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Impact of five important factors on restaurant performance and hospitality management: an empirical analysis of technological innovation

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the effects of five factors, i.e., price, food quality, ambiance, service quality, and online order on the performance of the Japanese restaurant of Kenzo in Iran. In this research, the required data were collected through a mixed-method involving both quantitative (with 81 participants) and qualitative (2 participants) approach. Data analysis was performed using the SPSS software. With the use of Lewin's Model of Change, the study's intervention plan was suggested. The Wilcoxon test results showed that the performance of the restaurant enhanced after the intervention. Foreign restaurants, especially Japanese ones, need to pay close attention to service quality and employees' behaviors. This factor cannot be changed or improved overnight; it takes time and investment to grow. The findings of this study help the managers and policymakers of the restaurant to gain a deeper insight into the influence of the above-mentioned factors on customer satisfaction and, consequently, the revenue of the restaurant. Additionally, it was found that food quality, price, online order, and service quality are the most important common problems of Japanese restaurants in Iran. Two phenomena limited this study: sanctions posed by the U.S on Iran and the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalized in the post-sanction time and post-pandemic time. Due to the pandemic, most customers prefer not to be present in the restaurant, which limits the results of the research. On the other hand, for future studies, researchers can study how to guide restaurant owners to use social media to increase the number of customers and attract new customers, which can be one of the unique factors that can directly affect the restaurant's performance. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this issue has not been studied in the Middle East region yet.

1. Introduction

A crucial part of our daily lives is food; on the other hand, it is a significant contributor to environmental problems. The increasing global population and shifting diets are predictable and further intensify the negative effects of food production and consumption. In today's modern world, most restaurants are making efforts to increase their customer satisfaction because it can lead to higher restaurant performance through better service or even lower prices with higher service quality, which can ultimately generate more revenue. But in general, restaurant management is one of the economic activities. Unfortunately, the weakness of most new brands in this field causes them to close their business in the first year. The

Japanese cuisine was selected in this study for the criteria that the quality 'tasty' may aid in attaining, rather than for quality purposes. Recognized norms are generally associated with longevity, lifestyle, and achievement. The discovery of these relationships is a critical element in understanding why a specific culture's food is preferred by foreign customers [1]. The Japanese restaurant industry pioneered the chain store system in the 1970s, which was later adopted by the retail industry in the United States to boost productivity [2]. Kenzo Restaurant in Iran is a subsidiary of the Rahyab Company, which has a history of about 70 years; the company started with a small group of taxis giving service in Tehran and nearby cities. Then, after 20 years, it was changed to five buses commuting from

Tehran to Mashhad, Shiraz, Tabriz, Esfahan, and Ahvaz, which are among the biggest cities in Iran, with a lot of passengers. The company succeeded in this business.

Recently, the food business has gained high popularity, With a further increase in expansion rates than other business sectors. It has made an intense competition among the companies working in this sector. Kenzo restaurant is located near the most important chain food provider "SuperStar". In addition, In the same location, there are lots of other businesses providing different kinds of food and Ice cream. With such tight competition, the current performance of the restaurant is far from the desired performance. When it comes to food habits and tastes, every household in this era has changed dramatically. Many trading activities such as hotels, restaurants, and business organizations are emerging in this regard. Such organizations must establish their reputation and brand in the eyes of the market and their customers.

Theoretically, the problem stems from the fact that most restaurants in the Middle East countries do not assess the quality of their services and do not try new ways of attracting customers. When customers get frustrated, they decide to find an alternative among competitors or start complaining and showing their dissatisfaction [3]. Most customers get dissatisfied with the high price of food, low quality, and inappropriate behavior of the employees in foreign restaurants, and these factors prevent them from being attracted. As a result, the customers' satisfaction with foreign restaurants decreases, which leads to a decrease in revenue [4]. Most foreign restaurants in Iran suffer from not having regular customers and high costs, which have led to the closure of some of these restaurants [5].

In 2020, Mirebrahimi, president of the Tehran restaurant and self-service association, mentioned 25% of restaurants in Tehran had changed their jobs due to a 60% decrease in sales [5]. He also indicated various factors such as low food quality, lack of online ordering systems, adhering to traditional ordering systems, and customer dissatisfaction as essential factors in the failure of these restaurants, especially foreign ones. Based on the initial interview conducted with the customers in the process of collecting preliminary data, the findings showed that the five main factors are related to performance in the restaurant due to retention of the customer, If those factors are not taken into account, the efficiency of the restaurant will decrease and eventually the restaurant will go bankrupt. The review of the relevant literature reveals various factors that affect the performance of restaurants, which could be generalized to the Japanese Kenzo restaurants in Iran. However, the literature lacks research focusing on the impacts of these factors on the performance of Kenzo restaurants in Iran. Knowing and being aware of the views of restaurant customers about the factors affecting the restaurant's performance can encourage investors to set up foreign restaurants in Iran. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature and be useful for managers, policymakers, and professionals to improve their work environment.

The research objectives of the present study are: i) to identify the factors that can affect customers' satisfaction and performance of Kenzo restaurant, ii) to implement some interventions to improve the customers' satisfaction, thereby increasing the performance of the restaurant, and iii) to determine the impact of the intervention on the improvement of the restaurant performance. Every study has its own significance and limitations. Many scholars have already researched this topic, but no one has focused on the

case of Iran or the Kenzo brand. To the best of our knowledge, the present paper is the first case focusing on this topic, which could have a contribution to the improvement of the Japanese restaurant performance. In this regard, Iran hosts many international restaurant brands, approximately 25 to 30 in Tehran alone. This study seeks to learn about the expectation of customers who visit Kenzo restaurants and their satisfaction with the food and services provided. Furthermore, it has been observed that many foreigners and Iranians visit restaurants to savor Japanese cuisine. The scope of the study was set to be as follows. First, the research was focused on Japanese Kenzo restaurants in the Republic of Iran. Second, a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed as the research design. Finally, the unit of analysis in this study was the restaurant with a focus on the Iran region.

The importance and value of restaurants in the hospitality sector cannot be denied. In addition, the social and cultural role of Iranian restaurants cannot be underestimated. There are several factors to evaluate the quality of service in restaurants. Ireton-Jones consider the environment and services provided and food quality as the main elements of service quality assessment in the food industry. Ireton-Jones believe that food quality is the most important factor [6]. This study was conducted to increase the performance of foreign restaurants, especially Japanese ones in Iran. The significance of this study is to identify the effects of factors such as food quality, food cost, ambiance (visual acuity), service quality, customer satisfaction, and online ordering on the performance of Japanese restaurants in Iran. This study is proposed to fill the gap in the body of knowledge by addressing this issue. The findings of the current research will enable restaurant managers to enhance performance by understanding and identifying the factors affecting the performance of foreign restaurants. In addition, the findings of this study can aid investors in setting up foreign restaurants in Iran and making better decisions for their restaurants with deeper insight.

