IMPACT OF RESTAURANT MUSIC ON CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Music is a significant element of the atmospherics in the restaurant industry influencing customers' perceptions of food quality and overall dining satisfaction. Music significantly impacts customers' perceptions of service quality in restaurants. Various musical elements such as tempo, volume and genre can influence customer emotions, satisfaction and behavior thereby affecting the overall dining experience. As restaurants increasingly recognize the importance of ambiance, the strategic use of music emerges as a key component in enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction. This study investigates how various aspects of restaurant music impact the customer experience by analyzing data from 400 respondents. The research employs descriptive and inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis to explore relationships between demographic factors, dining habits, and music preferences. Findings reveal that age significantly affects dining frequency with younger patrons dining out more frequently. Music preferences vary by age with Jazz and Classical being the most popular genres. The study finds a strong positive correlation between music and consumer satisfaction and identifies that music characteristics such as volume, tempo and genre have a significant impact on perceptions of service quality. Based on these results it is recommended that restaurants tailor music choices to demographic preferences, optimize music characteristics to enhance the dining experience and use music strategically to boost customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *Music, Consumer Satisfaction, Dining Experience, Music Preferences, Volume, Tempo, Genre, Service Quality.*

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Introduction

In the highly competitive restaurant industry, delivering exceptional service is just as important as the quality of the food. The entire dining experience and atmospherics play significant role in overall customer satisfaction. Today's consumer is looking for an overall experience rather than just being served quality food. One of such crucial but often underestimated component of this experience is the auditory element of atmospherics. Music is one of the powerful sensory elements of atmospheric that can significantly affect customers' emotions and perception of the service provided. The strategic use of music in restaurants can result in improved performance and overall customers' satisfaction.

Consumers can easily connect with the service as music can set the tone and atmosphere of a restaurant. It influences how consumers feel and perceive the environment. The volume, tempo and genre of music affects diners' moods, and their perceived waiting times. While much attention has been given to factors like food quality and customer service in shaping customer satisfaction, the role of music in influencing service quality perception and satisfaction remains underexplored. This study aims to

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bridge this gap by examining how music in a restaurant setting affects consumers' evaluation of the service they receive.

Music can create a pleasant dining experience that leads to repeat visits and customer retention. Live musicians can also significantly enhance the atmosphere making the space feel more lively and inviting. Live music can be tailored to match the restaurant's theme and cater to the preferences of its guests.

By understanding the relationship between music and perceived service quality, music can be strategically used to match the consumer demographics and create the desired ambience. This research investigates the impact of restaurant music on consumers' perception of service quality seeking to understand how different musical elements contribute to their overall dining experience. The findings from this research could provide valuable insights into creating an ambiance that not only meets but exceeds customer expectations ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study contributes to the broader understanding of how non-food elements such as music can be leveraged to improve perceived service quality and create a more enjoyable dining environment.

Review of Literature

The role of music in shaping customer perception in restaurant settings has captured significant academic interest. Recent studies have delved deeper into specific attributes of music and their impact on service quality. For instancea recent study performed by **Leonidas et al. (2024),** highlights the effect of music upon the restaurant customers' perception and choice. The study results offer valuable insights into the psychological impact of music on dining experiences. The study recommends that restaurant owners and marketers in creating atmospheres that not only attract customers but also enhance their overall perception of food quality and service.

Maria et al. (2022) in their study provides a comprehensive examination of how music impacts consumer behaviour in hospitality and tourism industry. They highlighted the significant role music plays in shaping customer experiences, perceptions, and behaviours in tourism and hospitality contexts. The meta-analysis reveals that music influences factors such as customer satisfaction, emotional responses and purchase intentions. The paper suggests that specific musical elements like tempo, volume and genre can be strategically utilized to enhance customer experiences offering valuable insights for industry practitioners aiming to create more engaging environments.

Tsui, P., Chen, Y., Chiang, M., & Lee, C. (2022), explored how background music influences diners' emotions in a restaurant setting particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed to understand the effect of background music on diners' emotions especially during the unique context of the COVID-19 pandemic where silent dining was promoted to minimize the risk of virus transmission. The study results found that background music significantly affects diners' emotions. Certain types of music can enhance positive emotions even when diners are required to remain silent. Specific characteristics of music such as tempo and volume play an important role in influencing diners' emotional responses.

