THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS ON RESTAURANT BUSINESS

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ABSTRACT

In this research I analyzed the impact of online reviews on restaurant businesses. My research focuses on how reviews are written and what motivates positive reviews or what causes negative reviews. There were many factors that causes writers to leave reviews. So far, my study has found that satisfaction, their expectations, and the customers' perception of the restaurants are key factors when giving reviews. Additionally, the study found some customers do not rely on reviews on choosing a restaurant, but depend on their purpose whether convenience or their strong purchase context. They rely on reviews when it comes to formal dining like night out and business dining.

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that, as compared to decades before, social media has a positive impact on restaurant businesses because restaurants are now getting the opportunity to market their businesses and share their products to potential customers. On one hand, companies like Yelp.com and TripAdvisor show there are great ways for companies to use their resources because they give customers the opportunity to understand and learn about what their products are, and the types of features or services they provide. Social media becomes a source when people seek information, and its platforms are becoming the new mainstream form of communication that businesses need to leverage in order to effectively communicate with customers.

When people are looking for a new restaurant to try, they search on social media for options. Reviews and ratings are the two main pieces of information they rely on. However, some consumers are not bothered by the negative reviews, and some of them would consider negative and positive on the same level. Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction indicate how a business's performance can influence their feelings. In order to retain their customers, restaurants need to be active on social media and keep their business up to date, so their customers can revisit the business and repurchase their product.

It is possible to change a negative review in a positive way. Social media platforms are also used by people to make false or negative reviews. It is deeply understandable and we can say that negative reviews can be extremely damaging to business as well, especially a small business. So it is easy to think that people who post negative online reviews are doing it just to harm a targeted

business, but this is not generally true. Negative reviews are not always bad if the restaurant managers or the person who handles the social media reviews knows how to handle them properly. Restaurants should be transparent when responding to negative reviews and apologize for any mistakes they have made, then figure out how to make it right and appease their customers. Social media has a great impact on corporations because it gives companies time to improve their food, services, reputation, and customer base.

Social media is becoming very revolutionary for businesses. There are a lot of opinions about the impacts of social media on restaurant businesses. Here's what I have learned so far about social media platforms and their use for hospitality businesses. And I am going to show you in literature reviews how these businesses really do with the quality of their food, their services, their relationship with customers, and their availability on social media platforms and the restaurant environment.

Purpose of Study

The aim of the study was to find out what changes are taking place in the restaurant industry due to social media reviews. Whether social media reviews will determine the future of a restaurant or whether even bad reviews can be a better clue to fix a restaurant's problem. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How has an active presence on social media platforms become imperative for restaurant businesses to connect with more potential customers?

RQ2: What are the strategies adopted by restaurant businesses to prevent bad reviews and how effective are they?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Erdem and Cobanoglu (2010) alleged that the invention of the Internet has had an irrefutable effect on the hospitality industry; social networking sites have arisen as an important tool for the hospitality businesses. Similarly, Goyal (2016) emphasized that social media empowers consumers to get information about numerous products and services provided by the restaurants, critique or like them and much more. He also added that most hospitality corporations have incorporated social media into their strategies and operations to connect with potential consumers.

Erdem and Cobanoglu (2010) stated that the scope of media generated by the consumer has increased to a very large extent; people are more likely to share content that is valuable and relevant. Furthermore, Goyal (2016) said that social media services provide customer insight as well as customer interaction; social media helps folks engage in conversations about the restaurant, the experience, and their response to improvement. He also added that connecting with customers makes businesses feel valued and in turn increases consumer's loyalty.

Goyal (2016) conducted an important research project in Jaipur, India. His research clearly indicates that social media is not popular for restaurant selection among Jaipur consumers, but it is now a strong driving force. In addition, he added that consumer buying behavior is changing very fast, and marketers have to change their strategies according to the situation.

Lima, Mainardes, and Cavalcanti (2019) found in their research that if a restaurant invests in social media, it will likely attract the interests of people who use social media, resulting in greater purchase intentions which can potentially affect the restaurant's performance. Nemeschansky (2020) emphasized that this is especially important in today's competitive environment where customers have a vast amount of information available, with more choices and more flexibility in their decisions. They can easily search for a new service provider if their expectations are not met.

