

EXPLORING CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF OPEN RESTAURANT KITCHEN DESIGN IN HOTELS IN GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

India is a developing country. We are emphasizing more on the industrial sector more for the rapid development of our nation. We can see competition is very tough among companies coming under the same industry. Since the last decade, the hotel industry has developed on a significant level. Every hotel is trying its best to attract customers by providing the maximum facilities. Customers always want changes, they will never continue in the same kind of environment or facility. So, every organization tries to have some major and noticeable changes in the workplace. By doing this, they can retain their customers. All the customers want to have a proper meal during their visit. A proper meal in terms of it should be fresh and hygienic. Generally, we have seen that in most hotels or restaurants, the kitchen area is closed. So, no one can go inside the kitchen and sometimes we found the board at the door of the kitchen with "NO ENTRY". This can create a negative impression of the organization. Because whatever the food is coming from the kitchen is fresh or not that we can't decide. Due to these disadvantages and to create some faith in customers, some of the hotels have developed the kitchen area open. It means the consumer can see how the food is prepared and how much cleanliness is maintained. This research study is conducted to analyse the advantage and disadvantages from the viewpoint of management as well as customers. How much this drastic change can be beneficial to hotel management? We will conclude with the positive and negative aspects of having open kitchen areas in dining as well as the perception of the consumers for the same. The research method which has been taken is primary data which is collected by a google form questionnaire and analysed with the concerned techniques. Secondary data is also taken from various sources to get more information about the same.

Keywords: Hotel & Restaurant, Kitchen, Food, Facilities, Transparency.

Introduction

The hotel and tourism business is a very emerging and essential industry nowadays where people want to travel to many places for refreshment as well as official purpose. When we are talking about the hotel industry, it includes so many things like loading, boarding, food, parking, and other facilities like laundry, spa, swimming pool, etc. Customers are paying a handsome amount for staying in the hotel so they expect more which is very obvious. Hotel management are providing packages for the convenience of the customers. Just like they charge some amount including 24 hours stays with morning breakfast as complimentary. In this way, hotels can attract customers. Different marketing techniques help to increase their consumer ratio. When we are talking about how management can target potential customers, they always try various methods on trial and error based on proper planning. The HR managers want to develop a strong belief in customers' minds for the hotel so it can be beneficial for a longer time. Not only in the hotel section, but also on restaurant premises.

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If we talk about the historical part of the hotel industry, there was no system of 24 hours packages earlier in the initial stage, there was no provision of additional benefits like complimentary breakfast or any similar things. There was a fixed check-out time (which still follows at many places), no laundry, etc. Even in a restaurant, only limited food was available. Criteria for proper hygiene were not followed. And people were enjoying limited facilities with acceptance of whatever they are getting, is sufficient. In the kitchen area, it was restricted to entry. So, no one can get the idea whether the food is fresh or not and whether is it safe for the healthy.

But days are changed. In today's era, when competition is increasing rapidly and other side consumers are getting smarter day by day, it is very difficult for hotel management to hide so many things from the eyes of the customers. The neat and clean arrangement can make a very effective impression on consumers' minds which helps them to increase their business credibility. To create transparency, some of the restaurant department has started opening open kitchen design on the dining premises. So, they can build a positive approach toward customers and pass on the message regarding hotel management being also concerned about the health of the people. People who come to a eat meal can have a view of the kitchen. They can come to know about the cook, other catering staff, how they are preparing food, cleanliness, their hygiene factor, etc.

We have gone through a small analysis of this kind of approach in the hotel industry. How people are taking this transparency and what is the feedback of the customers regarding this open kitchen area in the dining premises? And we found some of the conclusions.

Need

The main purpose of this research is to get a view of the people about the new concept of the restaurant and what is the opinion of the customers. Everyone wants some change but not every time change needs to be accepted by everyone. So, whether people have positive feedback or negative is to be found. Another aim of this research is to study the influence of the customers by having an experience of the open kitchen concept and what are the criteria for their positive or negative approach.

This research paper will provide you with some other detail also, like how frequently people use to visit the restaurant, age-wise bifurcation is also mentioned in this research paper. This research paper can be helpful to hotel management because they can decide whether the concept of an open kitchen area on dining premises should be there or not.