2. Literature review

2.1 Performance

An organization's performance is reflected in the actual organization outputs and outcomes [7, 8]. Since it is a demanding task to collect data on the performance of restaurants, the existing literature is limited in this regard. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the key determinants of the restaurant's performance. Hansen and Wernerfelt [9] introduced the company's competitive position as assessed by related market share as a predictor of performance. They confirmed that related market share is a substantial driver of top 1000 businesses' overall performance. The ISO certifications ensure that the documentation and service procedure, manufacturing method, and system management all fulfill the quality assurance and standards requirements. The ISO certifications can help businesses enhance their performance [10]. Basner et al. [11] and Gerber et al. [12] focused on the lack of workers' physical and mental conditions that are brought about by long-time night shifts; the outcome of lacking adequate sleep affects the workers' performance. Since it is a valuable method for measuring and evaluating a service provider's performance, the instrument has received a lot of attention from researchers

in this domain [11, 12]. SERVQUAL was used in several service sectors, either in its original or modified form According to Ladhari [13].

In addition, hospitality investigators have developed numerous operating efficiency measures across different areas. These include the proportion of labor and food expenditures [14], the restaurant seat turnover [15], eating time [16], the average number of customers handled by a server [17], and the proportion of room occupancy [18]. According to Reynolds and Thompson [19], achieving performance optimization is crucial to increasing the operating effectiveness by successfully allocating limited budgets in the firm. Labor hours, according to Reynolds [20], are an important factor in determining the performance of food service businesses since they are one of the efficiency measurements. Reynolds [21] also found efficiency variables such as staff training time, the number of servers in each period, and labor hours indicators of restaurant production.

Related market share is used by scientists as a gauge for relative value creation or a company's competitive standing. Hansen and Wernerfelt [9] identified a company's competitive status as assessed by market shares as a predictor of performance and confirmed that relative market share is a substantial driver of Fortune 1000 businesses' overall performance. The term "relative market share" is commonly used in the field of strategic management. A brand or company's degree of success and market position can be determined using relative market share [22]. Because restaurants have limited capacity and substantial fixed costs, restaurant capacities effectiveness is a difficulty when seeking to enhance performance. However, restaurants that are indifferent about restricted space, such as takeaway restaurants that promote the meal with no regard to the accompanying time and space, may have little interest in using revenue management (RM) to optimize their performance. The ideas of RM, according to Kimes [23], should be applied to restaurants since the unit of the sale in restaurants is the time required for service instead of the meal. In the peak period, RM is more suited to restaurants with higher demand than available seats (e.g., Friday dinner). These restaurants may improve their performance by controlling demand and reducing the length of time that guests are seated. The findings of Haque, M. G., and Hindrati D. [24] suggested that the halal logo on purchasing at Japanese restaurants has an important effect on the revenue due to its feature of religion. While consciousness and information have a minimal impact on purchasing decisions, they considerably impact the lifestyle. The outcome of the study of Bunchalio et al. [25] recommended that the restaurant should begin the procedures of standardization, inventory management, supplier management, food system safety, and human resource management. According to Koiwai et al. [26], increased intake of ultra-processed foods was related to lower dietary quality among Japanese adults. Subjects of the food industry's performance and expansion are today incredibly connected and are assessed in terms of establishing food safety in any country [27]. Similarly, the food industry is the foundation for the growth of the food consumer market. It is important to note that several researchers are now interested in these subjects.

According to the study by Panukhnyk et al. [28], the variables in the study for stance, consumer price index, total household spending on food, and agriculture production per capita had the most effect on the food industry's growth and overall food confirming the country's consumer market. Olshansky [29] proposed a business process to be remade as a management process technique and a set of persistent and consistent activities targeted at achieving the organization's goals.

The findings of the study by Tan and Netessine [30] indicated that the tabletop approach might increase average sales per check by 2.91 percent while extending mealtime by 9.74 percent, resulting in a 10.77 percent increase in sales per minute or selling effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings revealed that influential consumers, who incur less expenditure in accepting new methods, bring about more profit and have quicker mealtimes than unsuccessful customers. The tabletop approach allows low-skilled waiters to enhance their efficiency more than high-skilled servers. Ultimately, the results suggested that there is a significant potential for providing tabletop methods in a large service business, which is now lacking in digitization.

According to the review of the literature, the general description of food quality among researchers emphasizes presentation, temperature, freshness, taste, healthy options, and menu variety. Temperature is also a food quality sensory element that influences how food flavor is obtained; according to Delwiche [31], this will interfere with other sensory properties such as sight, smell, and taste. The temperature could then be considered one of the enchanting pleasure factors in the food experience [32]. In the dining experience, taste is perceived as a critical attribute of food [33]. Many clients have become food experts, so food tastes are increasingly important in restaurants [34]. Thus, a shabby restaurant with gourmet cuisine is not surprisingly packed with the customer. Taste is also usually thought to influence customers' satisfaction and their future behavior [33]. Restaurants should serve customers a wide range of meals since customers are generally from various economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and most of them have specific food preferences.

2.2 Food quality

Food quality appears to be recognized as a critical component in satisfying restaurant patrons; however, it is often ignored in studies conducted into restaurant service quality and customers' satisfaction. People nowadays place a premium on food quality as a critical component. However, there are few studies on the impact of fine dining restaurant food quality. Because the "product offering" for a full-service restaurant is prone to be affected by assessing an original product (the meals) and how it is delivered, we chose to break the tangibility dimension in SERVQUAL into two aspects: food quality and physical design of the restaurant (physical place). According to Sulek and Hensley [35], the most important aspect of a restaurant's overall experience is the food. They grouped all food attributes into just one factor, food quality, whereas Kivela et al. [33], who developed a model of return patronage and dining satisfaction, saw food quality as having several different characteristics. Peri [36] claims that food quality is a mandatory prerequisite to meet the desires and

demands of restaurant patrons. Given the value of food quality in the restaurant industry, previous research has looked at a variety of food quality attributes.

Menu variety is necessary to serve different customer dining preferences [37]. The presentation refers to the shape of the food technique, which is attractively decorated for customer's attention-grabbing to achieve customers' perception of quality [38]. Kivela et al. [33] emphasized that food presentation is one of the main elements of food satisfaction modeling and retrofitting customers. In addition, food presentation in the TANGSERV scale is also one of the product/service factors [39]. Healthy foods could have a significant impact on the perceived evaluation of the restaurant experience by customers [40]. Sulek and Hensley [35] mentioned many restaurant/customers health issues, and as one of the primary features of restaurant satisfaction, the availability of nutritious food products was found more important. The freshness usually refers to its crisp, savory, and aroma-related freshness [41]. Previous studies have illustrated food freshness as a key element of quality [33, 40]. One of the elements that affect the satisfaction of the customers is food. Food is one of the influencing factors on customers' satisfaction. Zeithaml and Bitner [42] have discussed foods in relation to customer factors and the eating context. In the study by Brown [43], food sensory properties such as flavor, color (taste or odour), texture, and temperature are explained in terms of factors related to food. According to Irtyshchevaa et al. [44], the operational expansion of the food industry is a necessary condition to guarantee the food safety of a country. Improving local food producers' efficiency, solidifying their positions in national and worldwide food marketplaces, offering source-saving information, and decreasing their expenses are all critical components of use procedure management. Pure and active business procedures, as a purposed set of sequential interdependent actions to change the enterprise's sources into the need finding, will allow reaching a set of goods objectives with optimization in the food industry and will assist in meeting the demand for high-quality and competitive food productions. The results of Zhao et al. [45] showed that internal integration and supplier integration are significant variables in improving product quality in the context of the agro-food supply chain. Furthermore, the link between internal integration and financial success, as well as the relationship between supplier integration and financial performance, is totally mediated by product quality. According to the findings of this study, ensuring product quality and food safety is an effective strategy for agro-food processing enterprises to improve their financial performance.