Moreover, a 2020 study by **Chun and Nyam-Ochir (2020),** in sustainability examined the influence of various restaurant attributes, including ambiance factors like music, on customer satisfaction, revisit intention and recommendations in fast food settings. They found that the atmosphere, inclusive of music, significantly affects customer satisfaction, demonstrating the importance of creating an environment conducive to positive customer perceptions.

The study performed by **Spence et al. (2019),** highlights the interaction between music and other sensory elements. The research emphasized the concept of multisensory dining where music can interact with taste, aroma and visual stimuli to create a holistic sensory experience that influences customers' perception of both food and service quality.

The study results of**Liu and Jang (2015),** indicated that lower volume and slower tempo music contribute to a more pleasant dining atmosphere, enhancing customers' perception of service quality.

Early studies suggest that background music can influence customers' emotions, behaviors and overall dining experience. **Caldwell and Hibbert (2002),**found that music tempo could alter the perceived waiting time and customer satisfaction in a restaurant setting suggesting that slower tempo music leads to longer customer stays and increased spending.

Further expanding on these findings, **North, Hargreaves, and McKendrick (1999)** explored the effect of musical style on restaurant customers' behavior. They observed that classical music increased the perceived elegance of the environment, leading to higher spending compared to pop or no music.

This supports the notion that music not only affects mood but also plays a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions of service quality and overall dining experience.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the frequency of dining out among different age groups
- To identify music genre preferences of consumers
- To assess the relationship between music and consumer satisfaction
- To investigate the impact of music on consumers' perception of service quality
- Examine how demographic variables interact with music preferences to affect dining experiences

Research Hypotheses

H_01:   There is no significant association between age and the frequency of dining out.

H_02:   There is no significant association between age and music genre preference.

H_03:   There is no significant relationship between the type of music played in restaurants and consumer satisfaction.

H_04:   Music volume, tempo, and genre do not significantly impact consumers' perception of service quality.

Research Design and Methodology

Present study employsa descriptive research design with an aim to examine the impact of restaurant music on consumers' perception of service quality. A total of 400 respondents were selected using a random sampling method to ensure a representative sample of the population.

Data Collection and Analysis Tool

A questionnaire was designed to collect data on demographic information, frequency of dining out, music genre preferences and perceptions of service quality. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic profile of respondents, their dining habits and music preferences using frequency distributions, percentages and mean scores. Inferential statistics such as Chi-Square Test, ANOVA and regression Analysis were used to test the null hypotheses. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to ensure accuracy in calculations and interpretations.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Profile of the Sample

		Count	%
Gender	Male	170	42.5
	Female	230	57.5
Age	Below 20	80	20
	21-40	230	57.5
	41-60	50	12.5
	Above 60	40	10
Qualification	Under Graduate	140	35
	Post Graduate	220	55
	Doctorate/professional	40	10
Total		**400**	**100**