Another important purpose of this research paper is to know how people want to get the experience of live food preparation in front of them. Whether they consider it a messy kitchen or they have some excitement for some food lovers. This research paper will provide details about the acceptance of the customers of the new concept of an open kitchen area in dining premises in the hotels of Gujarat.

Objectives

- To study the positive as well as negative factors in open kitchen design in hotels in Gujarat
- To study the influence of the customers by having an experience of an open kitchen restaurant.
- To study the acceptability of the customers regarding the new concept of hotel and tourism management

Research methodology

Primary Data

The primary data has been collected at the initial level with the help of a questionnaire, personal interview, telephone talk, etc. Primary data is considered fresh and original data. Primary data has been collected by Google Forms and contained included in the questionnaire is easy to examine and evaluable. We have sent google forms to several people and collected their responses and analysed them. After evaluating the entire report, we made a conclusion that describes the reaction of the people to this research. Hence, with the help of primary data, we can gather recent information and approach of the customers regarding the open kitchen area concept of Gujarat Hotels.

As primary data is always specific as per the need of the researcher, it becomes easy to make an analysis and get to the proper conclusion. Gathered the data in an excel file and manipulate it as per the requirement. A total of 215 (two hundred and fifteen) responses have been collected as sample size and examined to get a specific result.

- **Secondary Data**

The data which are taken by someone else previously and used for the research purpose is called secondary data. The secondary data are already gone through the statistical process. It is a kind of helping hand in the research report and it is quick and easy to figure out. It can be obtained from internal records, Government publications, articles, websites, books, journals, etc. Economically it is inexpensive rather than primary data and time-saving.

Secondary data helped to give back up the research paper. Previous articles and research papers provided sufficient guidance on the current scenario of the open kitchen area concept. Collected the periodic magazine from some of the hotels and referred it for a further concrete analysis. Hotel management has also provided the details about feedback received from the customer during their visit to the hotel. It helps a lot in getting true and fair conclusions about the research.

Review of Literature

Introduction to Modern Hotel Kitchen – “An employed sous-chef who is responsible for procedures not well sufficient to have a managerial chef. In addition to being in charge of the kitchen, an employed chef also switches one of the manufacturing positions. For example, he or she may grip the cooking place, and help in other places when required. Small kitchens may have only a chef, one cook, and perhaps one or two helpers to handle easy jobs such as washing and peeling fruits and vegetables. Line cooks are said to be on the hotline, or simply on the line. In many minor actions, the short-order cook is the support of the kitchen throughout the service period.”²

Martin A. O’Neill (2010): “For some hands, the characteristics of sanitation and purity could be highlighted in an open restaurant kitchen (Chow et al, 2010). Nevertheless, research on customers’ imageries – or even insights – of open kitchen projects, while possibly energetic to many restaurateurs, is practically inexistent in modern hospitality research. This study aimed to enhance the very narrow study discussion and information on this recreated strategy idea, examining the pictures that are suggested in customers’ attentions about this project idea.”³

Alice J. Chow, Abel D. Alonso, Alecia C. Douglas, (2010): “Due to the toll of society suffering from disease and the financial adversity caused by foodborne infection, methods to fight or avoid - it should be assumed. The World Health Organization (WTO) lists five features of diet treatment that donate to foodborne sicknesses: inappropriate catering measures; unsuitable temperature; absence of cleanliness and hygiene by food trainers; cross-contamination between raw to-be-cooked and new ready-to-eat foods; and food attainment from dangerous causes (WHO, 2006).”⁴

The website of betterbusiness.torkusa.com (2018): “*Pros and cons of open restaurant kitchens* – concluded that an open kitchen can help make or break the restaurant. They have clarified clearness as a benefit and given the example of Domino’s pizza that they have established – a pizza theatre – store project to ease customer outlook. Another feature of this object is – the performing aspect. Most of the cooks are pleased with the delicious dishes they make. Moreover, the open kitchen can deliver drama and a kind of enthusiasm, appealing to customers who can appreciate the creativity of work.”⁵

