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Restaurant Selection in Dublin

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Factors Influencing Restaurant Selection in Dublin

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the selection process used by consumers when choosing a restaurant to dine. This study examined literature on consumer behavior, restaurant selection, and decision-making, underpinning the contention that service quality is linked to the consumer's selection of a restaurant. It supports the utility theories that consumers buy bundles of attributes that simultaneously combined represent a certain level of service quality at a certain price. The findings of the research displayed a preference by Dublin consumers for Italian and Chinese styled restaurants and identified quality of the food, type of food, cleanliness of the restaurant, location and the reputation of the restaurant as the key decision variables/attributes used by consumers to select restaurants. The study also established that the importance of the attributes changed, depending on the consumer's age, prior experience, their mood and the occasion involved.

Contents

Restaurant Selection in Dublin Introduction

Over the past decade the restaurant industry in Dublin has flourished, increasing from 22 percent of the total restaurants Ireland in 1996 to 27 percent in 2000, (CHL Consulting, 2003). These restaurants provide consumers with many choices of internationally styled restaurants, locations, price and value with varying levels of quality. It is this increasingly competitive environment that has stimulated this study to investigate the behavioral patterns and the decision making process used by consumers to select restaurants for dining.

Researchers such as, Kivela, Inbakaran, & Reece (1999), Clark & Wood (1998), Koo, Fredrick, & Yeung (1999) and Johns & Howard (1998) have examined the complex issues involved in selecting a restaurant. They have identified salient decision variables used by consumers to select restaurants, and have provided a framework for the decision making process. These studies suggest that the decision to dine in a particular restaurant will follow a process of elimination based on, each of the restaurants facilities, quality, location and acceptable attributes.

Related Studies

Koo et al. (1999) suggests that consumers' buy bundles of attributes that simultaneously combined represent a certain level of service quality offered at a certain price. The study conducted by Koo et al. (1999) focused on the use of conjoint analysis when determining the utility values of restaurant attributes in an attempt to understand how consumers in Hong Kong make favorable and unfavorable buying decisions. Using a focus group of six persons Koo et al. (1999) established an evoked set of important attributes that restaurant diners' used in deciding where to dine for a family meal, business entertainment or as a tourist in Hong Kong.

Clark & Wood (1998) suggests that generic reasons for restaurant choice exist. In this study respondents were asked to select five factors and rank them from 1-5 in terms of their general importance when choosing a restaurant. Clark & Wood (1998) study had a sample size n = 31, with only 20 respondents providing usable responses to the questions, of who 19 ranked food quality as the most important variable in restaurant selection. The five factors most commonly included in respondents' ranking, in order of importance, were: the range of the food; quality of

the food; price of the food; atmosphere and the speed of the service. Studies conducted by Kivela et al. (1999; 2000), and Johns & Howard (1998), provide greater insight into the decision variables used by consumers, when selecting restaurants. Kivela et al. (2000) focused on dining satisfaction and return patronage using twenty-eight attribute variables with an alpha coefficient ranging from .85 to .95 based on closed-ended questionnaires. Kivela et al. (2000) sampled fifteen theme restaurants in Tsim Sha Tsui Kowloon, Sha Tin and Hong Kong Island with a sample size n = 1,028 and a usable completion rate of 83.8 percent. The respondents in the study were asked to rate the restaurant attribute on a five-point scale. Kivela et al. (2000) used regression analysis and cross-tabulation to reveal the relationship between dining out frequency and the consumer's intention to return to the restaurant. The findings identified a strong relationship between the consumer's selection of a restaurant, the quality standards, and value for money provided by the restaurant. Kivela et al. (2000) ranked the top five attributes as feel comfortable to eat there, cleanliness, freshness of the food, staff appearance and the room temperature.

Johns & Howard (1998) examined the separate measurement of expectation and perception of service attributes using open-ended questions, and a seven point rating scale in two different pizza restaurants, N=100. Johns & Howard (1998) found that the consumers' expectations and performance perceptions were based on an almost identical list of aspects; food, price and value. They also found that the attributes associated with these aspects are qualitatively comparable. Johns & Howard (1998) findings support the notion that consumers have a mental "checklist" of expectations against which they tick off items quality, see table 1 for attributes used in related studies. Kivela et al. (2000), Koo et al. (1999), Clark & Wood (1998), and Johns & Howard (1998) indicated that the consumers' selection of a restaurant is influenced by different variables encapsulated within three quite distinct concepts that are often used interchangeably; service quality, consumer satisfaction and value. Although these researchers provide excellent models of the decision variables used to select restaurants, their work is based on the American, Australian, Hong Kong and UK markets.

