on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry, providing an empirical case for the application of the CCSI model in this sector, while deepening the practical application of service quality management theory. Practically, the research offers decision-making support for restaurant enterprises, helping them identify their strengths and weaknesses, and enabling the formulation of targeted business strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, thereby promoting the overall development of the restaurant industry.

However, the sample of this study is primarily concentrated in the Guangzhou region, and the age and educational structure are relatively homogeneous, which may not fully represent the opinions of all customer segments. Future research could expand the sample to include customers from different regions, age groups, educational backgrounds, and consumption levels to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this study analyzed only a subset of key variables in the CCSI model affecting customer satisfaction, without considering other potential influencing factors, such as the dynamic changes in the competitive market environment and cultural differences in dining. Subsequent research could broaden its scope to include more factors for a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying customer satisfaction.

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