2.3 Price

The food industry is large and omnipresent in the U.S. Almost every household, in one way or the other, has a range of products and services. In 2003, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) estimated that Americans spend \$426.1 billion on consuming food in the restaurant industry (National Restaurant Association, 2003), which reflects the industry size. Of that amount, full-service restaurants were predicted to secure around \$153.2 billion, or approximately 36 percent of their share. Over the years, the food industry

has expanded, mainly because of the changed American lifestyle. Married women have almost tripled since 1950 [46], which means that women have less time to prepare and plan their meals at home. These days, people consider other problems rather than thinking about how to prepare the meal [47]. There is no time to cook; thus, people are hungry and eat out. As a result, the restaurant industry is booming.

The findings of a study conducted by Cha and Lee [48] revealed that price, convenience, and freshness all had a meaningful impact on customers' satisfaction. Nevertheless, the menu did not affect satisfaction, and contentment had a statistically significant impact on repurchase. Nonetheless, the effects differed depending on the offline shopping network used by consumers to acquire HMR items. The three elements (price, menu, and freshness) influence online purchasing. Nevertheless, the most influential aspect of online shopping is convenience. According to a study by Kim [49], 74.6% of consumers compare prices when purchasing products. When consumers purchase, the price factor highly affects their satisfaction and repurchase intentions [50]. The finding of the study by Bureau and Swinnen [51] showed that food price changes made it more probable for numerous countries to pick one: whether a consumer or a producer, or whether importing or exporting food. Sparks et al. [52] stated that the belief of consumers in credibility, quality, and corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on hospitality companies with awards or certificates. Peiró-Signes et al. [53] found that the hotel's certified environmental management (ISO 14001) is more satisfied than those that are not certified. Therefore, it is worth exploring the moderating role of certification in the relationship between determinants and the performance of restaurants. Moreover, this study looks at the role of a certificate of excellence in the relationship between the financial performance of restaurants and predictors that are regarded as moderating variables.

2.4 Ambiance

Workers must strive to ensure acceptable working conditions; the body and mental matter of employees are guaranteed [54]. Low conditions of environmental health work can lead to poor service, environment, atmosphere, and management quality. Chauke [55] stated that different elements related to the working environment could influence the health of the workforce, for instance: (1) Time of working, (2) Medical care, (3) Hygienic people and food, (4) Equipment of the workplace, (5) work conditions hygienically with adequate refreshing and clear air and atmosphere of the restaurants, (6) Payment of low salary with scarce advantages can conduct to disappointment. Basner et al. [11] and Gerber et al. [12] focused on the low physical and mental conditions of workers, which are brought about due to long-time nightshift work; it leads to the lack of adequate sleep, which has a negative impact on work performance. Appropriate uniforms can be supplied to keep workers safe from rough atmospheric conditions, which can cause sickness or discontent with workplace circumstances. The results demonstrate that all five elements of the café atmosphere, namely, layouts, cleanliness, decorating, music, and lighting, have a substantial impact on consumers' inclination to return.

Music had the most negligible impact on consumers' inclination to return, while Lighting was the most significant of these five elements. Customers nowadays are asking for extra features such as shop atmosphere rather than food quality, according to Hussain and Ali [56].

2.5 Service quality

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a non-profit organization that establishes global standards for quality control, content, and operation. ISO certifications ensure that the reporting methods, service processes, manufacturing techniques, and management systems meet quality assurance and standards requirements. ISO certifications will help businesses boost their results [10]. Abdul-Aziz et al. [57] maintained that certifications, especially ISO certifications, enable businesses to achieve greater standardization, which leads to improved efficiency. According to William B. Martin, a food industry specialist, "quality service is made up of two key factors: "service procedures" and "the personality of the service personnel [58]. Anticipation, accommodation, timeliness, the flow of operation, monitoring, customer reviews, and contact are the seven key components of "Service Procedures." In a 1978 survey of National Restaurant Association executives, the quality of service was identified as a "critical" variable [59]. This variable can generate compliments and complaints. Clients are more sensitive to an acceptable quality of services. The service area is narrow to customer indifference. In the hospitality industry, service quality has always been a priority. It has been described as one of the most important ways to improve organizational efficiency and create a competitive position.

The research of Hyunghwa Oh and Jichul Jang [60] showed that managers of full-service restaurants must urge waiters to receive training for them to develop emotional intelligence to maintain high-quality relationships with their personnel and improve job performance. In addition, restaurant managers who want to raise their employees' job performance (JP) should be aware of the position of the value of follower's sidelong associations that intelligent membership promotes emotionally. Therefore, the programs of intervention for instance, which need per-shift meetings, might be used since these social gatherings have been observed to promote relationships and socialization among members. Finally, In the opinion of employees, there is a statistically significant relationship between servers' JP and tip size. As a result, offering continuous training meetings that aid servers' advancement JP may result in rising tips. Customers can first compare the actual quality with the standards before experiencing the service, considering the level of service quality [61]. They blend this evaluation with standard levels and produce summaries of satisfaction comparisons [62]. Brady and Robertson [63] argued that the "development of customer behavioral intentions" is consistent with customer satisfaction and service. Several academics have concentrated on service quality and restaurant industry customer satisfaction. The researchers have highlighted many important features: value for money, brand name, picture, location, services, taste and nutrition, food quality, and reasonable pricing [64, 65]. In addition, Johns and Pine [66] mentioned a variety of

main factors that influence the quality of service in restaurants during the meal experience. On the other hand, while service quality is a concentrated assessment that represents the customer's understanding of dimensions of service (e.g., reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles), satisfaction is more inclusive: it is determined by perceptions of service quality, product quality, and price, as well as situational and personal factors. Customer satisfaction is influenced by the level of service provided. If we use McDonald's restaurants as an example, customers can receive high-quality food service everywhere they go, just as they do in McDonald's restaurants. It occurs because of the high-quality services provided. Customers today expect a very high standard of quality in the hospitality, travel, and leisure industries. As a result, competitors' success in these fields would be fuelled by strategies focusing on service quality to add value, product differentiation, or price differentiation. Service quality control, which is focused on methods and techniques from the recreation, travel, and hospitality industries, can improve service delivery and include a rational and understandable annotation of theoretical concepts and their realistic applications [67].