In this research I analysis factors that influence Dublin consumers' choice of restaurant such as; travel experience, occupation, income, age, attitude and attributes. The purpose of this study was to establish the dine-out restaurant preferences of Dublin consumers and rank their attributes

based on the mean values used by them when selecting a restaurant to dine out for a social occasion and eat out as substitute for cooking at home. I also identify a consumer age profile of preferred restaurants. The separate measurement of consumer age profile provides a new approach to restaurant selection dynamics. This information will facilitate target-marketing decisions by restaurateurs in Ireland.

Method

The design of the survey was initially based on the studies conducted by Johns and Howard (1998), Kivela et al (1999;2000), and Koo et al (1999). However, as this research was intended to provide comparable analysis on a number of objectives, it required a much greater depth of investigation into consumer attitude, preference and perception, see questionnaire in Appendix A. A mix qualitative and quantitative research was used in this study. The qualitative research was conducted following indications from the pilot questionnaires that some problems existed with the attributes used in the study. Casual research was also conducted to clarify the selection of a fish and chip shop as dine out experience for a social occasion see results and discussion. The research question was formulated based on the findings of the secondary research: *How do consumers select restaurants to dine / eat out in Dublin?*

The focus of this research was to determine the main factors that influence the consumer's decision to select a restaurant at which to dine / eat out in Dublin. The primary research objectives were:

> To identify a range of decision attributes used to select a restaurant in Dublin;
> To rank the five most important attributes used by consumers when selecting a restaurant to dine or eat out in Dublin;
> Develop a consumer age profile for selecting a restaurant.

Research Framework

Dublin accounts for 27 percent of restaurants in Ireland and has the highest level of disposable income, 16 percent above the national average, (CHL Consulting, 2003). Fáilte Ireland defines a restaurant as establishments where "on-site provision of food represents the main business activity, as distinct from public houses where food may be provided; but where the on-site sale of liquor represents the main business activity," (CHL Consulting, 2003, p.27).

Primary Research

Eleven research assistants were engaged to disseminate questionnaires. The assistants were briefed on the requirements of the study. A convenience sampling approach was used, and appreciation samples were also taken from the: Garda Síochána (Dublin Metropolitan police force), Department of Transport, Department of Finance, Department of Defense, Building and Trades Institute, Catering Institute and random street interviews in Dublin City. 850 questionnaires were disseminated and a return rate of 39 percent or 330 was achieved, 28 questionnaires had a completion rate below 75 percent and were not included in the study leaving N = 185 female and 117 male usable questionnaires. Random number tables were used to eliminate 68 female respondents when analyzing questions two and five to ensure equal variance for comparing attitude statement results. Although this was not necessary the researcher wanted to provide unbiased results, the total number of responses were included for analyzes in the remaining questions. In Table 2, I present the respondents profile.

Achieving Precision

To achieve reliability and validity the following criteria was set: that respondents' lived in Ireland and dined in Dublin restaurants. This eliminated tourist and business travelers and reduced the probability of bias effect on the investigation. The research was restricted to people that are aged fifteen or over. The age restriction is the primary classification used for the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) (Office, 2001). The level of desired precision, D = .05.

Pilot Questionnaire

Friends, work colleagues, and interviewers randomly selected people in Dublin city center and work places to administer pilot questionnaires. Respondents were asked to comment on the design of the questionnaire. The pilot testing was repeated until the questionnaire was unambiguous and addressed the research question. As a result of the pilot testing, the range of attributes used in the study was adjusted. The initial attributes used was based on Kivela et at. (2000), pilot respondents indicated that a number of the attributes were similar in nature and made some suggested changes. In addition to the pilot feedback, twenty commuters using public transport were randomly selected and asked what attributes they would consider when selecting a restaurant. A number of additional questions were added to the questionnaire, the question sequence was changed using the funnel technique, see Chisnall (1997) and a cover letter explaining the difference between, dine-out and eat-out was provided. The restaurant choice was expanded to represent the more popular styles of restaurant in Dublin, and a section was provided to allow respondents the opportunity to include any restaurant(s) not included in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Description and Explanation of Terminology

The first section, of the questionnaire, question 1a to 1c, was designed to identify if the respondents fit the required criteria for a valid sample. Using questions 1d to 1g I extracted information about the respondents' travel life style dimensions in terms of their travel experience, duration and travel activities. This information facilitated the correlation analysis required to establish if a relationship existed between the respondents travel experience and their restaurant selection. Product – moment correlation coefficient was used to provide a description of the magnitude between the two variables. For example, visiting Spain for a holiday and selecting a seafood restaurant to dine; traveling to Italy and selecting a Pizza house or Italian style restaurant to dine and so forth. Sections two and three make the distinction between dining-out for a relaxing meal and eating-out as a substitute for cooking at home. This distinction was deemed necessary because the secondary research suggested that consumers' used different decision variables to select restaurants for different functions.