The above table shows the count and percentage of sample in various demographic categories. A total sample size of 400 respondents was selected by using random sampling method. The share of female respondents is slightly greater than their male counterparts. Age wise distribution of respondents shows that more than half of our respondents belong to the age group of 21-40 while the share of respondents belonging to more than 60 years of age is only 10% of the total. 55% of respondents are educated at postgraduate level whereas 35% are undergraduate and 10% hold doctorate or any professional degrees.
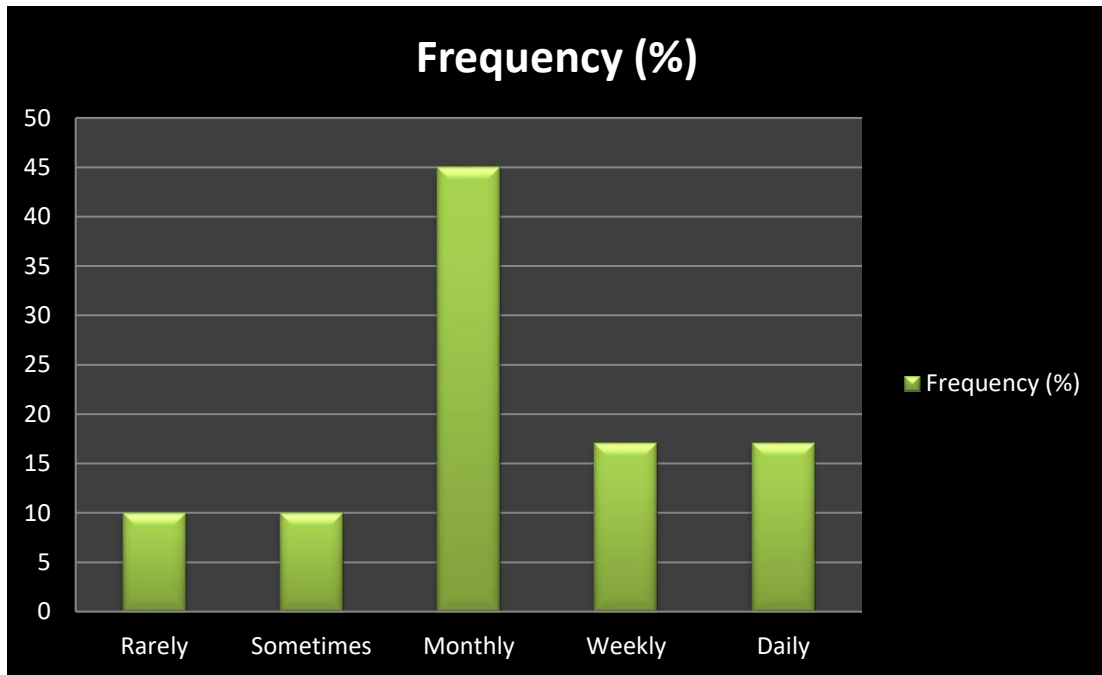
Figure 1: Frequency of Dining Out

Figure 1 shows the frequency of respondents' habit of how often they eat out. It is very clear from the chart that 45% of the total respondents monthly visit restaurants whereas only 10% hardly dine out. 17% of the total sample prefers to dine out daily. This clearly indicates the monthly preferred dine out habits of the majority of respondents.
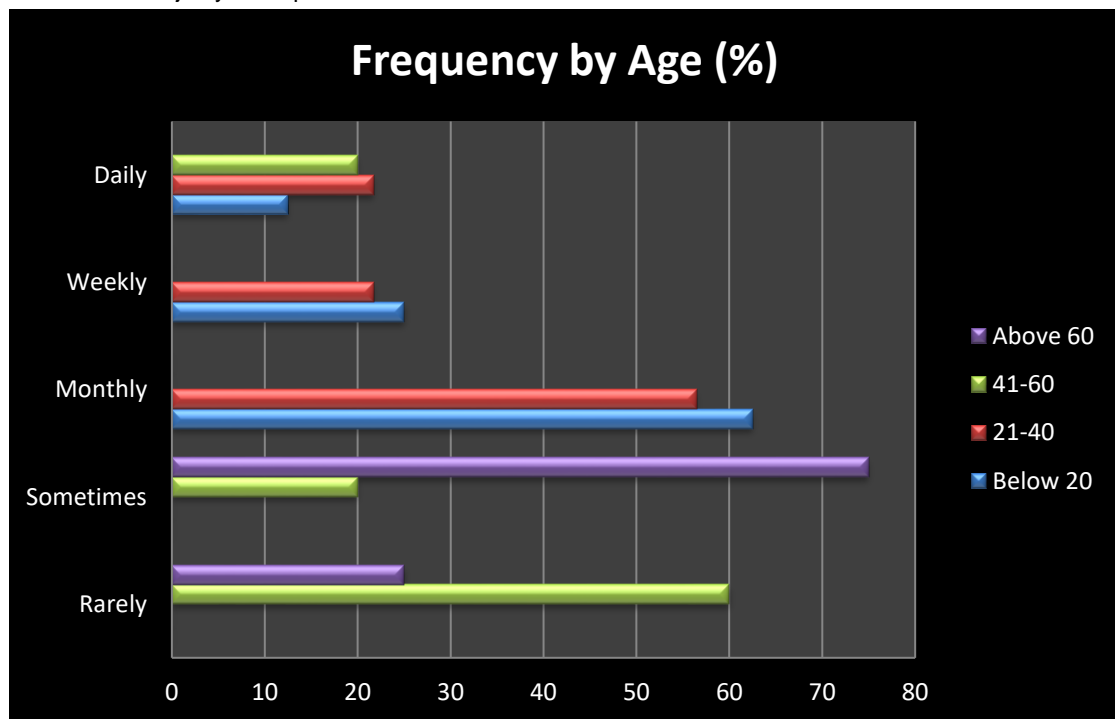

