

The Causal Effect of Restaurant Ambient, Food Quality, Service Quality, and Customers Satisfaction towards Behavior Intention in Premium Japanese Restaurants in Bangkok

Pojarnee Latthiprasart^{1*} and Napawan Kananurak²

¹⁻²Doctor of Business Administration Program (Bilingual Program), Graduate School,
University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC)

*e-mail: apinutt2704@gmail.com

Received: December 17, 2025; Revised: February 25, 2026; Accepted: March 4, 2026

ABSTRACT

The restaurant business is considered one of the most important businesses to the service sector and has been growing rapidly, making the competition in this industry higher. Meanwhile, the trend of the Japanese food market and Japanese restaurants continues to grow amid intense competition in the restaurant market. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of restaurants ambient, food quality, and service quality on the customer satisfaction of Japanese restaurants' consumers in Bangkok, which in turn will have an impact on behavior intention. The method used in this study is a quantitative approach, using a Likert Scale as a measurement method. Data analysis uses the structural equation modeling (SEM) method with LISREL 8.7. The population of this study is premium Japanese shabu restaurants' consumers in Bangkok. Total sample that used in this research is 400 samples. The results of this study show significant and positive effects, both individually and simultaneously, between restaurants ambient, food quality, and service quality to customer satisfaction and its impact on repurchase intention. Outcome of study are valuable for entrepreneur restaurants and academicians interested in restaurant business research.

Keywords: Restaurants Ambient; Food Quality; Service Quality; Customers' Satisfaction; Behavior Intention; Premium Japanese restaurants

INTRODUCTION

Japan's long-standing cultural heritage has shaped a distinctive and refined culinary tradition. Japanese cuisine emphasizes high-quality ingredients, meticulous preparation processes, aesthetic presentation, and the preservation of natural flavors and colors. These characteristics reflect cultural values

such as simplicity, seasonality, and balance. As a result, Japanese food has gained widespread global recognition and acceptance (Pornsomboonsir, 2016). Beyond taste, Japanese cuisine is often associated with health consciousness due to its emphasis on fresh ingredients, vegetables, seafood, and moderate cooking methods. This perception

has strengthened its international appeal, particularly among urban consumers seeking healthier dining options. Japanese food has become increasingly popular in Thailand since the early 2000s, when Japanese restaurants began expanding rapidly across the country. Initially, many restaurants adapted flavors to suit Thai consumer preferences (Japanese news agency, Embassy of Japan in Thailand, 2016). Over time, however, authenticity and specialization became more prominent. According to data from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the number of Japanese restaurants in Thailand has expanded significantly. In 2022, there were 5,325 Japanese restaurants nationwide, increasing to 5,751 in 2023—an 8.0% growth rate (Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Group, 2023). Thailand is ranked sixth globally in terms of the number of Japanese restaurants, reflecting strong and sustained demand. In addition to overall growth, the market has evolved toward specialization, including sushi, tempura, yakiniku, and sukiyaki-shabu restaurants (Kwankaew & Fussiri, 2020). This specialization indicates market maturity and intensified competition, particularly in urban centers such as Bangkok. As competition increases, restaurants must differentiate themselves not only through food offerings but also through service quality and dining atmosphere.

Among specialized formats, Japanese shabu (sukiyaki-shabu) restaurants have gained particular popularity. Shabu is widely perceived as a healthy dining option because it includes vegetables, lean meats, tofu, mushrooms, and clear soup bases. This aligns

with the lifestyle shift of Thai consumers toward healthier eating patterns (Pheunpha, 2022). Although the overall market size of shabu restaurants is smaller than some other restaurant segments, it is highly accepted among middle- and upper-income consumers (Kwankaew & Fussiri, 2020). Premium shabu restaurants, in particular, emphasize three core elements: (1) high-quality and carefully selected ingredients, (2) luxurious ambience and interior decoration, and (3) professional full-service delivery. Premium restaurants typically offer set menus arranged in courses, distinctive food presentation styles, well-designed interiors, and highly trained staff who follow standardized service protocols and international dining etiquette. While prices are higher than those of general restaurants, consumers often perceive the experience as providing good value for money due to superior quality and atmosphere (Pornsomboonsir, 2016). Given the rapid expansion of premium shabu restaurants in Bangkok, competition has intensified. Each brand must develop strategic differentiation to attract and retain customers. In such a competitive environment, restaurant ambience, food quality, and service quality become critical determinants of customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Previous studies have examined factors influencing customer satisfaction in restaurant contexts, including ambience and service quality (Tu, Wang, & Chang, 2012). However, several research gaps remain. First, limited research has specifically focused on premium Japanese shabu restaurants, despite

their growing importance in Thailand's restaurant industry. Second, empirical studies in the Bangkok context remain insufficient, particularly in examining high-end dining segments where consumer expectations differ from mass-market restaurants. Third, prior research often investigates ambience, food quality, or service quality separately, with limited integration of these three variables within a single comprehensive model that links them simultaneously to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship factors affecting and its associated consequences which have the specific objectives as follows:

1. To study the importance level of restaurant ambience, food quality, service quality, and customer satisfaction toward behavior intention of customers who the using service premium Japanese restaurant in Bangkok.
2. To investigate the influence of restaurant ambience, food quality, service quality, and customer satisfaction toward behavior intention of customers who the using service premium Japanese restaurant in Bangkok.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Restaurant Ambient

The rapid growth of Japanese restaurants in Thailand, particularly in Bangkok, reflects not only the popularity of Japanese cuisine but also the increasing competition in

restaurant positioning and experiential differentiation. In this context, restaurant ambience has emerged as a critical strategic factor. Rather than merely describing physical surroundings, ambience functions as a stimulus that shapes customers' emotional responses and influences their overall evaluation of the dining experience.

Omar, Ariffin, and Ahmad (2015) argue that restaurant ambience plays a significant role in establishing restaurant image and attracting customers. However, beyond initial attraction, ambience contributes to memorable dining experiences that may influence both customer satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intention. Ambience typically encompasses elements such as lighting, seating arrangement, spatial layout, music, and décor, which collectively construct the perceived atmosphere of the restaurant. These environmental cues operate as experiential signals that shape customers' affective and cognitive evaluations.

Toyoshima (2013) found that popular Japanese restaurants in Bangkok tend to adopt a "modern Japanese ambience" rather than a traditional one, suggesting adaptation to local consumer preferences. Interestingly, many Japanese fast-food chains replicate interior designs similar to their outlets in Japan to preserve brand authenticity. This raises an analytical tension: while authenticity may enhance brand image, localization of ambience may better align with Thai customers' experiential expectations. This contradiction highlights a potential gap in understanding how different ambience styles

influence satisfaction and revisit intention in the Thai context.

Importantly, ambience should not be examined in isolation. Environmental psychology and service marketing literature suggest that physical surroundings influence emotional states, which subsequently affect satisfaction and behavioral intention. Therefore, in this study, restaurant ambience is conceptualized as a perceived environmental stimulus that directly and indirectly affects customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Food Quality

Food quality is widely recognized as one of the most critical determinants of customers' restaurant choices (Din et al., 2016). However, food quality can be conceptualized from two perspectives: (1) objective attributes (e.g., freshness, ingredients, presentation), and (2) subjective perceptions formed through customers' expectations and consumption experiences. Rijswijk and Frewer (2008) emphasize that customers' evaluation of food quality is largely perception-based, shaped by prior beliefs and post-consumption assessment. Accordingly, this study treats food quality primarily as customers' subjective evaluation rather than purely objective characteristics.

Empirical evidence further supports the central role of food quality in shaping post-consumption outcomes. Sakornratanakul (2020) found that food quality was the most significant factor influencing customer satisfaction and revisit intention in Japanese restaurants. While physical environment and

service quality also affected satisfaction, food quality demonstrated the strongest predictive power. This suggests that in Japanese dining contexts—where authenticity and taste consistency are highly valued—food quality may function as a core determinant of both satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Nevertheless, previous studies tend to focus more on satisfaction as the immediate outcome, with less explicit discussion of how food quality translates into behavioral intention. Given that revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth are critical for long-term profitability, it is necessary to strengthen the conceptual linkage between perceived food quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Therefore, this study positions food quality as a direct predictor of satisfaction and as an indirect driver of behavioral intention through satisfaction.

Service Quality

Service quality remains one of the most extensively studied constructs in service marketing. Guo et al. (2012) emphasize that service expectations are dynamic and continuously evolving, requiring ongoing research to capture emerging gaps between customer expectations and perceived performance. Conceptually, service quality is often defined as the gap between customers' expectations and their perceptions of actual service performance (Puri & Singh, 2020; Herington & Weaven, 2009). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, later refined into the RATER framework (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1990), which identifies five dimensions of

service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

RATHER than reiterating definitions, it is essential to identify which dimensions are particularly relevant to Japanese restaurants in Thailand. In this context:

- **Tangibles** relate to staff appearance and the physical presentation consistent with Japanese cultural identity.
- **Reliability** concerns order accuracy and consistency in food delivery.
- **Responsiveness** reflects speed of service, particularly important in fast-food formats.
- **Assurance** involves staff knowledge of menu items and confidence in service delivery.
- **Empathy** captures personalized attention and cultural sensitivity.