Question 2a and 2b provided psychographics of respondents dinning patterns and when used in conjunction with the demographics, it provided valuable feedback in relation to the respondents psychological / life style characteristics.

Question 2c addressed conflict resolution and was included in this section of the questionnaire to avoid conditioning the respondents in their response to later questions, see (Chisnall, 1997). This question provided information that facilitated a psychological analysis of the respondent's attitude towards selecting a restaurant. The analytical process was based on statistical means using a five-point scale; Independent-sample t-test was conducted to compare attitudes of male and females.

Section three was designed to support the psychological and socio-economic analysis of the respondent's preference for different styles of restaurant and their attitude towards factors that influence their choice. The socio-economic analysis was conducted using correlation coefficients between section three and section eight of the questionnaire. It examined the relationships between: household income, education, occupation, age and restaurant choice.

Section four provided feedback on the media that most influences the respondent's choice of restaurant. However when conducting the analysis of this question, it became apparent that better feedback could have been achieved, if the respondents had have been asked, to rank the media in order of its influence on the selection of a restaurant. Many of the respondents marked more then one answer thus making it difficult to select any one mode as the most influential when selecting a restaurant. Consequently some additional qualitative research was undertaken to more clearly identify the media ranking order.

Section five provided a measure of the respondent's attitude towards restaurant quality. These statements provided data for assessing the consumer's attitude when selecting a restaurant: for example, the frequencies and scale of the answers were analyzed in conjunction with sections seven and eight to establish if a relationship existed between the respondents' socio-economic status and their attitude towards the price and quality.

Section six related to the impact children have on the decision process when selecting a restaurant. The questions provided a means of assessing the parent – child interactions in the decision making process used to select restaurants.

Section seven explores the price consumers would consider spending on the meal and section eight obtained information about the respondents, household income, education, occupation, and age.

Results and Discussion

Analytical Approach

The analytical tools applied in this study, were: Chi square, frequency distribution and cross-tabulation techniques. Independent sample tests are applied to compare attitudes between male and female respondents and the "eta squared" was calculated to establish the magnitude of the difference in the means using the formula: Eta squared = $\dfrac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 + N2 - 2)}$

Travel Descriptive Statistics

Sixteen percent of the population sample lived outside of Ireland for six months or longer; four percent have never traveled outside of Ireland, 43 percent traveled outside of Ireland at least every six months, 28 percent travel at least once per year and 9 percent traveled less then once per year. Holidays were the biggest factor for traveling, representing 57 percent of respondents, followed by visiting friends at 23 percent and business at 20 percent.

The Influence of Travel Experience on Restaurant Selection

The relationship between the country visited and restaurant choice, was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that traveling to a particular country will greatly influence the choice of restaurant. Appendix (B), provides the results of the correlation. Some influence was found to exist in the

correlation between variables visiting Asian lands and selecting a Japanese restaurant [r = .041, n = 292, p = .481], Spain and seafood restaurant indicated [r = .031, n = 294, p = .593].

Visiting Spain and selecting a wine bar indicated [r = .032, n = 293, p = .586]. Whereas, visiting Asian lands and selecting a Chinese/Thai restaurant indicated [r = .176, n = 293, p= .002] and visiting Asian lands and seafood restaurant [r = .205, n = 294, p = .001] these results suggest that further research is required in this area. Eleven respondents indicated that they never traveled outside of Ireland. The results generated for these respondents were negative for all but the cheaper styles of restaurant, such as Fast food [r = .129, n = 11, p = .027], Pub carvey [r = .196, n = 11, p = .001], Café [r = .02, n = 11, p = .739]. The economic profile of these respondents fell into the low-income bracket, with an age profile ranging between 16 and 60+. This group indicated that they would not consider the more expensive styles of restaurants, 70% of the respondents suggested that price was a factor in their selection of a restaurant.