Ming-Yi Wang & Chai-Hui Huang (2018): “. According to the Importance-Performance Analysis method, the characteristics of cultivating the excellence of life and adequate countertop space for training, cooking, and cleaning, typically fit into the benefit preservation area. We confirmed that these three characteristics are advantages of an advanced cooking utensil design. The appearance of materials that are easy to clean, improve quality of life, are user-friendly, have good air quality and a comfortable inside temperature all belong to the centralized development zone and low precedence enhancement area, which should be controlled initially.”⁶

The website of theforkmanager.com (2019): “Measurement is also an important aspect when deciding the design of open kitchens. It all will come down to the restaurant’s features. For illustration, there are some restaurants whose signature dish is grilled meat, which is why they only show this remarkable part of their work. Some restaurants use a smaller, counter-like arrangement where their cooks beautify and put the final touches on plates in front of their customers.”⁷

Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (2020): “The walls of closed kitchens are being battered because of new elegances of cuisine, food delivery demonstration, and the customer’s curiosity in food which requires the chef to be noticeable to meet the direction carried about through the experience economy. This exposure to clients has created a new kitchen work atmosphere, one where the customers are impacting how chefs work, act and interrelate with their colleagues, therefore, for the first time exciting the orthodox modern debates of the occupational identity and culture of the chef.”⁸

Anwasha Barari (2022): "One of the main aspects of in a selection of an open segmental kitchen is preservation. The design should be made with a light colour so it can be prevented or maintained very easily. If the management of the hotels wants to keep their area neat and clean and looks sober, it is preferable to decorate it with light colours like grey or wood colour. Colour and combination of all the colours are available in the market which suits the premises of the hotel. Sometimes, open kitchens are doesn't include the utility area. That can be a problem. But that depends on the designer who designs that area and makes it useful as per the requirement of the management." ⁹

Research Tools

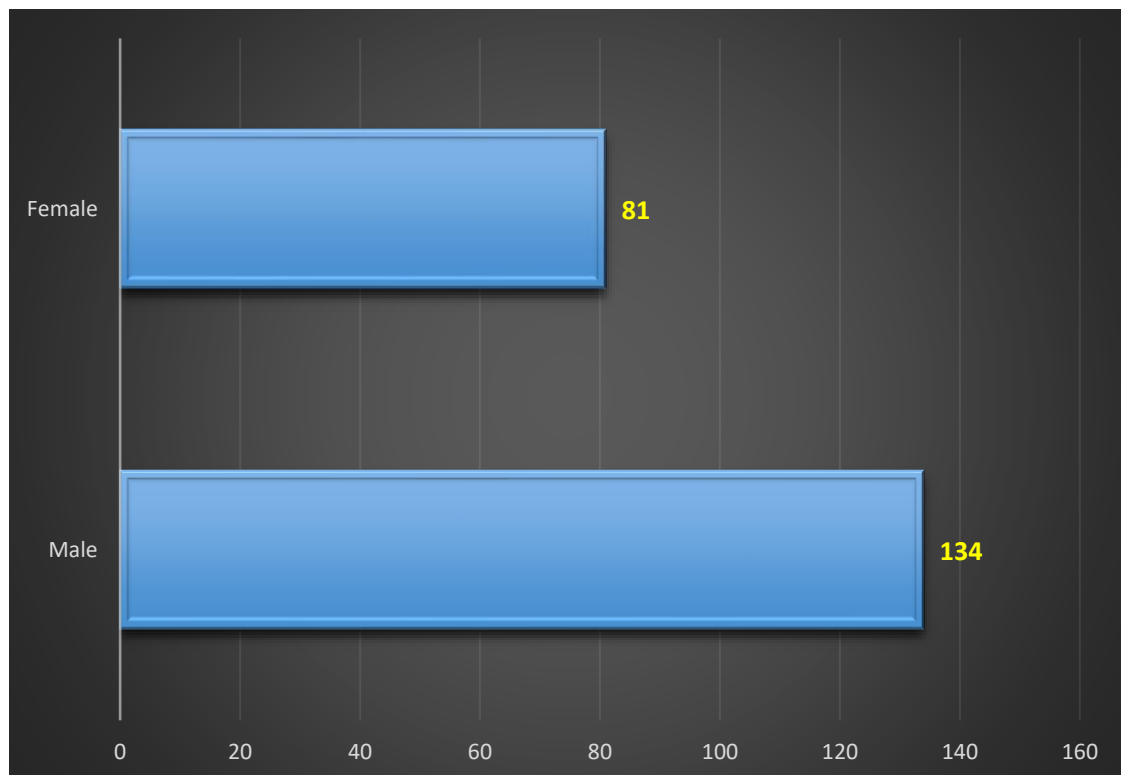
Sample Size: In this research paper, a total of 215 samples were included from the total population and gathered information regarding the customer view, their feedback and opinion regarding open kitchen area design in dining premises. The majority of the research has been prepared as per the primary data. So, a true and fair view can be obtained for the concerned topic. The data information has been analysed 360 degrees and concluded the accurate result.