Bilgihan, Seo, and Choi (2018) shared that Yelp is a popular website for people who are looking for some sort of service but need information that they can trust, especially the information from people who have experiences on the products or the services. Ong (2012) stated that Yelp.com provides customers' reviews on hospitality businesses such as restaurants, bars, cafés and many

more. By the same token, McIntyre, McQuarrie, and Shanmugam (2015) mentioned that Yelp has achieved numerous customer reviews, so it is no doubt that people use these sites as a source of useful information where all opinions and experiences are written and shared without any compensation. Erdem and Cobanoglu (2010) restated that people are more likely to share content that is valuable and relevant. Online review sites have created a revolution and become popular because consumers search for information about their destinations and hospitality before and after their visits.

As reported by Lima et al., (2019) the active presence of a business on social media is noted by the consumers. The image consumers perceive of a restaurant's active presence on social media has a positive influence on their purchase intention toward the restaurant. By the same token, Ong (2012) warns that hospitality marketers should not ignore social media matters, especially the customers' point of view about their business such as their reviews.

Nemeschansky (2020) mentioned that some businesses make the mistake of responding to favorable comments only. Customers who notice this don't appreciate it. Instead, businesses should respond to favorable and unfavorable comments in a caring and concerned way. When management builds the customer's perspective into every component of the dining experience, the operation becomes totally customer-focused. In keeping with Bilgihan et al., (2018) it is important that the restaurant owners and managers pay attention to the customer's point of view and what the customer expects from their service; to benefit the business as well, the business owner should use both good and bad reviews to improve their business.

Souder and Bottone (2014) say the art of food has become one of essential elements in the restaurant industry. Some customer reviews analyze more than just the taste of food; they focus on how their plates are presented as well. There are blogs and several

website reviews criticizing the presentation of their foods. Ong (2012) stated that customers' perception of restaurant service is very personal; it depends on their preference. Some probably prefer the taste of foods, some prefer ambience, and some prefer convenience. According to Souder and Bottone (2014), restaurant critics have experience in high-scale restaurants and are well known in the food industry. They focus on metaphors to compare if the taste of the food would outweigh the way it looks or what it is named; the outcome is the taste, which is still the main factor used to describe food.

Bilgihan et al., (2018) acknowledge the things customers write when they rate and stretch an assessment on restaurant ratings based on their satisfaction. First is service which includes the behavior, mood and personal touch of the restaurant crew. Then pricing, food, beverage like the freshness, the taste, variety of menu, and the presentation are other sub main components. Finally, mechanical clues including the atmosphere, lighting, melody, and interior decoration lightly affect their satisfaction. Good satisfaction encourages customers to leave positive reviews and possibly recommend friends and family for future visits. Those are what customers write when they rate and stretch an assessment on restaurant ratings. Souder and Bottone (2014) say the art of food has become one of essential elements in the restaurant industry. Some customer reviews analyze more than just the taste of food; they even focus on how their plates are presented as well. There are blogs and several website reviews criticizing the presentation of their foods.

Tiwari and Richards (2016) say that a network of peers is more powerful and effective; even negative reviews can cover those positive reviews because peers tend to come back to the restaurant they have been to. Peer network is more trustworthy due to peers themselves who have experienced the restaurant and have more specific information to describe. They can influence future customers.

Singh, Nishant, and Kitchen (2016) demonstrate that the number of peers like friends and fans have a crucial role in writing reviews; they also potentially guide and suggest individuals to write reviews.

According to Tiwari and Richards, (2016) between the peer effect parameter and anonymous reviews, it shows that the anonymous-reviews effect is by far unreliable while the peers outweigh and have a stronger impact than those anonymous opinions from web-based anonymous sources. They proclaimed that restaurants get positive benefits from both peer and anonymous reviews. Peer reviews have three times larger numbers than anonymous reviews on making a decision; which restaurant to be chosen, either negative or positive can influence the decision, but negative will hugely affect the preference. Moon, Jalali and Erevelles (2021) study that both business and customer use online reviews for their purposes. Reviews help customers to find specific information they are looking for, while businesses use reviews as their raw materials to improve their business.