2.6 Online ordering

Online ordering is increasingly popular among both consumers and restaurants because it can benefit everyone. Consumers accept the ease, speed, and accuracy of online orders, while restaurants notice the potential for higher performances and lower ones. Through websites or apps, restaurants can offer their multi-restrained site and application (e.g., Snapfinger, campusfood.com). The increase in income, improved capacity management, improved productivity, and improved transactional marketing and customer relationship management were associated with online ordering, but some operators raised issues of potential commodification, reduced service quality, overloaded kitchens, and increased cost. Online meal ordering has been shown to enhance revenue, transactional marketing, productivity, capacity management, and customer relationship management in restaurants [68]. Consumers purchase meals online for a variety of reasons, including convenience and control, while individuals who like personal connections may not have utilized these services [69].

2.7 Customer satisfaction

"Satisfiers" are described as factors that elicit compliments when performed exceptionally well but do not elicit dissatisfaction or complaints when performed averagely or not good at all. Big portions of food are an example of a satisfier. Unlike key factors, which are both a challenge and an opportunity for management, satisfiers are a straightforward opportunity for the restaurant to stand out and outperform the competition [59]. According to Malik and Ghaffor [70], customer satisfaction refers to "meeting customers' expectations in terms of particular satisfaction parameters". Zairi [71] defines this concept as the fulfillment of consumers' inner desires. Field scholars have defined this term in a variety of ways. According to Dube et al. [72], client satisfaction is "an indication of whether customers want to

visit a restaurant again". Customer satisfaction is also regarded as "the leading factor for assessing the quality provided to consumers by the product/service and by the consequent servicing" [73]. Customer satisfaction has received a lot of attention from advertisers and analysts as the most important concept affecting service management [74]. Many academics have thus extended the principle of customer satisfaction to the service sector [75, 76]. Furthermore, Yüksel and Yüksel [77] bond this definition of satisfaction to the desire to positive word-of-mouth and purchase again. According to the findings of Takeshita, S. [78], Muslim visitors want to see halal logos and ingredient disclosures. Khoiriani [79] indicated that work skills and motivation have a statistically significant effect on restaurant workers' job satisfaction and performance. Marketing is core to customer satisfaction. The ability to satisfy customers is critical for a variety of reasons. It has been shown, for example, that unhappy customers tend to complain or seek redress more often to alleviate cognitive dissonance and failed consumption [80, 81]. Such behaviors may be observed seriously if the service providers do not address them properly. Clients may respond to a negative word of mouth as a way to return in extreme cases of dissatisfaction. As a result, a dissatisfied customer will act as a saboteur, scaring away other potential customers from a particular service provider. In addition, researchers discovered a close connection between satisfaction and loyalty. Szymanski and Henard [82], in their meta-analysis research, identified 15 correlations between the two structures, positive and significant. The relationship between loyalty and satisfaction was also demonstrated by Bearden and Teel [61]. According to Jones et al. [83], this is not a clear linear relationship; these actions can be influenced by customer attributions or their beliefs about the causes of the CS/D evaluation. Marketing professionals have always associated their bets with customer satisfaction, utilizing slogans like "Customer is king" or "Our emphasis is customer satisfaction". To create the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), the University of Michigan monitored customers through 200 companies representing all major economic sectors. Almost every company received an ACSI score calculated on the future loyalty, complaints, expectations, satisfaction, value, and quality of its customers' perceptions [84]. Oliver [85] defined customer satisfaction as the answer to customer fulfillment. The assessment of the pleasurable consumption-related performance of the product or service or product or service itself. This is, in other words, the overall satisfaction with the experience in service and product.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 The research paradigm

The mixed approach is the choice for doing this research. Researchers may use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect required data in this approach. To assess the challenge of diagnosing and assessing the intervention being done in the restaurant, a phone call interview was administered. In addition, to assess the efficacy of the restaurant intervention scheme, a survey questionnaire was issued. This study employs specific analysis paradigms, which are commonly categorized as

positivist, interpretive/constructivist, and realistic [86]. The hypothesis test is used in the positivist research approach to evaluate the conclusions resulting from perceived social realities. The positivist approach is used in this research. It may assist the researcher in gaining a deep and thorough understanding of the study through an interview session and a survey. A qualitative or quantitative approach to analysis will be less comprehensive and accurate. To measure the efficacy of the approaches, the qualitative and quantitative data provided by the respondents as well as the supporting documents should be compared. The deductive technique is used in the study. The deductive approach relates to the development of an approach that will be used in the research and is based on existing theory [87]. To perform the investigation, the researchers used two existing models.

3.3.1 Research cycle

The problem is found in the first stage through an interview session with customers of the Japanese restaurant. Following the diagnosis of the problem, a strategy for improving the restaurant's existing problem is formulated. To ensure that the intervention is feasible, data are collected during the planning period. Following the intervention, a post-survey is completed. As a result, the post-survey results are compared to the pre-survey results. The observation is carried out at this point to keep track of the status and any changes –improvements – that could occur during the timeframe. When the outcome is formed, and there is a reflection on new understanding, the final stage, i.e., reflection, occurs. If the outcome is not good, a revision intervention is required.

3.3.2 Time horizon

The time horizon is applied to the time in which the study is to be carried out. Figure 1 shows the time horizon. This research is mostly concentrated on cross-sectional time horizons, which necessitates a brief time. Cross-sectional analysis is very beneficial for determining the prevalence of a condition or disturbance in a population [88]. One of the benefits of using such an analysis is that this is inexpensive and takes a minimum time.



Figure 1. Time Horizon

3.3.3 Unit of analysis and sampling

The sampling elements in the population of interest are identified as the unit of analysis; the frameset will influence the sampling unit decision. As a result, the primary goal of this study is to examine how performance in Japanese Kenzo restaurants in Iran can be improved. Thus, the customers of

the Kenzo restaurants in Iran were selected as sampling items. The target sample of the study is 81 customers that had tested food at the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran. This restaurant is in a business area in Tehran, Iran. [Table 1](#) shows the unit of analysis.

Table 1. Unit of Analysis

| Participant | Method | Content |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| CUSTOMERS | Interview | Problem diagnosis (2 interviewees) |
| CUSTOMERS | Survey | Survey on before intervention program (81 Customers) |
| | | Post- survey on an intervention program (81 Customers) |

A total of 81 customers (90 questionnaires were distributed among which 81 questionnaires were returned) of the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran participated in this research. First, an interview session was conducted to identify the problem and obtain supporting documents to evaluate the results. The questionnaire survey base on the quantitative method was focused on the customers in the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran. Eighty-one participants answered the survey before and after the intervention.