Figure 2: Frequency of Dining Out by Age

Frequency of dine out habits of respondents by different age group is presented in the above chart. The graph reveals that younger age groups dine out more frequently. Age group of 21-40 have the highest percentages for 'Weekly' and 'Daily' dining. In contrast, older age groups especially above 60 show higher percentages for 'Rarely' and 'Sometimes' dining out habits.

Table 2: Association between Age and Frequency of Dining Out

	Value	d.f	Asymptotic sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	45.41	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.63	12	.000
Linear by Linear Association	14.73	1	.000
N of Valid cases	400		

The chi square test result shows the strong association between the age and frequency of dining out. Since the value of p is .000 which is less than significance level of 0.5 therefore we reject the null hypothesis that there is no association between age and frequency of dining out.
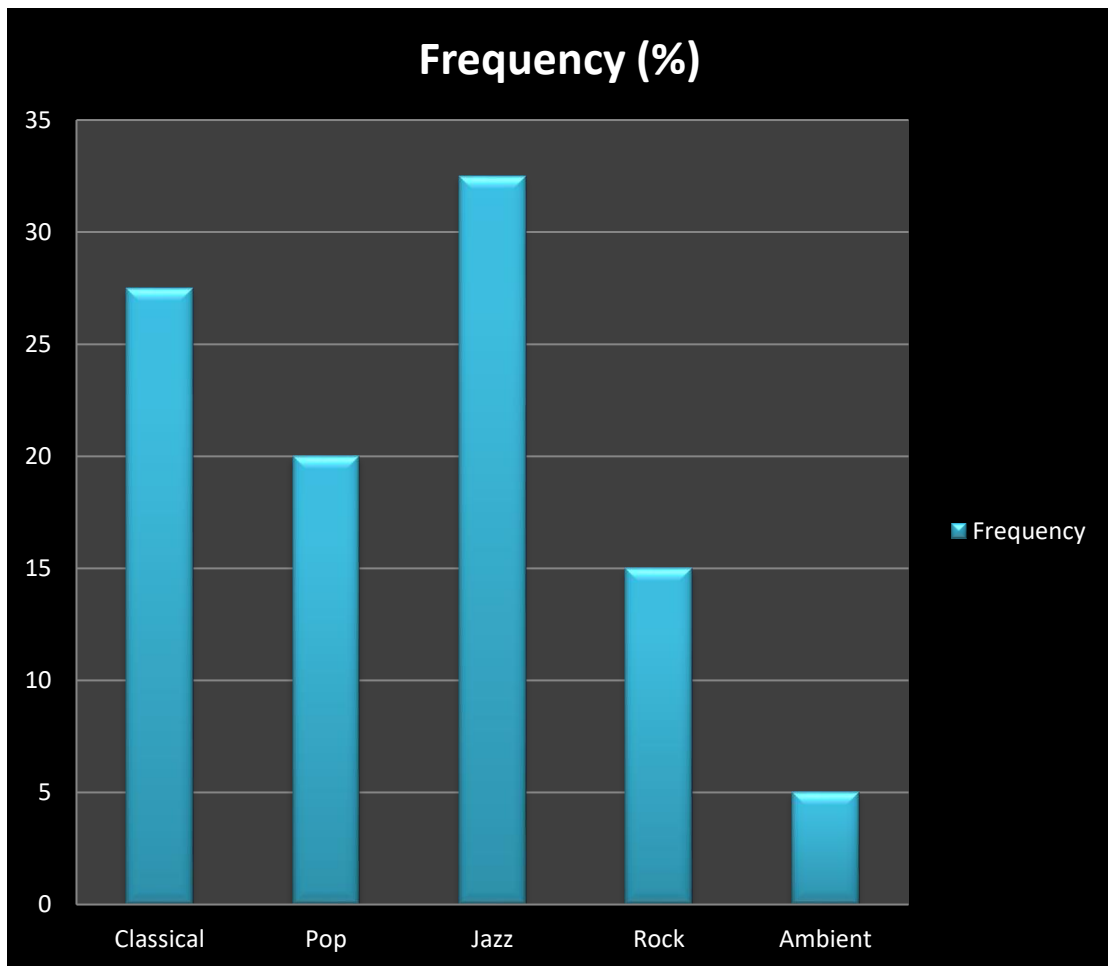