According to Ong (2012) some potential consumers do not read negative reviews seriously, and a few of them would consider negative and positive in the same level. Consumers who have such an intended purchase context, do not pay much attention to reviews. On the other hand, customers put more weight on written reviews than rating on regular purchase, they focus on written reviews, writer profile, time and date the reviews were made, thus they can get reliable and accurate reviews and at the same time those reviews can cut down and eliminate their choices.

When it comes to the services, customers who lack understanding of the way they perceive and use reviews. It seems like user reviews favorably focus on goods rather than services (Ong, 2012). In addition, Bilgihan et al. (2018) mentioned in their research that satisfaction of customers can boost the business profit as they tend to be loyal and have potential for future purchase. On the other

hand, research says that dissatisfied customers usually look for the negative side of a product or service, but if negatives are handled properly, it could be a good opportunity for businesses to see and fix for the better.

Bilgihan et al., (2018) commented that online reviews are considered as an electronic word of mouth, when customers share their review on internet, websites, blogs and other social networking sites; the reviews can point out the restaurant's weak point and so the restaurant can figure out how to make their customers happy. Agreeing, Goyal (2016) asserted that online visibility through social media is slowly becoming a secret weapon of restaurant owners to keep a strong customer base. Correspondingly, Ong (2012) and Bilgihan et al (2018) stated that online reviews are used as a source for restaurant managers to understand their customers' thoughts and satisfaction to improve performance.

Bilgihan et al., (2018) asserted that negative reviews would indicate a restaurant's blind spot or they could be misleading customers and restaurants. The restaurant manager can use negative reviews to explain the reason for matters to the customers. They would probably understand more and change their view of the restaurant. Ong (2012) found in her analysis that, for restaurant reviews, most consumers mainly focus on the taste of food and the service; those two are the top that both readers/writers pay attention to. The restaurant third-party site that does ratings on restaurant business may have to add these two attributes when consumers ask. Souder and Bottone (2014) said the art of food has become one of essential elements in the restaurant industry. Some customer reviews analyze more than just the taste of food; they even focus on how their plates are presented as well. There are blogs and several website reviews criticizing the food presentation.

Customers perceive restaurant service as very personal. It depends on their personal preference, some prefer the taste of food, some prefer ambience, and some prefer convenience. Thus, the rate of the restaurant is inaccurate. A three-star rating on a restaurant is considered an achievement (Ong, 2012; Souder & Bottone, 2014).

Methods of Data Collection

In this research paper, I selected five participants and asked ten common questions about the relationship between social media and restaurants. I didn't pick random people; all the participants are very well qualified and experienced in the hospitality and restaurant industry. I have relationships in the hospitality industry; that is why it was possible to find our participants from different corners of the world. They have a very high-ranking role in their organizations. The reason I chose participants from different locations was because I wanted to see how social media platforms were affecting restaurants in those particular locations.

I used two methods to collect the data. Video interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings and the other was email interviews. I used Zoom Meetings because we wanted to have a very in-depth look at all my research questions and get enough information about my topic. One of the experts lives in St. Kitts and Nevis (an island country in the West Indies). Due to the time

difference between the two countries, it was difficult to make an appointment for the Zoom interview. Since we were in the same boat with the expert's work schedule, we were able to manage time and interview him.

I did another video interview via Zoom meeting with a participant living in Atlanta, Georgia. Since he is also a chef, our work schedule was almost the same but there is a time difference of one hour. I tried to contact our participant and agreed on many times but due to our work schedule, we got stuck at work and couldn't. After two weeks of trying, I finally interviewed the participant. I am grateful to the participant for being able to do this at 11 pm. The last Zoom meeting I had was with a restaurant owner who lives in Rockford, Illinois. And I also thank the participant because I did this interview also at midnight. There was a lot of workload on the contestants in their restaurant. The interview could take place only after the restaurant was closed after 10 pm.

Another option I had for the interview was an email interview. One of the participants I interviewed via email lives in Mississippi. Her work schedule was tight, so we found it difficult to set up the video interview. I contacted her and sent her an email with ten of my common research questions. Two days later I got her email with eight replies. Another participant who lives in India was comfortable doing a video interview but our work schedules did not match. So I talked to the participant and sent him eight common questions about our research. He did not take much time and sent his reply within a few hours.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Participants.