Findings: (Respondent Related Information)

After the analysis of primary data and secondary data, we have generated some of the following charts as per the various criteria which are mentioned below:

• Gender Wise Bifurcation

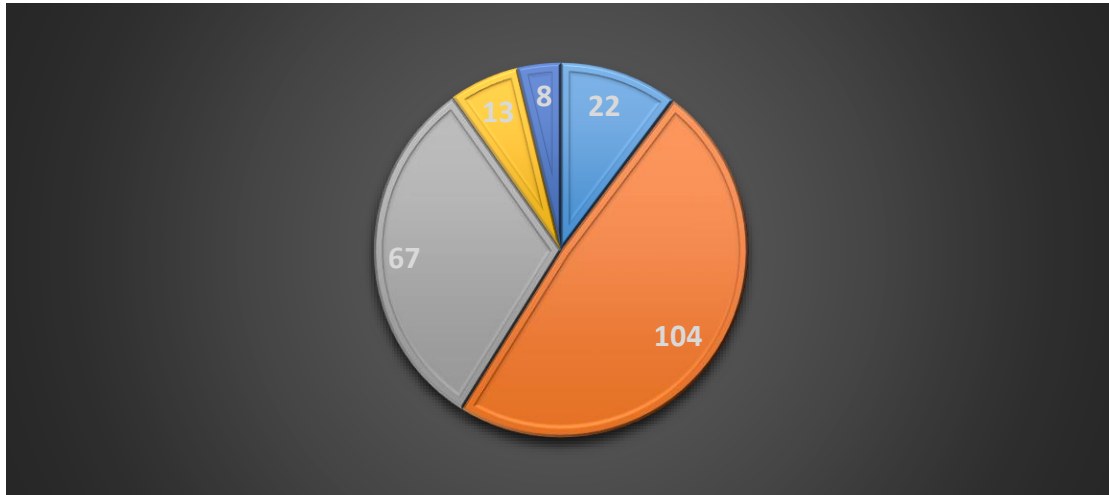
Sr. No.	Gender	No. of Person	In Percentage
1	Male	134	62.32%
2	Female	81	37.68%
	Total	215	100.00%



As mentioned in the primary data section, we have collected data of total 215 consumers of which 134 respondents are male and 81 are female. Gender-wise bifurcation is important because sometimes the area of interest differs according to the male or female. So, the research on the concept of the open kitchen area in the dining premises is established according to gender-wise divergence. The graph shows that around 62% of respondents are male and approximately 38% are female.