3.3.4 Degree of involvement

The procedure for defining the issue, data collection, and intervention activities in the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran resulted in a medium level of involvement in this study, and [Table 2](#) shows the degree of involvement data. Customers at the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran were engaged in both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire surveys).

Table 2. Degree of Involvement

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Qualitative (Interview) | customer |
| | Diagnosis the problem |
| Quantitative (Survey Questionnaire) | customers |
| | Diagnosis of , Evaluatuon and Reflection Stage |
| | Before- post-surveys on the efficacy of the planned intervention |

3.3.5 Sampling strategy

According to Sekaran and Bougie [89], there are two sampling systems, namely probability and non-probability sampling. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling methods are the components of non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is used in this study.

3.3.6 Sample size

In this study, due to the limited size of the population, Krejcie and Morgan’s (1973) table was used to determine the sample size. According to the HR managers’ report, they have 100 customers per day on average; thus, based on the

Krejcie and Morgan’s table, a sample size of 80 customers was determined. Following the advice of experts, 90 questionnaires were distributed, and 81 questionnaires were returned. The survey questionnaires were sent to the restaurant managers, and they distributed them among their customers at Kenzo Japanese restaurant in Iran. Therefore, non-probability sampling was used in this study. Furthermore, interviews and surveys with related people who are customers at the Japanese Kenzo restaurant in Iran were used to gather the required data. Customers were chosen as interviewees to diagnose the problems in the Japanese Kenzo restaurant.

3.3.7 Data collection method and research instrument

The mixed-method approach involves gathering data using both qualitative and quantitative methods [90]. Each component of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques and procedures has its own set of strengths and weaknesses [91]. According to Bryman [92], a mixed-method approach can validate a questionnaire. In the end, when compared to employing just one approach, the mixed one has been demonstrated to be more successful. Accordingly, this research used a mixed-method approach. This research uses primary data. Two types of research instruments will be used in the study, i.e., interviews and questionnaires. Several interviews were conducted, and questionnaires were distributed among respondents. The interviews were conducted in a one-to-one mode. The research instruments used in this study were selected based on the review of academic literature. The primary constructs used in the study are shown in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Constructs used in this study

| Construct | Items | Source |
|------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| Food Quality | 4 | Namkung and Jang, 2007 |
| Price | 4 | Jeong et al., 2019 |
| Ambience | 4 | Ryu and Jang, 2007 |
| Service Quality | 4 | Qin, 2010 |
| Customers Satisfaction | 4 | Soriano, 2002 |
| Online Order | 4 | Kimes, 2011 |

3.3.8 Content validity

Content validity is a way to ensure that the questionnaire used in a study is able to measure the desirable concept or attribute. Accordingly, the questionnaire was sent to some specialists to check whether the inquiries measure the ideal trait or not? Furthermore, whether the questions survey can cover the whole topic or not? And does the questionnaire have content legitimacy? Logical and face validity are two types of content validity: (i) the logical validity in this study was determined based on the experts’ opinions. Faculty members with specialties related to the field of research and experienced people in the field of research are the most famous people that determine content validity because they can judge the correctness of the questionnaire. (ii) The face validity evaluates the appearance of the questionnaire. The face validity examines the questionnaire format, the font, and size, line spacing, the number of questions, the layout of the questionnaire, etc. In this study, the following methods were used to measure the

content and face validity of the questionnaire: (1) Reviewing the literature of the research, (2) Using the opinions of the supervisor, co-supervisor, and other specialists in this area, and (3) Using questionnaires used in previous studies. The experts reviewed the interview question and made changes based on their feedback and suggestions.

3.3.9 A pilot study (reliability)

A pilot study was conducted to validate the tools developed for this study. The purpose of this pilot study was to: (1) determine the time required to complete the survey to make sure the tool length was appropriate, (2) check the reliability and effectiveness of the content and instrument, and (3) improve the instrument. The confidentiality of pilot respondents was guaranteed. After the pilot research, some changes were made to the equipment to improve clarity. The time required to complete the survey was estimated to be about 15 minutes, and this time was reasonable. Countermeasures were taken from the literature, but the validity and reliability tests must be performed as they are used in different contexts of this study. Content validity is related to the question of whether the elements or measures of the questionnaire represent a means by which the content of a particular composition can be measured [93]. As Straub [94] suggests, the validity of the content is determined by the literature research and a panel of judges and experts. To identify all possible applicable steps, a systematic analysis of the literature was performed. A pre-test was conducted on five factors' effects on restaurant performance. To scrutinize the internal accuracy and reliability evaluation, a pilot test was arranged and attended by a selected group of respondents. Moreover, the study served to non-probable the research question before the actual survey questionnaire activity is evaluated. According to Isaac and Michael [95], a sample size of 10 to 30 respondents is appropriate for a pilot survey. As a result, 30 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in this study during the pilot research. The respondents in this pilot study were clients from another Japanese restaurant that had a similar problem with low performance and revenue.

3.3.10 Interventions planned and implications

Using Lewin's Model of Change, an intervention plan is suggested in this study. It is divided into three stages: input, transformation, and output, or unfreezing, changing – altering-, and refreezing. The concept provides a simple and practical way to understand the transformation process. According to the n's model, the change process entails first forming the perception that only a change is necessary, then advancing towards a new and desirable level of attitude, and finally solidifying that new pattern of behavior as the norm. The model remains common and forms the foundation for several current models of transformation. The planning step, often known as the first plan, is included in the input stage. The organization is typically aware of the issue that occurs at this point and has not yet recognized the real issue. The issues must be resolved by implementing changes to the present procedure. As a result, during the input stage, the researcher will address the problematic circumstance that has become their issue with the organization's management – restaurant management. The researcher will begin a preliminary analysis of the issue that has arisen. Together

with the organization's supervisors – management, the researcher will consider possible solutions or relevant interventions for resolving the problem. The researcher collects data on the performance of the Japanese restaurant program as part of the study. An interview with many customers is undertaken to obtain their feedback on how the performance training and strategies program is now run and to collect recommendations on how to enhance them. The intervention plan will be executed to increase the restaurant's performance (second stage); one of the most important parts of the intervention belongs to the training of employees. They have training season (they get a certificate during class). This training is examined with the manager, and when employees are ready. The researcher takes the post-survey among restaurant customers to find out whether the training of employees can affect the restaurant's performance or not. On the other hand, the purpose of the reflection session is to guarantee that the participants, who are consumers, comprehend what they have read in the questionnaire. Refreeze is the final stage, which examines if the employee and management make any adjustments because of the intervention. The researcher sends a post-survey to the customers at this stage to determine whether the Japanese restaurant can improve its performance. Furthermore, the manager will monitor the employee's performance on a daily basis. The list of interventions:

- I.To prepare the environment and design a suitable restaurant for a Japanese restaurant where the customer can feel the Japanese atmosphere and feel comfortable there (Ambience)
- II.10% discount for second and above coming in the month, to motivate the loyal customer to come more and more in a month (Price).
- III.Excellent customer service is divided into two types of training: How to interact with restaurant guests and increasing employee English fluency to avoid misunderstanding during their job (service quality). For excellent customer service, there are two types of courses or training: First, these courses include the correct way of serving food and the proper posture of the waiters as professional behavior courses.
- IV.The period of proper treatment of the customer and better performance of duties and raising the tolerance of waiters in difficult conditions and avoid arguing with the customer as professional interaction course.
- V.Add the accurate delivery time to the software so that customers, before making the order, can see how long they must wait to avoid customer dissatisfaction (Online ordering).
- VI.Change receiving orders from traditional to the new programs in the restaurant. For online ordering, coordinate the program with the sales app available in the Iranian market (online Ordering).
- VII.Other part of the intervention is a combination of training for:
 1. Preparation of food from fresh daily materials and the duration of their use is a maximum of two days and no more (Food Quality).
 2. Daily dusting and cleaning of decorations (Ambience).