Factors Influencing Restaurant Choice

The respondents were asked to indicate the factors they would consider when selecting a restaurant, and table 3 provides results based on the probabilities of event. Respondents were then asked to rank on a scale of one to five the attributes they considered most important for a social dine out and eat out occasion. The mean values of the five attributes indicated by respondents were calculated and are presented in Table 4. The results indicated that the importance of these attributes change based on the consumers' salient beliefs about the restaurant, a prior visit and their meal experience. Analysis was conducted using cross-tabulation, regression and Independent-sample t-tests of hypothesized questions that support these findings. Tttttables 5 & 5a present the hypothesized questions and results. This analysis formed the development of a restaurant behavioural age profile.

Behavioural Profile

Age twenty to twenty-nine. This group can be subdivided into those who live with their family and those who are independent, most possibly between the age of twenty-five and thirty, who do not have children and are most likely married or living with a partner and have two incomes

(CSO, 2001). These groups have limited responsibilities and lead an active social life, and have a high price acceptance indicating that they would consider spending (M=$81.66, SD=$13.61) and (M=24.45%, SD=4.50%) indicated that they are likely to dine once per week for a social occasion and are the most likely group eat out as a substitute to eating at home, (M=43.75%, SD=8.17%) indicated this factor. The sixteen to under-thirty group prefer Italian, Chinese, French styled, mixed ethnic and Bistros restaurants in that order.

Age thirty and thirty-nine. Young married age between thirty and thirty-nine and have children. Analysis showed that the addition of a child impacts on the salient attributes. The location of the restaurant becomes more important-distance is now a greater factor. Results showed (M=26.55%, SD=4.42%) the 20-29 age groups would not consider a restaurant more then ten miles away, as apposed to, (M=32.69%, SD=5.45%) of the, 30-39 age group. This age group is likely to have a first time mortgage with an average monthly repayment of $1,170 to $1,950 (Office, 2001). They have new purchases in the area of baby clothes, furniture, food and health care products, and are becoming price conscious by the age of 35 years, (Melia, 2004). However this group are still in the high spend bracket when dining out and would consider spending (M=$72.02,SD=$12.00). The thirty and thirty-nine age group still prefer the same types of restaurants as the twenty to twenty nine year olds, but are the more likely group to include steakhouses into the evoked set of restaurants, see table 6 for preferred types of restaurant and respondents age.

Age forty to forty-nine. Characterized as middle-aged, married with children (CSO, 2001). This group are price conscious and reduce their dine out occasion (M=25.00, SD =10.42%) indicated that they dine out at least once per week. By the age of 49 this group will have eased the burden of the mortgage repayments and are beginning to increase their disposable income (CSO, 2001). Preferences in the type of restaurant selected is beginning to change see table 6, however this group still prefer Italian, Chinese, French styled and seafood restaurants when dining out. The forty to forty-nine group, are more price conscious then the thirty and thirty-nine group when dining out, and tend to select more moderately priced restaurants. Results showed this group would consider spending (M=$60.79, SD=$10.13) when dining out for a social occasion.

Age fifty to fifty-nine. Characterized as empty nest one older married couple (Peter & Olson, 1994). The children are independent, but may be living at home (Office, 2001), thus contributing to the household income and have little or no impact on decisions to dine out. Independent sample t-test was conducted between the different age groups using attitudinal statements to establish the magnitude of the impact children have on the decision to dine out. The 50+ group indicated that children do not impact on the decision to dine by disagreeing with statement I question six. Results showed (M=2.2, SD=1.15) dt (90) = 1.006, p = .319). The dine-out and eat out frequency patterns remain similar to the forty to forty-nine group but the selection of the style restaurant is changing. This group is less likely to consider mixed ethnic restaurants, American diners and Pizza houses. These styles of restaurant are moving down the scale in comparison to the younger age groups, see probabilities of event for restaurant selection in Table 6. The main choice of restaurant is Italian, Chinese, French styled and seafood restaurants.

The results indicated that the evoked set of restaurants is growing with the greater inclusion of pub carvery and fish and chip styled restaurants. Casual research was conducted based on the selection of fish and chip restaurant as a dine out social occasion and revealed that consumers are likely to drive to a scenic area in Dublin, for example; Howth fishing village, buy a fish and chip take-out, sit in the car or on a wall eating them before going for a walk and then a drink in the local bar. This behavior is associated with a "emotional comfort" see Johns & Howard (1998, p.5) rather then a dining experience for couples and would normally be dependent on the weather. The fifty to fifty-nine age group, have a greater disposable income in comparison to the other groups (Office, 2001) and would consider spending (M=$79.40, SD=$13.23).