Sham, who has an MBA in Hotel Management with more than 22 years of experience in the Hospitality Industry with different organizations, is presently serving for Tabla Group of restaurants in Atlanta, Georgia as a Corporate Executive chef.

John, who studied Hotel Management from IHMCTAN, Kolkata and Bachelor of Commerce from Calcutta University. He has been an hotelier for 25 years and worked with The Oberoi Group of Hotels & Resorts in various locations and positions across India and now serves as a Vice President – Hospitality and Property Management, at The Lodha Group.

Seema, who has been working in the restaurant industry for 15 years and has worked with many restaurants in the United States, and she was a restaurant manager of Thai house restaurant in Mooresville, NC

Kiroula, who is an entrepreneur and hospitality professional with more than 18 years of experience. He has worked with Marriott international, Hilton, The Lalit Goa as a food and beverage manager, and as a food and beverage director across the globe. He has an MBA from National Institute of Management Studies and is presently working with chain restaurants in Saint Kitts and Nevis as a general manager and also running his own incorporation.

Bij, who has been working in the hospitality industry for 37 years and has been running his own restaurant business in Rockford, Illinoi for 21 years. He has worked with Le Meridien hotel New Delhi, Hilton Hotel Singapore and with many restaurants around the globe.

I sum up our interviews into 5 main themes: Theme1: The reasons behind social media: I learned their opinions and how they think and react to social media reviews. Theme2: Reviews change the minds of potential customers. I wanted to find out if they believe, and want to see if it will influence future customer's decisions. Then theme3: Social media platforms for restaurant reviews: this is one of those important matters which they even mentioned that popular platforms for reviews are more trustworthy than anonymous or small no name sites. Next theme 4: The effect of restaurant rating: I found that restaurant owners pay attention to star rating deeply, they think it is their principal reputation, it indicates the quality of their business. Finally Theme5: Principles for responding to false and negative reviews: How they deal with false or negative reviews are various.

Theme 1: Reasons behind Social Media Reviews

All the participants in the study mentioned that social media reviews are playing a really important role in restaurant businesses. Participants shared their experiences about what drives reviews on social media platforms and how they can impact restaurants. Seema explained why social media reviews take place and stated that:

> Social media is a communication tool which everyone can access, anytime and anywhere. Sometimes identity is not necessary when you want to review any products or services, so customers can express their feedback freely.

In something similar John says that:

> Reasons for reviewing are multiple. Sometimes people make reviews thanking and appreciating the restaurant team or sharing wow moments. Sometimes reviews take place because of celebration or a special occasion, and at the last but not the least customers review about a restaurant to share unhappiness with the products or services.

Kiroula shared his thoughts about reviewing on social media and said that:

> The media term explains the mode of communication. Social media is the social mode of communication and communication is the vehicle of thoughts, so people give their thoughts and through social media they reach to most of the people. I think 99% of people are using social media in today's world. People are using Facebook, Instagram, twitter and many other social media platforms and people use these platforms for marketing their businesses. It is a place where you advertise and when consumers review on these platforms so it is an advertisement itself. And nobody wants a bad advertisement about their business.

Theme 2: Reviews Change the Minds of Potential Customers

Three out of five participants in my research said that social media reviews change the minds of most potential customers. The way they share their views may be different but the conclusion was the same. Seema believes that reviews do not change the minds of potential customers and she also said that:

> Potential customers would focus on the quality of product and service that they experience on their own, not from others.

Somehow, in a different way John said that:

Dining is a very personal activity. It involves not just a selection of a cuisine but incorporates an entire experience. A diner goes through a complete process of buying behavior. As a result 'reviews' play an important part in influencing the customer choice and perception of a restaurant.

Kiroula explained that it depends on person to person. He mentioned that:

Before anywhere we go we make our mind first. I think the entire game is of our mind. So if your mind accepts that this place is good so you will go there, but if you mind accept that this place is not good and you have read some negative reviews already so you will always have a fear that you might get bad service or bad food or a bad product or anything. You might feel like you're in the wrong place. So these positive and negative reviews play with your psychology and most of the things in this world I think runaround psychology. There are two types of people we find in the world- 1- who says I see I believe, and some people say I heard I believe. On the other hand if you don't have enough options and you find bad reviews about the place, still you try and you find everything fine there; such things mostly happen with new startups or new restaurants. Nobody is perfect so you should give them a chance to experience their services too. People who are wise and judgmental make these kinds of decisions. People give them a chance. There is a word called building that is not called build. If it is not completed it's called a building and seven if it is completed still it's called a building. So there is scope every time. It can be near perfection, it cannot be perfect. It depends on person to person. Some people need everything on their table quick-quick and some people need isolation. And these things happen because of multiple religions, multiple cultures, and multiple demographics. So people should give a try to those restaurants that have some bad reviews. Maybe people can get something good there.