3. The same table should be cleaned when settling the customer bill (Ambience).
4. Cleaning the bathroom every hour (Ambience).
5. Serve foods between 15 to 20 minutes from the moment of ordering (Service quality).
6. Customer satisfaction should be questioned by the manager when the customers want to go out of the restaurant (customer satisfaction).

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher examined all data acquired by qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study. The qualitative data were examined using Miles and Huberman's [96] technique, while the quantitative data were evaluated with the SPSS program. Further, this research was tested by Reliability of Measurement Tools with Alpha Cronbach and Test of Normality. In comparison, the differences between the pre-test and post-test data were evaluated; in addition, a descriptive analysis was done. To determine the difference between before and after the intervention, the Wilcoxon-test was used. Finally, the results of the analysis will be clarified and explained.

4.1 Participants Profile

Gender, education, occupation, age, and salary were among the demographic characteristics gathered during the interview sessions. The participants' profiles are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Participants' Profile

| Participants | Gender | Education | Occupation | Age | Salary |
|--------------|--------|---------------|------------|-----|--------|
| A | Female | Dr. MD | Anesthesia | 42 | 1600\$ |
| B | Male | Eng. Bachelor | Management | 30 | 800\$ |

The researcher categorized all sub-themes obtained from the interview sessions into six themes based on the qualitative analysis. Table 5 shows the concluded sub-themes and themes collected from the analysis. Based on the qualitative analysis, sub-themes and themes were identified from the interview transcripts. The sub-themes derived from the interviews are quality of foods, price of food, atmosphere, cosy place, favourable air, quality of service, ordering mistakes, misunderstanding, timely ordering, timely preparation, the behavior of restaurant staff, customers' satisfaction, accurate ordering, delivery time, and restaurant revenue.

Table 5. Themes and Sub-themes

| Sub-themes | Themes |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Quality of foods | Food quality |
| Price of food | |
| Atmosphere | Ambience |
| Cosy place | |
| Favourable air | Service quality |
| Quality of service | |
| Ordering mistakes, Misunderstanding | Customer Satisfaction |
| Timely ordering, Timely preparation | |
| Behaviour of restaurant staff | |
| Customer satisfaction | Online Ordering |
| Accurate ordering | |
| Delivery time | |
| Restaurant revenue | |

These thirteen sub-themes are then categorized into six themes which are Food Quality, Price, Ambience, Service Quality, Online Ordering, and Customer Satisfaction. The

intervention plan was executed to increase the restaurant's performance. One of the most important parts of the intervention plan was the training of employees (the employees would be given certificate). This training was conducted by the manager when employees were ready. The researcher carried out the post-survey among restaurant customers to find out whether the training of employees could affect the restaurant performance or not. On the other hand, the purpose of the reflection session was to guarantee that the participants, who were consumers, comprehended what they have read in the questionnaire.

4.2 Quantitative Analyses

4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the summation of a population's sample size. The descriptive analysis for this research is shown in the tables presented below. In addition, descriptive statistics of the data are sometimes used to identify the dominant pattern and base to explain the relationships between the variables used in the research. In short, the set of methods used in collecting, classifying, and describing numerical facts is called descriptive statistics. In fact, these statistics describe the data and research information and provide a general scheme of data for quick and better use of them. In a compilation, descriptive statistics can be used to identify the characteristics of a bunch of information. The central parameters and scattering are used for this purpose. The function of these criteria is that one of them can express the main characteristics of a set of data as a number. In this way, in addition to helping to better understand the results of a test, the comparison of the results of the test with other tests could also be facilitated. Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 show the descriptive analysis of 81 respondents participating in the study. Based on the gender, the respondents consist of 43.2% (n=35) male and 56.8% (n=46) female. Four categories of ages were included in the study; 51.9% (n=42) of the respondents were 30 years old and below, 28.4% (n=23) were 31-40 years old, 16% (n=13) were 41-50 years old, and 3.7% (n=3) were 51 years old and above. The results showed that 0% of the respondents were at the school level; 61.7% had an undergraduate degree, and 6.2% and 32.1% had a PhD and a master's degree, respectively. In terms of salary, from 4 categories of salary, there was 0% for two types of up to \$150 and \$151- \$500, which 72.8% (n=59) of respondents \$501-\$1000, 27.2% (n=22) \$1001 and above.

4.2.2 Normality Test

The concept of normal distribution applies to parametric data (not nonparametric data). The normality test, by creating a graph of the probability of being normal (in the form of a bell and also symmetrical relative to the mean), tests whether the observations of the research follow a normal distribution. Many human characteristics such as intelligence, attitudes, and personality have a relatively normal distribution in the population (society). Normal distribution does not mean standard or optimal distribution. Normalization is the most basic premise of multivariate analysis. If this assumption is not met, certain statistical tests are invalid and unusable [97]. The importance of familiarity and measuring the normality of data distribution is that some statistical methods such as Pearson correlation, Wilcoxon tests, and analysis of variance analysis assume that data distribution is normal (in society). It is also estimated that the population parameter is based on the normality of the variable distribution in the population. To estimate the normal statistical distribution, skewness and kurtosis are

used. The acceptable range of skewness and kurtosis is the values between -2 and +2 for normal data. Normality tests help researchers recognize which type of evaluation is needed for the study to compare before and after the intervention. All the variables have ($p < 0.05$); thus, to test all the factors, the appropriate test must be a non-parametric system test.

Table 6. Gender

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 35 | 43.2 | 43.2 | 43.2 |
| | Female | 46 | 56.8 | 56.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 81 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 7. Age

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Up to 30 | 42 | 51.9 | 51.9 | 51.9 |
| | 31-40 | 23 | 28.4 | 28.4 | 80.2 |
| | 41-50 | 13 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 96.3 |
| | 51 and above | 3 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 81 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 8. Education

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Undergraduate | 50 | 61.7 | 61.7 | 61.7 |
| | Masters | 26 | 32.1 | 32.1 | 93.8 |
| | PHD | 5 | 6.2 | 6.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 81 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 9. Salary

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | \$501 - \$1000 | 59 | 72.8 | 72.8 | 72.8 |
| | \$1001 and above | 22 | 27.2 | 27.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 81 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

4.2.3 Wilcoxon test

The Wilcoxon Test, commonly known as the Signed rank test, is a non-parametric statistical test for comparing differences between paired groups. The Wilcoxon test was used to examine each element.