• **Age wise Bifurcation**

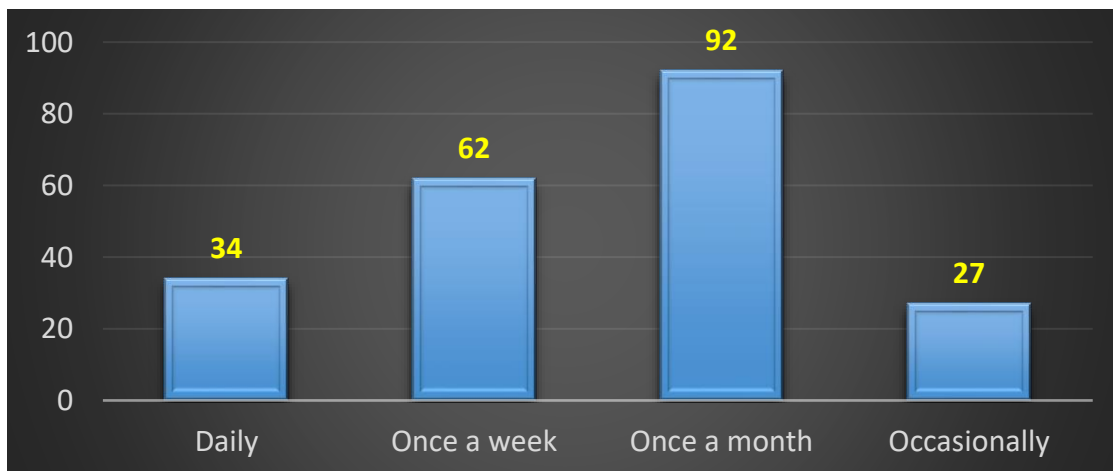
Sr. No.	Age Group	No. of Person	In Percentage
1	Below 18 Years Old	22	10.23%
2	18 – 29 Years Old	104	48.37%
3	30 – 39 Years Old	67	31.63%
4	40 – 49 Years Old	13	6.05%
5	Above 50 Years Old	8	3.72%
	Total	215	100%



Age factor is another criterion for frequent visits to restaurants. We can see in the chart, almost 50% of the people are coming to the age group of 18 to 29 years. These young people always want something new. And from this age group, the maximum positive response has been received for open restaurant kitchen design in the hotels of Gujarat.

• **Frequency of Going to Restaurants**

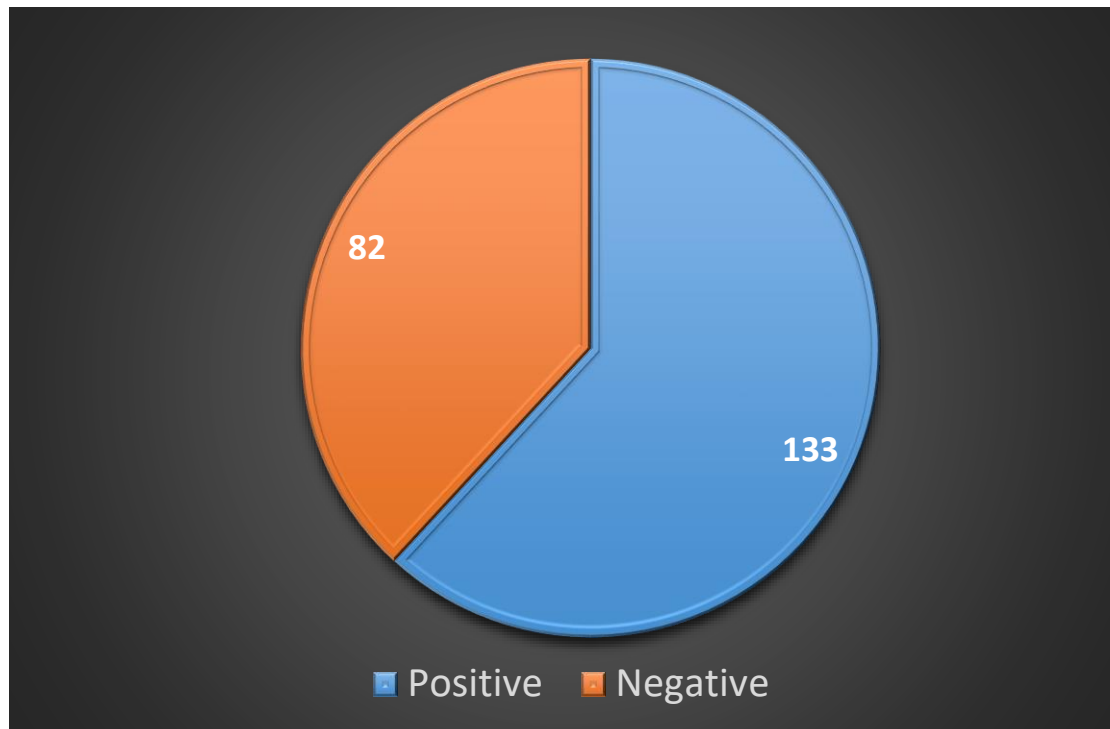
Sr. No.	Frequency of Visit Hotel	No. of Person	In Percentage
1	Daily	34	15.81%
2	Once a week	62	28.84%
3	Once a month	92	42.79%
4	Occasionally	27	12.56%
	Total	215	100%