Sham sees these things in a different way:

Social media reviews change potential customers' minds. If you are getting mostly positive reviews on social media platforms that means the restaurant is in a good shape but if a restaurant is getting constantly bad reviews that means there is something wrong that you have to work on, you have to rectify what you are doing wrong. Because the reviews are seen by the community, you have to take care of the problems immediately.

Theme 3: Social Media Platforms for Reviewing a Restaurant

 Participants mentioned that there are many social media sites which customers use for reviewing a restaurant. I always ascertain some new social media platforms to review or find restaurants at different-different places or locations. According to Seema:

> If you want to find a good restaurant to eat but you don't have any clue, the first thing you would do is Google the place near you. Google is the top efficient search engine and becomes a "must have" account for business, easy to access.

About the social media sites which people use in today's world might be vary, with continuing Sham said:

> There are many portals to evaluate a restaurant. Some of those are TripAdvisor, yelp, google reviews, apart from that social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, twitter, YouTube as well are the platforms where customers make their opinion about a restaurant.

Correspondingly John mentioned some particular or not much famous social media platforms across the world. He stated that:

> The most popular social media sites would include Instagram, Facebook, Trip Advisor, Food delivery and Restaurant reservation sites. Having been part of the industry I am able to make the above statement.

Kiroula believed that there are many sites for reviewing a restaurant but all those are not that famous and trusted by the customers. He said that:

> There are many social media platforms to review a business, but one the world known and trusted platform for reviewing is TripAdvisor. If you make a false review on TripAdvisor for a restaurant, the restaurant business can sue you for sharing false information about.

Theme 4: The Effects of Restaurant Ratings

Many of the experts in the study believed that star ratings plays a very important role on social media platforms for a restaurant business.

According to Sham:

Everyone has a standard of living or eating and visiting different places. People choose a restaurant according to their standards and they decide the rating of that place. Some restaurants do a very good business but they don't have a good rating.

John added that:

The star ratings impact the restaurant business in many ways, listing on the website, availability on search engines, creating a perception in the mind of the customer, reach and communication to the customer, higher footfalls, and pricing and promotion strategies.

Kiroula described it as:

Star ratings are basically the qualifications of a restaurant business. When your restaurant has more stars you will be on top. No one needs to scroll down to find your business. If someone sees the five star ratings for your restaurant people do not prefer to see reviews because they just make their mind about it and they can understand what kind of reviews you would have, they will just jump to your business. If people find less stars they prefer to see reviews about your business. Overall, stars play a very important role in businesses. Some people are just looking for good food they don't need anything else but some people think differently.

Similar to other participants Seema said that:

Rating will influence new customers but not loyal customers. Rating is one of the factors that affects decisions about what's worth the money, how the quality of the product is based on customers who have experience with it before.

Theme 5: The Principles of Responding To False and Negative Reviews

Responding to reviews on social media platforms makes a change. All the participants shared that there are some principles of responding to false reviews on social media platforms. According to Sham's experience:

A restaurant should take care of all the reviews because reviews go to the community and we are here to serve the community. Reviews should be responded ethically, don't make excuses like this is not good and it is not right or something like that. Take all the reviews in a positive way and try to rectify this, and invite them to make your services right for them. Brief your staff about the dissatisfaction of the particular customer and try to make a wonderful experience whenever they revisit your restaurant. The customer must feel like he is the king of the restaurant after getting special attention from all the staff.

Parallel to Sham, John said that:

The most appropriate way to respond to false reviews would be to report the review to the Social media Admin for removal, take the discussion offline by sharing details, and post a mature response without posting a tit for tat.