4.2.3.1 Food Quality

The descriptive statistics for food quality are shown in Table 10, with the mean before intervention being 4.5216 and after intervention being 5.8827. The Wilcoxon test was used

to compare the difference before and after the intervention in Table 4.9. The result of the SPSS analysis for the food quality element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after the intervention. Table 11 also demonstrates that the calculated value ($0.00 < 434^*$) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Consequently, the result demonstrates that there is a significant difference between before and after an intervention. As a result of the findings, the null hypothesis is rejected as a conclusion. Therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics FQ

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 4.5216 | 0.57173 |
| After | 81 | 5.8827 | 0.53777 |

Table 11. Wilcoxon test FQ summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.2.3.2 Price

The descriptive statistics for the price are shown in Table 12, with the mean before intervention being 3.6327 and after intervention being 5.0889. The result of the SPSS analysis for the price element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after an intervention.

Table 13 also demonstrates that the calculated value ($0.00 < 434^*$) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Therefore, the result demonstrates a significant difference between before and after the intervention. As a result of the findings, the null hypothesis is rejected as a conclusion. Therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 12. Descriptive statistics P

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 3.6327 | 0.58908 |
| After | 81 | 5.0889 | 0.60233 |

Table 13. Wilcoxon test P summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.2.3.3 Ambiance

The descriptive statistics for ambiance are presented in Table 14, with the mean before intervention being 4.5710 and after intervention being 6.2870. The result of the SPSS analysis for the ambiance element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after an intervention. Table 15 also demonstrates that the calculated value (0.00<434*) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Consequently, the result demonstrates a significant difference between before and after an intervention. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected as a conclusion. Therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 14. Descriptive statistics A

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 4.5710 | 0.54376 |
| After | 81 | 6.2870 | 0.37314 |

Table 15. Wilcoxon test A summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.2.3.4 Service Quality

The descriptive statistics for service quality are presented in Table 16, with the mean before intervention being 3.5494 and after intervention being 4.8463. The result of the SPSS analysis for the service quality element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after the intervention. Table 17 also demonstrates that the calculated value (0.00<434*) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Consequently, the result demonstrates a significant difference between before and after an intervention. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected as a conclusion. Therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 16. Descriptive statistics SQ

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 3.5494 | 0.46338 |
| After | 81 | 4.8463 | 0.46117 |

Table 17. Wilcoxon test SQ summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.2.3.5 Online Order

The descriptive statistics for online order are shown in Table 18, with the mean before intervention being 3.6358 and after intervention being 4.9895. The Wilcoxon test was used to compare the difference before and after the intervention in Table 19. The result of the SPSS analysis for the online order element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after an intervention. Table 19 also shows that the calculated value (0.00<434*) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Consequently, the result demonstrates that there is a significant difference between before and after an intervention. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected; therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 18. Descriptive statistics online order

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 3.6358 | 0.42214 |
| After | 81 | 4.9895 | 0.36036 |

Table 19. Wilcoxon test online order summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.2.3.6 Overall analysis

The descriptive statistics for the Overall Analysis are presented in Table 20, with the mean before intervention being 3.9069 and after intervention being 5.3875. The Wilcoxon test was used to compare the difference between before and after the intervention in Table 21. The result of the SPSS analysis for the overall analysis element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after the intervention.

Table 21 also demonstrates that the calculated value (0.00<434*) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicate that the finding is significant. Consequently, the result demonstrates that there is a significant difference between before and after the intervention. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and, consequently, the intervention was effective.

Table 20. Descriptive statistics overall analysis

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 3.9069 | 0.26787 |
| After | 81 | 5.3875 | 0.21735 |

Table 21. Wilcoxon test overall analysis summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

A qualitative approach was adopted to answer the first research objective. For the qualitative approach, interviews were conducted with two participants to identify specific themes related to the factors that influence the restaurant's performance. The interview protocol was conducted properly during the interview sessions. Eight interview questions were asked to identify the factors that can improve the performance of the Japanese restaurant. Based on the findings from the qualitative approach, six themes were identified: Food quality, Price, Ambience, Service quality, Online ordering, and customer satisfaction. These themes are the factors that can influence the restaurant's performance. Food Quality represents a combination of positive and negative feelings that customers have about the food in the restaurant; in addition, the quality of food includes taste, different flavors, fresh and healthy ingredients, etc., which enhance the restaurant's performance. The competitive price affects the performance of the restaurant, too. Based on the results, restaurant atmosphere can play an important role in restaurant performance. Additionally, it has been determined that the quality of restaurant service can have a significant effect on restaurant performance. Based on the results of the qualitative part of the research, it was determined that customer satisfaction could have a positive impact on restaurant performance. When satisfied, the customers begin word-of-mouth advertising among all family members, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. Based on the results of this study, online orders can have a significant and positive impact on the performance of restaurants. The positive effects of online ordering on the restaurant performance include reducing the need for labor to register customer orders as well as reducing customer order errors. Based on the interviews conducted, it was found that the above five factors can cause very big problems for the restaurant and, as a result, the performance of the restaurant can be significantly reduced. Furthermore, Severt et al. [98] found a significant positive relationship between food quality, ambience, price, and service quality and the performance of the restaurants. In this study, after the interventions, the ambience and price factors had the greatest impact on increasing the sales of Japanese restaurants at this stage among five factors. The interview and survey data indicated that the development program's intervention was beneficial in improving restaurant performance. Training and development for enhanced service quality are significant to restaurant consumers, according to the two interviewers held in this study. Employees may be able to improve the restaurant's performance with the new information and skills gained via the training and development programs. For excellent customer service, there are two types of courses or training: First, these courses include the correct way of serving food and the proper posture of the waiters as professional behavior courses. Second, the period of proper treatment of the customer and better performance of duties and raising the

tolerance of waiters in difficult conditions and avoid arguing with the customer as professional interaction course. On the other hand, two learning courses were held to increase employees' English fluency (speaking and listening skills) to avoid misunderstandings during their duties. Simultaneously, it may boost their motivation, confidence, communication, and morale while they do the work assigned by clients. Furthermore, employees feel valued since the restaurant allows them to learn and do new things. For the research objective to determine the impact of the intervention on the improvement of the restaurant performance, a quantitative approach method was used for data collection. Questionnaires were distributed among 81 samples of restaurant customers. The questionnaires consisted of five categories with a total of 24 items and 4 items on the demographic analysis. The response from the distribution of questionnaires was among restaurant customers, 35 males, and 46 females. Based on the Wilcoxon test conducted, there is a significant difference between before and after the intervention. The descriptive statistic for the overall analysis is the mean before intervention being 3.9069 and after intervention being 5.3875. The Wilcoxon test was used to compare the difference between before and after the intervention. The result of the SPSS analysis for the overall analysis element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after the intervention. Both the P-value and the T-value indicated that the finding was significant. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. Before and after the intervention, a significant difference was observed. Moreover, significant differences in all factors affected the performance after the intervention programs. This shows that the Japanese restaurant can perform better than before in these factors, which leads to increasing performance significantly. Furthermore, these results supported by Severt et al. [98] stated a significant positive relationship between food quality, ambience, price, and service quality and the performance of the restaurant. Additionally, three factors were found more effective among the others in the Middle East (Iran, UEA, and Qatar), those factors are Food Quality, Ambience, and Service Quality.