Due to more middle-class families involved in this research study, a total of 92 out of 215 families used to visit restaurants once a month. But the actual result can get from serial numbers 1 & 2. The persons who visit the restaurants daily or once a week can have clear perceptions regarding open kitchen areas in dining premises. Approximately 42% of the people are a combination of daily and once-in-a-week groups. And another 42% of families are used to visiting once a month. And the rest of the families i.e. 12-13% are not preferring to go for a meal outside in a restaurant.

- **Types of Feedback**

Sr. No.	Gender	No. of Person	In Percentage
1	Positive	133	61.86%
2	Negative	82	38.14%
	Total	215	100%



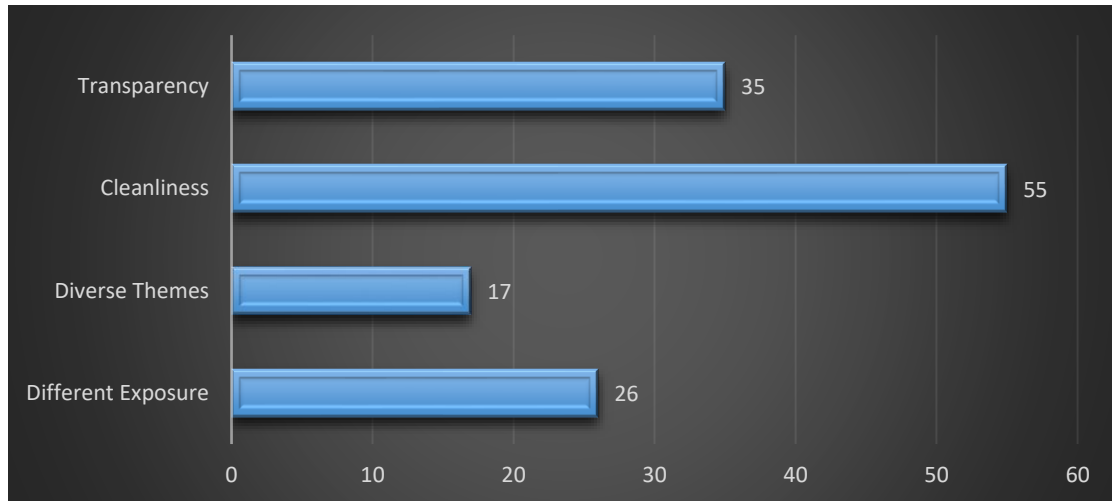
Here is the accurate result received from the respondent. 62% of the consumers have a positive approach regarding open kitchen design and they welcome this kind of new concept whereas 38% of the people refuse to have this new change in the restaurant due to various reasons. Both the response have their criteria. But we can conclude by analysing the about chart, most of the customers are ready to accept new things and they appreciate this new concept in hotels and restaurants which can increase the ratio of overall industry and growth of the nation as well.

Now, we have taken some of the reasons why people like or dislike the new open kitchen area concept. Some of the points are mentioned below.

Let's start with a positive review of accepting this new concept.