Kiroula mentioned something unique about the principles of responding to false reviews. He said that:

Reviews should not be counted as false, negative or positive. It is our moral responsibility to respond to each and every review according to the situation. Whatever the review says at the end of the day you should respond. You should either add salt or sugar, the thing should not remain the same.

Participants pointed out that social media reviews may be both helpful and harmful to a restaurant business. According to Kiroula:

Social media reviews can make or break a restaurant. I have recently seen a restaurant here in Saint Kitts. Someone wrote about the restaurant owner on Facebook and after that the restaurant completely died. It is a recent example of the power of social media reviews. Because people share things and negative things get viral very fast. To get a good review you have to achieve the expectation and to get a bad review you have to do the opposite, it's totally up to you. Bad is worse itself and good you have to make the best.

By the same token Sham said that:

You can evaluate your restaurant in 3-4 reviews. If you are getting a lot of customers that means a positive response in the community, people are talking about you, your services and your food, especially whatever you are creating in this Food Temple. You are on the top in the town and the reviews are good. But opposite to it, when a lot of food order cancellations , customers are not coming to your restaurant, empty tables on the weekends, that means there is something wrong and that's an alarming sign for your restaurant and you have to rectify the problems.

Three out of five participants talked about the best way to respond to a negative review.

Sham stated that:

Negative reviews are only for customers, as a chef or as an owner a bad review should be taken in a positive manner. From a bad review we get a good hint where we have to work more. All the reviews should be responded politely and ethically. There always should be a P&P (Professional and Personal) way. You must be professional but there should be a personal touch as well. When you are talking to a customer you should be there professionally but if required you have to put a personal touch too.

In the same way Kiroula cited that:

First of all we find the reason behind it. We ask our staff, go through the cameras, see the time the customers visit and see what they ordered, what time their food took to get ready, what time they left the restaurant. It is a technological world today, even if I am not in the restaurant, not in the city or not even in the country I can still see what is happening in my restaurant because of the cameras. So we look around and reach to the root first and then we acknowledge how the problem happened with the particular customer. Then we respond to the review and ensure each and everything on the bullet point should be covered. We always request and ask the customer for an opportunity to serve them our best and make them satisfied and happy to fix the problem, which happened with the customer.

Likewise John stated that:

The best way to respond to a negative review would be to take it offline. If there has been a glitch, it should be acknowledged and therein lies an opportunity to win over the customer.

Most of the participants agreed that social media reviews impact the working environment inside a restaurant. Sham sees it as a

leader's responsibility and he mentioned that:

> As a leader the staff's morale and team spirit should be kept high all the time, and that's a responsibility of a team leader. In a restaurant there are two teams, service and kitchen but the goal is the same and that is customer satisfaction. A customer should always have a very good experience in the restaurant.

Likewise John stated that:

> Social media is a very effective tool and most establishments use it to their advantage. Not only do employees have targets to achieve positive reviews but also use a platform of recognition and incentives. The overall culture of any businesses cannot be solely attributed to reviews.

Kiroula agrees with other participants in the research. He believes that it is the time for the staff to show their potential and indicated

that:

> In today's time it's very important. We recognize our employees according to the reviews. For example; in a month we go through the reviews and see how many names there are. Sometimes staff do a personalized service so customers know the staff's name to share on the reviews. We decide the star of the month or employee of the month according to the reviews on social media platforms. And we share with our employees in a group about each and every particular review.

Sham also described that how the working environment changes in a restaurant after bad reviews and said that:

> Food tastes change from place to place. The same recipe is not followed in every restaurant. If we find so many complaints about a particular dish, we should definitely go for some changes or eliminate that dish from the menu.

Being a responsible personnel, you should take care of the customer during their time in your restaurant and it should start from greeting them to getting feedback about food at the end of their meal. Because of the interaction with the guest, they mostly feel friendly and give a positive response and that can be a key to get good reviews in the restaurant and on the social media platforms.

All the participants shared their experience with me on different themes about the social media reviews on restaurants' business. I went through all the participants and tried to ask their thoughts about our topic.