Figure 3: Preference for Music

The graph reveals the popularity of music genres among the respondents. It indicates that Jazz and Classical music are the most popular one while ambient music is the least popular with 10% share.Pop and rock music are moderately preferred by consumers.
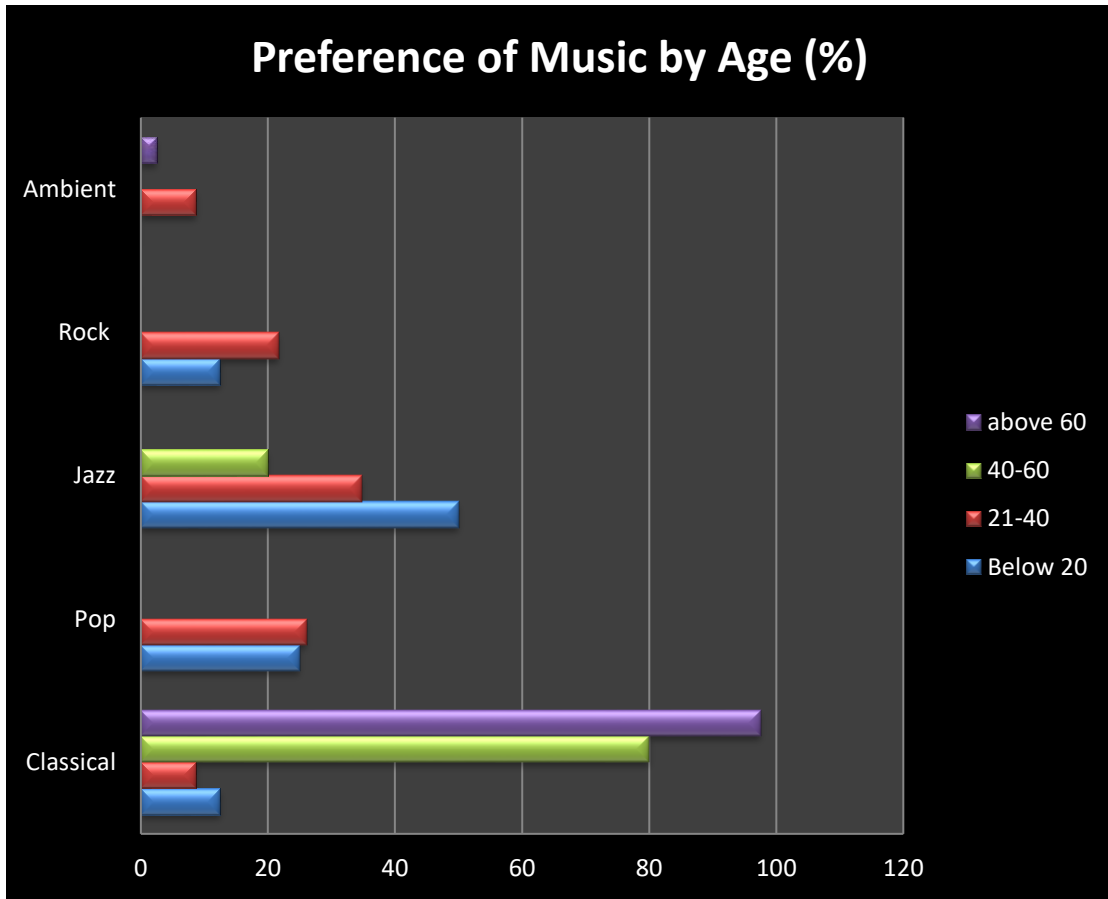
Figure: 4. Preference of Music by Age