Sixty plus empty nest aged, married with one partner still working but considering his or her retirement or retired (Peter & Olson, 1994). Based on the probabilities of event this group prefers hotel restaurants/carvery, pub carvery, pub restaurants, and fish and chip restaurants. They are least likely group to consider Chinese/ Thai or French, Greek, Japanese, American diners, Brasserie or Bistro restaurants among others see table 6. The preferred styles of restaurant indicated in the survey are more modestly priced. However if this group were to consider a higher priced restaurant to dine out it would most likely be seafood. This group indicated they would consider spending (M=$61.32, SD=$10.22). Results showed that the true mean spending

considered for a meal is (M=$75.49,SD=$7.31), the exchange rate at the time of conversion was US = $1.30 to one Euro.

Supportive Research

The finding suggests that age disposable income is a factor when selecting a restaurant. According to the Statistical yearbook of Ireland 2001, the most common age for marriage in Ireland is between the twenty-five and twenty-nine age group. However the reference age for rented accommodation is under thirty-five. This suggests that between the age of twenty five and thirty four consumers are either married with two incomes or living at home with little no overhead, thus this group spend more of their income, hence this age group had a greater acceptance of higher priced restaurants when dining out. The greatest reference to home loan / mortgage is between the age of thirty-five and fifty-four, indicating that by the age of thirty-five the consumer is likely to have made a major investment in a home (Office, 2001). This affects the type of restaurant selected i.e. price conscious consumers.

Conclusion

This research draws on techniques used by Johns & Howard (1998), Kivela et al., (1999; 2000), Koo et al., (1999), and Clark & Wood (1998), to measure profiled attributes of Dublin consumers and establish the salient factors that influence restaurant selection in Dublin. The study found that attributes are associated with the characteristics, benefits or positive consequences of using the restaurant and form the basis of the consumer's salient beliefs. It supports Johns & Howard (1998, p.7) suggestion that consumers have a "mental checklist" of attributes based on their expectation of quality. This suggests that the formation of the consumers' attitude towards a restaurant transpires through a complex network of associations that link attributes with meanings that are stored in the memory. For example if the consumer drove to the restaurant, but had problems finding a parking spot then parking would move up the scale of attributes. The consumer would associate parking with a meaning, thus parking becomes a salient belief when thinking about the restaurant hence the attitude is formed. The study suggests that when selecting a restaurant there are two factors that contribute to the choice, the strength of the consumer's salient beliefs towards the restaurant and their evaluation of these beliefs based on their

knowledge of the restaurant. Five key attributes associated with restaurant choice for "dine out and eat out" were identified, the study also established that cleanliness rates in the consumer's expectations of the restaurant for both dine out and eat out occasions. This study supports Kivela et al., (2000) identifying cleanliness as a salient factor when selecting the restaurant. Clark & Wood (1998) suggested that generic reasons for restaurant choice exist. However these findings suggest that generic reasons for restaurant choice are placed in the larger spectra of attributes rather then the salient attribute, which differs from study to study. The findings for this study suggest that a link exist between the age of the consumer in Dublin and the attributes used to select a restaurant see table 7. A pattern was established between the consumers' age and the restaurant selection process. As the consumer moves through the life cycle their attitudes towards restaurants is continually changing. Different ratings are placed on the various attributes used to select restaurants in Dublin, all of which have a value of quality attached for different consumers'. This supports the suggestion that consumers buy bundles of attributes that simultaneously combined represent a certain level of service quality offered at a certain price or value to the consumer. As consumers we develop impressions of particular restaurants in Dublin. In our minds we categorize the restaurant as good, bad and indifferent basing our considerations on assessments of the food quality, type of food, location, value, cleanliness, reputation and other peoples' comments or what we read about the restaurant.

Our perception of a restaurant will therefore influence our expectations of the overall service quality received in that restaurant, thus predominating our selection in the future. The decision to dine is based on the evaluation of a complex network of generic attributes that are reduced to a few manageable salient beliefs unique to the individual or family unit making the decision. The evoked set of Dublin restaurants considered is likely to include a number of the salient beliefs identified in this study, which are compatible with the findings in related studies. The consumers individuality is expressed when the value meaning of an attribute changes their salient belief about the restaurant. The decision is made based on the changed attribute, which becomes the more important salient belief at that time, for that occasion or mood.

Research Contribution

The most important implication of this study is the addition to the existing body of knowledge available. The consumer behavior analyses will inform competitive marketing decisions in Dublin. This theoretical framework will enable restaurant owners to better understand the effects of changes in menus, service, price, and product quality in terms of the degree to which market share is likely to shift. This study would enable restaurants marketers to "test" considered actions using the statistical data gathered and the age profile developed as a guide to whether their considered strategy is likely to work.