Four out of five participants were almost similar but Bij, who was our fifth and last participant. He pointed out something different about the impacts of social media reviews on restaurants. He said that:

I believe on social media that it is necessary for today's businesses but on the other hand I have never seen reviews about my restaurant. I never responded to any review whether it's in the favor of our business or not. I believe in my hard work and focus on our customers. I believe that because of our loyal customers we are standing here and running our business successfully for 21 years.
Maybe I get some business because of social media, but social media comes after my work for our customers. Social media did not come first, our efforts did. In a restaurant business you cannot make every customer happy; sometimes customers make complaints because of food taking time, spice level and delays in service, but those all are the part of a restaurant business. We always try to serve the best product to our costumes and I believe that there should not be two opinions about good things that take time to get prepared.

Ignoring social media reviews and relying only on his own hard work makes Bij very unique compared to other participants. But the thing to understand is that social media reviews have not done any harm to his business for the past two decades, and he has been running his business successfully for 21 years. He has a different upbringing and a different perspective on how businesses should operate.

Reviews have become crucial to the success of a restaurant, as every restaurant owner is aware of the fact that good reviews can boost popularity and profitability, whereas terrible reviews even have the potential of closing businesses down. That's why it is crucial for restaurateurs to understand the impact of review websites such as Yelp or TripAdvisor and the role they play in the success or downfall of a business.

Discussion

Such reviews (figure 1.1) are usually found on social media platforms. In this study I found different kinds of reviews. Reviews are categorized as follows: positive reviews, negative reviews, and false reviews. Online reviews are built from electronic word of mouth, and they are trustworthy. Thus, the number of reviews does weigh more than rating because the customers tend to pay attention to written reviews due to more details and accuracy, and some specific information that they are looking for are found in reviews as well. It is clear that social media is having a large impact on the restaurant industry.

I found out that the restaurant industry heavily relies on social media for a successful business. I looked at how things are changing; social media enables restaurateurs to build a community around their businesses and thereby compensate for the lack of loyalty shown by customers today, who tend to be more cost-conscious than a few decades ago. I also came to know that restaurant reviews offer opportunities and risks. One advantage is that restaurants can track consumer opinions in a way that would not be

entirely possible with classic WOM (Word of Mouth; people tell it to each other) communication. However, unlike the classic WOM, reviews are available to everyone at all times.

The participants in my research shared their experience and mentioned a lot of information about restaurant business and social media connection. I learned that social media has created a revolution in restaurant businesses; a business can reach potential customers in a very short time and also can share its products' information. This was not possible a couple of decades before because social media did not exist. Now a potential customer can find the complete history about a restaurant and then decide whether to get service from that particular restaurant or not. I learned from these experts that the active presence of a restaurant business on social media platforms makes a very big change for their businesses. This is true because an active presence is considered by the customers and they may find some answers about the restaurant services and products.

Most of my participants believe that a negative review can be changed into a positive review if a manager interacts with the customers directly in the restaurant. I also found that reviews from restaurant's peers are more powerful and effective; even negative reviews can cover positive reviews as peers tend to revisit the restaurant. Peers can also influence future customers, compared to reviews from anonymous customers, which is considered unreliable.

In conclusion, the dining experience is a huge factor in the success of a restaurant, as that carries over to customers' social fulfillment. Restaurant reviews are not flawless, but they have nevertheless contributed to reshape the restaurant industry and will certainly continue to have a profound impact on it in the coming years. In the future, the importance of reviews is unlikely to decline.

However, the fragmentation of information sources and the exponential increase in the number of reviews will pose challenges to both restaurateurs and customers.

CONCLUSION

The rapid development of technology plus the communication channels have led consumers to make more use of internet and web tools. Social media plays the most important role in this internet era. It is clear that many businesses and organizations use the internet to emerge. In addition, social media is the center of communication between service providers and service receivers, which also benefits both sides. In the study I found how much reviews can impact business and how much they can influence consumers to make decisions. I also found that consumers have different degrees of weighing on reviews; some of them do not rely on reviews at all. At the same time business owners use social media and reviews to improve and expand their business. I learnt that negative reviews on social media do not always affect their business if they handle it properly; in contrast, negative reviews give businesses a good chance to explain and clear any misunderstood issues. A negative review can translate into lost dollars, while glowing reviews can help reshape an establishment's image. With that in mind, it is obvious that social media is something to be taken seriously in the restaurant industry. Social media is revolutionizing the restaurant industry.

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Figure 1.1