4.2.3.7 Customer Satisfaction

The descriptive statistics for customer satisfaction are presented in Table 22, with the mean before intervention being 3.5309 and after intervention being 5.2307. The Wilcoxon test was used to compare the difference before and after the intervention in Table 23. The result of the SPSS analysis for the customer satisfaction element revealed a significant P-value of less than 0.05 (0.000<0.05). As a result, there is a significant difference in scores before and after an intervention. Table 23 also demonstrates that the calculated value (0.00<434*) is less than the crucial value. Both the P-value and the T-value indicated that the finding is significant. Consequently, the results demonstrated that there was a significant difference between before and after an intervention. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the intervention was effective.

Table 22. Descriptive statistics CS

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|------------------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| | N | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Before | 81 | 3.5309 | 0.43550 |
| After | 81 | 5.2307 | 0.52260 |

Table 23. Wilcoxon test CS summary for after the intervention

| Condition | Findings | Result |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| P-value<0.05 | 0.000 < 0.05 | Significant |
| Calculation value<Critical value | 0.00 < 434 * | Significant |
| The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a difference between before and after. | | |
| *The critical value for the Signed rank test only up to N=50. Thus, for N>50, the critical value should be more than 434. | | |

4.3 Reflection

In this study, an intervention such as the recap and reflection session were conducted in every factor, which was applied to enhancing the understanding among restaurant customers’ desires. Interestingly, after the interventions, the survey results show that the efficiency or performance of the restaurant has increased. It is mostly influenced by the following three factors: the restaurant’s ambiance, customer satisfaction, and food prices, respectively. Therefore, all the null hypotheses were rejected. Thus, the intervention was effective and had a positive impact on the restaurant’s performance. It was determined that all interventions performed (all factors) caused the improvement of the restaurant’s performance. This intervention can help the Japanese restaurant to improve its performance. According to the data obtained for the second cycle, the intervention for training an employee and upgrading the restaurant sales app had a positive impact on the restaurant’s performance. In addition, the intervention had a positive impact on the overall performance of the restaurant. All of the null hypotheses were rejected. Therefore, the intervention was effective and had a positive impact on the restaurant’s performance, it was determined that the employee training program and the update of the restaurant sales app improved the restaurant’s performance.

5. Conclusion

The present study concluded that there is a difference between before and after intervention in the first cycle. On the other hand, this cycle can be repeated repeatedly in the future. As a result, the performance and efficiency of the restaurant will be increased. Each of the five factors obtained from the study had significant impacts on the restaurant’s performance. Based on the study, foreign restaurants, especially Japanese restaurants, must pay close attention to service quality and employee behaviors. This factor cannot be changed or improved overnight, and it takes time and investment to grow. On the other hand, most people use mobile software to buy food online in Iran and other countries in the region. It is not very common among customers in the Middle East countries to use social networks to find a restaurant, but in western countries, finding restaurants via social media is very popular. Therefore, in today’s modern world, restaurants need to be more present on social networks, and it is not a bad idea to pay more attention to attract customers through this way to enhance the restaurant performance. Managers and policymakers of the restaurant should keep in mind that these five factors have a great impact on performance and should try to improve the situation. It was found that food quality, price, online order, and service quality are the most common problems for Japanese restaurants in Iran. Finally, courses and training for employees improved their motivation, confidence, communication, and morale. Employees also feel appreciated if the restaurant provides opportunities for them

to acquire new skills and learn new things. This study provides insights for restaurant managers to improve their restaurant performance. The study can be used as a reference to address other issues regarding how to improve the performance of the restaurant. Although the five factors were found important to growing the restaurant’s performance, the training program was more effective in the service quality. Thus, there is a need for a combination of the five factors to receive the highest performance in the restaurant. Managers and policymakers of the restaurant should keep in mind that these five factors have a great impact on performance. In addition, from all the factors, based on the research findings, service quality needs more time and investment to improve. In addition, luxury restaurants must pay attention to the service quality because customers in such restaurants need more attention. If they lose it, it is tough for a restaurant to make them come back into the game. This study has some limitations which have needed to be noted here. Considering the population of the study, the results of this investigation are carefully generalizable to the overall restaurant industry in different settings, and even it can be used in other service sectors such as hospitality and tourism management sectors with some adjustment or modification. In the end, utilizing a restricted example of a Japanese restaurant in Iran that works in Iran under explicit conditions confines the generalizability of the aftereffects of the investigation to different settings, particularly in their region. The data utilized as a part of the study were gathered with subjective measures considering the perceptions of the restaurant customers. The data were gathered during the sanction posed by the U.S on Iran and the limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the result of this study may not be generalized in the post-sanction time and post-COVID-19 pandemic. Given the current state of the world and the presence of the COVID-19 virus, most customers are not present in the restaurant, which limits the results of the research to certain numbers of (less health precaution) customers. And the most important factor is the opinion of the restaurant management as well as their desired budget, which can affect the entire research process and decisions. There are a few recommendations for potential research in this field. The findings of this investigation were obtained from an example of an Iranian restaurant’s business. Based on the findings, the intervention could be seen to have an impact on the restaurant’s performance. However, the timeframe was too short to measure the intervention’s actual effects. Two types of service quality training (identifying problems and solving them, a good reaction under work pressure and avoiding discussing with customers, good posture and style of employee and increasing English fluency in both speaking and listening to C1 grade to reduce misunderstanding with customers) for employees need more time and investment. And the management must wait to build strong service quality, which is gained after this training program. And in future research, researchers can use social media to increase the number of customers and attract customers, which can be one of the new factors that can directly affect the performance of the restaurant. This issue has not been studied in the Middle East region at present. The sample considered in this study was a Japanese restaurant; it is also an interesting idea for future researchers to study the effects on restaurant performance by adding traditional foods to the restaurant menu and changing part of the restaurant environment to a traditional atmosphere. The scope of the study can also be widened by using other restaurants from other states or other Middle East countries.

Ethical issue

Authors are aware of and comply with best practices in publication ethics, specifically with regard to authorship (avoidance of guest authorship), dual submission, manipulation of figures, competing interests, and compliance with policies on research ethics. Authors adhere to publication requirements that the submitted work is original and has not been published elsewhere.

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

All authors of this study have a complete contribution to manuscript writing.

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