Evaluation and Suggestions for Further Research

None of the research including this study has addressed "Second families" (children born through re-marriage or co-habiting with new partner) which represent different consumption processes, as the young child is very likely to be raised under conditions associated with greater material wealth. The forty-something father will definitely be a different consumer from his same-aged counterpart just entering the empty nest stage (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). A gap exists in research aimed at presenting a robust and comprehensive classification of families based on economic potential and the future impact of the new-age families (same sex parents) etc, on the restaurant industry. Future research needs to consider all family member interactions and the members' explicit and implicit roles in the consumption processes. For example, it was not apparent if sibling influence on purchase decisions that relate to restaurant selection exists, despite the obvious modeling by younger children of their (especially same-sex) older siblings (Atkin, 1978). With the advent of search cost reducing media such as the Internet, it is likely that these in the family having more access to information may be changing, with new technologies proliferating faster among the youth. Children may be bringing more information into the restaurant selection process than in the past. The dynamics and implications of these shifts need addressing, for instance how the restaurant industry design web sites. To date the researcher has not come across any Irish restaurant websites identified as "dine out" in this study that would appeal to children. Considering the above it is apparent that several useful directions for further research exist. One possible extension would be to incorporate sibling power over a brother or sister to further influence the selection process into the theoretical framework of selecting a

restaurant. Another avenue for further research is to investigate in more detail how family members with travel experience influence the choice of restaurant. A similar parallel study could be conducted with well-traveled consumers and consumers that have not traveled. This would underpin the effects of travel into a hypothetical framework thus expanding the model proposed in this study by separating the internal influences from the external influences on the restaurant selection process. Cultural impact on restaurant selection requires exploring. For example parallel studies of how the different ethnic groups select restaurants to dine needs investigating in terms of the impact of religion and family influences.

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Table 1. Attributes used for Restaurant Selection in Related Studies

Researchers ➝	Koo et al.,	Clark & Wood	Kivela et al.,	Johns & Howard
Location	Yes	No	No	Yes
Quality of the food	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food portion size	No	No	No	Yes
Seafood	Yes	No	No	No
Taste of food	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Quality of the service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cleanliness	No	No	Yes	Yes
Price of food	Yes	Yes	No	No
Speed of the service	No	Yes	No	Yes
Parking facilities	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
New meal experience	No	No	No	No
Ambience/atmosphere	No	Yes	No	Yes
Restaurants décor	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Menu item variety	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comfort level	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sells draft beer/ liquor	No	Yes	No	Yes
Competent waiting staff	No	No	Yes	Yes
Handling of complaints	No	No	Yes	No
Spacious restaurant	No	No	No	No
Friendliness of staff	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Handling of reservations	No	No	Yes	No
Food temperature	Yes	No	Yes	No
Uniqueness	Yes	No	No	No
Opening hours	No	Yes	No	Yes
Value	No	Yes	No	No
Presentation of Food	No	No	Yes	Yes
Dining Privacy	No	No	Yes	No
Level of Noise	No	No	Yes	Yes
View from Restaurant	No	No	No	Yes
Nutritious food	No	No	No	Yes

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents in Dublin Survey

	Occupation	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Self employed / farmer / freelance	10	4
	Senior executive or senior civil servant	26	9
	White collar worker, civil servant	51	18
	Skilled worker	26	9
	Other worker	16	6
	Pensioner	7	3
	Housewife / Househusband	6	2
	Student / Pupil	48	17
	Currently without work	4	1
	Other	8	3
	In full time employment	61	22
	In part time employment	13	5
	Total	276	100
Missing	System	26	
Total		302	
	Child carer or parent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	106	36
	No	185	64
	Total	291	100
Missing	System	11	
Total		302	
	Highest level of education	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Primary level	5	2
	Second level	43	15
	Post - secondary level certification	32	11
	Apprenticeship or trade	20	7
	Third level Diploma or Degree	101	36
	Higher Degree	79	28
	Total	280	100
Missing	System	22	
Total		302	

Table 2.

	Group Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	20 - 29	100	35
	30 - 39	68	24
	40 - 49	60	21
	50+	54	19
	Total	282	100
Missing	System	20	
Total		302	
	Household income group	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	€0 - €5,000	15	6
	€5,001 - €10,000	11	4
	€10,001 - €20,000	26	10
	€20,001 - €30,000	52	20
	€30,001 - €40,000	42	16
	€40,001 - €50,000	30	11
	€50,000 - €60,000	37	14
	€60,000+	50	19
	Total	263	100
Missing	System	39	
Total		302	

Table 3.