- **Positive Aspects of the Consumers**

Sr. No.	Criteria	No. of Persons	In Percentage
1	Different Exposure	26	19.55%
2	Diverse Themes	17	12.78%
3	Cleanliness	55	41.35%
4	Transparency	35	26.32%
	Total	133	100.00%

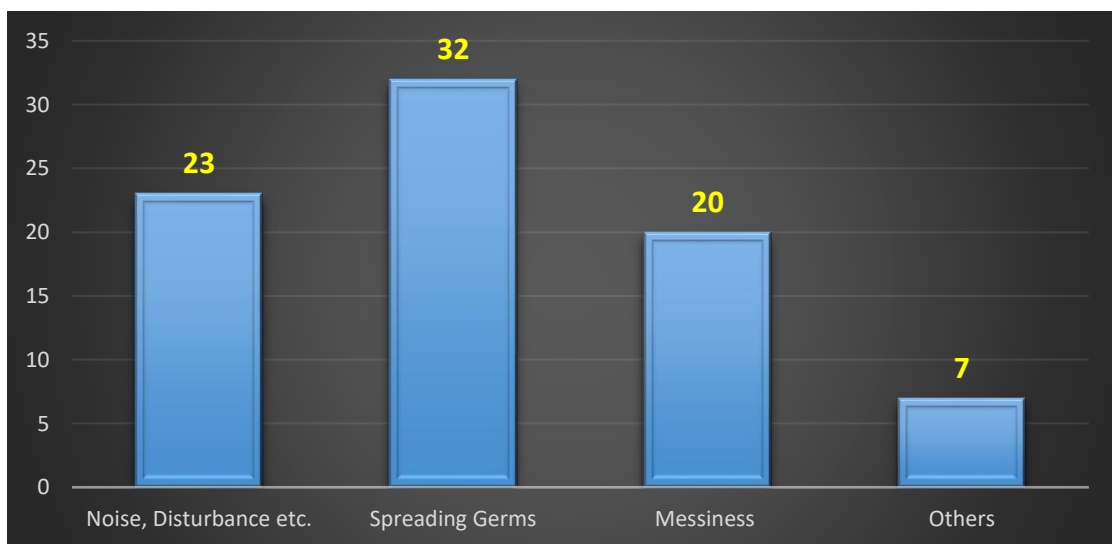


People like this concept for different reasons. They are getting different exposure from restaurants, some of the consumers feel diverse themes while some likes cleanliness in the kitchen area and the rest of the people believe in transparency. The majority of the people i.e. 42% are believing in cleanliness. The food is hygienic if there is cleanliness around the kitchen. So, people like to eat if the area of the kitchen is well-maintained, neat and clean.

The second thought of the customers is, they are accepting this new change because they feel the hotel is very transparent in terms of their ethics. They are not doing anything wrong in the kitchen and consumers are getting fresh food always because it is made in front of their eyes. Almost more than 26% of the consumers have given their poll on the transparency aspect. The rest 32% of the people have said they are getting different exposure and diversified theme.

• Negative Aspects of the Consumers

Sr. No.	Criteria	No. of Persons	In Percentage
1	Noise, Disturbance etc.	23	28.04%
2	Spreading Germs	32	39.03%
3	Messiness	20	24.39%
4	Others	7	8.54%
	Total	82	100%



A total of 82 out of 215 participants have rejected this new approach because of various reasons. 39% of the consumers have afraid of spreading germs by this kind of change. So, from the health safety point of view, they don't prefer to have an open kitchen area in the dining premises in the restaurant. Some people feel that it creates noise and disturbance around the dining. In their opinion, they will not enjoy due to this nuisance, so they reject this new approach and are not in favour of this concept.

More than 24% of people feel a mess or dirtiness when it is an open kitchen. So, they will not allow themselves to eat meals on uncomfortable premises. And 7% of people have other reasons like getting smell, pollution etc.

Conclusion / Findings

The hotel and tourism industry is providing a major role in increasing the Indian economy in financial terms. Since last decade, people want to visit various places during the festival season and their holidays. And at the same time, customers always need some change in every field. They expect something new that he is not getting at their home and he is ready to pay if he is getting proper service and innovative things.

After getting all the data and analysing them, we can conclude that open-kitchen restaurant design in hotels is a very good concept, some people are ready to accept this approach but still, some of the population is not ready to consider this new change as an appropriate one. Out of 215 consumers, 38% of the people say "no" to this concept. If people can change their mindset and try to accept this approach as 62% have given positive responses, it can be a drastic innovation in the hotel industry.

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