The above graph illustrates the percentage of people in different age groups who prefer different music genres. Jazz and pop is most preferred by younger generation however classical music is popular among people above 60 years of age. Rock is preferred by those below 20 and 21-40 age groups.

Table 3: Association between Age and Preference of Music

	Value	d.f	Asymptotic sig. (2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.48	12	.017
Likelihood Ratio	25.89	12	.011
Linear by Linear Association	8.40	1	.004
N of Valid cases	400		

The Pearson Chi-Square value of 24.48 with 12 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.017 indicate that there is a statistically significant association between age and music genre preference. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. The result is supported with likelihood ratio which is alternative test to Pearson Chi square test. The significance level of 0.011 which is less than 0.05 indicates significant association between age and music genre preference.

Model Summary of Regression Analysis Establishing Relationship between Music and Consumers' Satisfaction

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.77	.60	.59	.44

Table 5: ANOVA

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	**d.f**	**Mean Squares**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	10.79	1	10.79	56.91	.000
Residual	7.21	38	.19		
Total	18.00	39			

Table 6: Coefficients

Coefficients[a]					
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**		
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
Constant	.22	.57	.00	.39	0.698
Music	.97	.13	.77	7.54	0.000

- **Dependent Variable: Overall consumers' dining satisfaction**

Regression analysis was performed to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between consumers' satisfaction level and restaurant music. The above table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 briefly summarized the regression results. **Correlation Coefficient** value is **0.77** which suggests a strong positive correlation between music and consumer satisfaction. The F-value is **56.91** which show that the model is statistically significant. High F-value supports the model fits the data well. The p-value is **0.00** which is less than the significance level of 0.05 clearly indicates that the relationship between music and consumer satisfaction is statistically significant. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and alternative is accepted.

Table 7: Summary Table of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Analysing Impact of Volume, Tempo and Genre of Music on Consumers' Perception of Service Quality

		Sum of Squares	**d.f**	**Mean of square**	**F.**	**Sig.**
Volume	Between group	12.11	3	4.04	24.64	.000
	Within group	5.89	36	.16		
	Total	18	39			
Tempo	Between group	8.97	3	2.99	11.92	.000
	Within group	9.03	36	.25		
	Total	18	39			
Genre	Between group	9.05	3	3.02	12.13	.000
	Within group	8.95	36	.25		
	Total	18	39			

The above table represents the results for analysing the impact of volume, tempo and genre of music on consumer perception of service quality. The F-value **24.64 and** the p-value **0.000** indicate a statistically significant effect of volume on consumers' perception of service quality. Similar results can be seen for tempo and genre of music. The ANOVA results indicate that volume, tempo, and genre of music all have a statistically significant impact on consumers' perception of service quality as supported by the p-values of **0.000** for all three factors. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis for each of the three factors (volume, tempo and genre) in this analysis.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study reveals that restaurant music significantly impacts customers' perception of food quality and overall satisfaction. The analysis shows that music preferences vary by age with Jazz and Classical being the most favoured genres. Younger diners preferring Jazz and Pop while older diners lean towards Classical music. The data also indicates a strong positive correlation between music and consumer satisfaction with music volume, tempo and genre all significantly influencing perceptions of service quality. Based on these findings it is recommended that restaurants tailor their music choices to match the demographic preferences of their patrons, optimize music volume and tempo to enhance the dining atmosphere. The strategic use of music can improve the overall customer experience. Further research could explore long-term impacts and specific music preferences for different dining occasions to refine these recommendations.

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