Attributes Considered when Selecting a Restaurant for a Social Occasion in Dublin

Attribute Response for Restaurant Selection

Quality of Food	94%
Type of Food	86%
Location	76%
Cleanliness Factor	75%
Ambience / atmosphere	74%
Good Reputation	71%
Quality of Service	67%
Cost of Food	64%
Friendliness of Staff	56%
Comfort Level of Restaurant	51%
Menu Item Variety	46%
New Meal Experience	44%
Competent Waiting Staff	35%
Speed of Service	34%
Restaurant Décor	30%
Food Portion Size	27%
Parking Facilities	26%
Handling of Reservations	20%
Restaurant is Spacious	14%
Prompt Handing of Complaints	13%
Sells Draft Beer	11%
Charcoal Grilled Steaks	9%
Other	2%

Table 3 presents the fundamental property 1 results =

Pr (E)= [number of outcomes in E], see (Goldstein, Lay, & Schneider, 1984) (p. 343).

N

Table 4.

The mean scores (M) based on the ranking of the most importing attributes considered when selecting a restaurant.

To Dine Out for a Social Occasion		To Eat Out as Substitute for Cooking at Home	
1. Quality of the food,	M= 38%.	1. Location,	M= 29%.
2. Type of food,	M= 18%.	2. Quality of the food,	M= 23%.
3. Cleanliness,	M= 13%.	3. Cleanliness,	M= 19%.
4. Location,	M= 9%.	4. Price of food/meal,	M= 10%.
5. Good reputation,	M= 6%.	5. Type of food,	M= 10%.

Table 5. Hypothesized Questions (H_o) used in the Survey of Dublin Consumers

H_1. I would try a new restaurant out without knowing what to expect,

H_2. If a restaurant were more than ten miles away from home I would not consider it,

H_3. Restaurants are good value for money,

H_4. Price is not important when selecting a restaurant,

H_5. The restaurant must have prestige before I would consider it,

H_6. Distance is not an issue if the restaurant is good,

H_7. The more expensive the restaurant the better the quality,

H_8. I would consider a lot of different restaurants within a certain price,

H_9. If the atmosphere in the restaurant were good I would not notice the poor food quality,

H_{10}. The restaurant selection depends on your mood,

H_{11}. Restaurant selection is a joint decision by two or more people,

H_{12}. Culture influences restaurant selection decisions in Ireland,

H_{13}. Restaurant selection depends on the occasion,

H_{14}. I would not select a restaurant that gives me a time to vacate,

H_{15}. Restaurants are too busy to consider service quality,

H_{16}. The service quality is not important if the food is good,

H_{17}. The taste of the food is the most important aspect when selecting a restaurant,

H_{18}. If the atmosphere in the restaurant were good I would not notice the poor service quality,

H_{19}. I tend to select restaurants I feel welcome in, even if the quality is not great,

H_{20}. If I want to try food better than I cook / get at home I would have to pay a high price,

H_{21}. The food quality is not important if the service is good,

H_{22}. When I am selecting a restaurant, I consider both the food and service quality provided.

Table 5a. Independent Sample Test Results for Hypothesized Questions (H_o)

Respondents N = Male 117, Female 117

	Males		Females						
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	t	p<.05	Eta squared	Ho
H_1	3.01,	1.57	3.53,	1.45	(234) = -2.620		.009	.028	Accept H_1
H_2	2.67,	1.51	2.68,	1.46	(234) = -0.088		.930	.000	Reject H_2
H_3	2.62,	1.02	2.81,	0.99	(234) = -1.422		.156	.009	Reject H_3
H_4	2.41,	1.28	2.39,	1.17	(234) =	.106	.916	.000	Reject H_4
H_5	2.13,	1.14	2.00,	1.05	(234) =	.830	.407	.003	Reject H_5
H_6	3.28,	1.35	3.37,	1.31	(234) = -0.491		.624	.001	Accept H_6
H_7	2.06,	1.14	1.99,	1.00	(234) =	.545	.586	.001	Reject H_7
H_8	3.80,	1.14	3.80,	1.11	(234) =	.000	1.000	.000	Accept H_8
H_9	1.78,	1.05	1.63,	1.01	(234) = 1.071		.285	.005	Reject H_9
H_{10}	3.55,	1.27	3.74,	1.22	(234) = -1.143		.254	.006	Accept H_{10}
H_{11}	3.44,	1.29	3.65,	1.24	(234) = -1.236		.218	.006	Accept H_{11}
H_{12}	3.24,	1.23	3.55,	1.21	(234) = -1.924		.056	.016	Accept H_{12}
H_{13}	4.11,	.985	4.23,	0.90	(234) = -0.966		.335	.004	Accept H_{13}
H_{14}	3.44,	1.32	3.44,	1.21	(234) =	.000	1.000	.000	Accept H_{14}
H_{15}	2.44,	1.15	2.31,	1.17	(234) =	.896	.371	.003	Reject H_{15}
H_{16}	2.11,	1.13	1.94,	0.98	(234) = 1.295		.197	.007	Reject H_{16}
H_{17}	3.31,	1.13	3.35,	1.24	(234) = -0.220		.826	.000	Accept H_{14}
H_{18}	1.81,	1.09	1.86,	0.98	(234) = -0.377		.707	.001	Reject H_{18}
H_{19}	2.58,	1.20	2.45,	1.19	(234) =	.815	.416	.003	Reject H_{19}
H_{20}	2.94,	1.43	2.73,	1.26	(234) = 1.206		.229	.006	Reject H_{20}
H_{21}	1.71,	1.11	1.56,	0.82	(234) = 1.133		.258	.005	Reject H_{21}
H_{22}	4.28,	.99	4.39,	0.89	(234) = -0.828		.409	.003	Accept H_{22}

Table 6. Analyses of Preferred types of Restaurant and Respondents Age

Age Group	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +
Steakhouse	42%	47%	44%	34%	27%
Seafood	44%	45%	46%	38%	47%

Wine Bar / Bistro	48%	34%	34%	34%	0%
Greek	33%	30%	26%	17%	7%
Mixed Ethnic	53%	47%	44%	31%	20%
French	56%	53%	52%	48%	27%
Japanese	35%	34%	24%	24%	7%
Fish & Chip	14%	9%	8%	17%	20%
In store	9%	8%	20%	10%	7%
Italian	76%	70%	66%	83%	47%
Hotel	40%	34%	36%	38%	53%
Brasserie	33%	26%	34%	31%	7%
Café	29%	21%	16%	10%	0%
Pub carvery	20%	23%	28%	34%	47%
American diner	27%	26%	14%	13%	7%
Fast-food	15%	15%	14%	10%	13%
Pizza house	42%	42%	30%	21%	20%
Vegetarian	19%	17%	18%	24%	20%
Pub restaurant	37%	28%	38%	34%	47%
Chinese / Thai	73%	79%	58%	59%	20%
Food court	16%	15%	10%	10%	13%

Table 6 presents the fundamental property 1 results =

Pr (E)= [number of outcomes in E], see (Goldstein et al., 1984) (p. 343).

N

Table 7. Attributes that Influence Restaurant Selection in Dublin
        and Respondents Age

Age Group	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60+
Location	71%	74%	78%	83%	67%
Type of Food	92%	81%	74%	83%	80%
Cost of Food	65%	57%	64%	55%	60%
New Meal Experience	45%	47%	44%	48%	27%
Menu Item Variety	46%	42%	60%	45%	20%
Competent Waiting Staff	38%	38%	36%	38%	33%
Friendliness of Staff	55%	47%	58%	45%	67%
Quality of Food	97%	85%	92%	86%	93%
Quality of Service	66%	66%	66%	76%	60%
Speed of Service	40%	36%	30%	21%	27%
Ambience / atmosphere	75%	68%	72%	86%	73%
Comfort Level of Restaurant	55%	55%	40%	48%	40%
Prompt Handing of Complaints	12%	17%	10%	17%	13%
Handling of Reservations	20%	21%	16%	28%	20%
Food Portion Size	34%	26%	14%	17%	13%
Cleanliness	75%	68%	76%	69%	80%
Parking Facilities	18%	30%	28%	38%	67%
Restaurant Decor	32%	34%	34%	14%	13%
Sells Draft Beer	14%	11%	10%	3%	13%
Restaurant is Spacious	15%	19%	12%	10%	7%
Charcoal Grilled Steaks	6%	13%	4%	21%	20%
Good Reputation	75%	64%	68%	62%	53%

Table 7 presents the fundamental property 1 results =

$Pr (E)= \frac{[\text{number of outcomes in E}]}{N}$, see (Goldstein, Lay, & Schneider, 1984) (p. 343).