These dimensions collectively influence customers' evaluation of the dining experience and their satisfaction. However, compared to food quality, service quality may exert both direct and indirect effects on behavioral intention. While satisfaction often mediates this relationship, strong service encounters may also directly encourage revisit intention and recommendation behavior. Therefore, this study integrates service quality as a multidimensional construct influencing satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the overall evaluation of a consumption experience, reflecting customers' affective and cognitive responses after using a product or service (Johnson, Anderson, & Fornell, 1995).

Marketing scholars consistently regard satisfaction as a fundamental component of effective service management and long-term business success (Oliver & Rust, 1994).

Lertnaisat (2020) examined satisfaction in Japanese restaurants and found generally high satisfaction levels across different income groups and service usage frequencies. Although variations were observed based on prior experience traveling to Japan, overall evaluations of people, process, and physical evidence remained high. However, qualitative findings suggested that service quality in Thailand was perceived as inferior compared to Japan. Rather than detailing subgroup differences extensively, the key implication is that satisfaction is influenced by contextual expectations and comparative standards. More importantly, satisfaction is not an end outcome but a mediating mechanism linking service attributes to behavioral outcomes. Extensive marketing literature indicates that satisfied customers are more likely to revisit, recommend, and develop loyalty. Therefore, in this study, customer satisfaction functions as a central mediating variable between ambience, food quality, service quality, and behavioral intention.

Behavior intention

Behavioral intention refers to an individual's willingness to perform a specific behavior and is considered a strong predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In service contexts, behavioral intention is commonly expressed through revisit intention, positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to recommend (Cao & Chen, 2011; Byun & Jang, 2018). While prior studies

often emphasize definitional aspects, the empirical significance of behavioral intention lies in its role as a strategic outcome variable. Since intentions directly influence actual consumption behavior (Ajzen, 1991), identifying their antecedents is crucial for restaurant management. Byun and Jang (2018) suggest that favorable evaluations of products and services lead to stronger usage intentions, reinforcing the importance of experiential quality. Integrating previous sections, behavioral intention in this study is positioned as the ultimate outcome influenced by restaurant ambience, food quality, and service quality—both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. This integrated framework reduces conceptual fragmentation and clarifies the logical progression from environmental and service attributes to emotional evaluation (satisfaction) and finally to behavioral responses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the structural relationships among restaurant ambience, food quality, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention in premium Japanese shabu restaurants in Bangkok. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test both measurement and structural models.

Sampling Design and Data Collection

The target population comprised customers who had recently dined at premium Japanese suki/shabu restaurants in Bangkok. The sampling frame was derived from ten

premium restaurants listed in the Tripadvisor (2023) ranking. While Tripadvisor rankings reflect customer visibility and popularity rather than objective service quality, they provide a practical and market-recognized benchmark for identifying leading premium establishments. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that respondents had direct experience with premium Japanese shabu services. Given the non-probability nature of the sampling approach, findings should be interpreted within the premium restaurant segment in Bangkok and not generalized to other restaurant categories or geographic contexts. Sample size adequacy was determined according to SEM requirements. Hair et al. (2010) recommend sufficiently large samples to ensure stable parameter estimation and reduce standard errors. A total of 400 usable questionnaires were collected, exceeding minimum thresholds and providing robust statistical power for model estimation.

Measurement Instrument and Construct Operationalization

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from prior literature and aligned with study objectives. The instrument comprised six sections: (1) demographics, (2) restaurant ambience, (3) food quality, (4) service quality, (5) customer satisfaction, and (6) behavioral intention. Customer satisfaction and behavioral intention were explicitly separated to prevent construct overlap.

Restaurant ambience was defined as customers' perceptions of the physical and atmospheric environment (e.g., lighting, décor,

layout). Food quality was conceptualized as customers' subjective evaluation of freshness, taste, and presentation. Service quality reflected perceived service performance. Customer satisfaction represented overall evaluative judgment of the dining experience. Behavioral intention was operationalized as revisit intention, positive word-of-mouth, recommendation intention, and willingness to pay a premium price. All items were measured using Likert-type scales.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), with acceptable values ranging from 0.50 to 1.00. A pilot study ($n = 30$) was conducted to assess clarity and contextual appropriateness among respondents familiar with Japanese restaurant services. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). To avoid artificial inflation of reliability, excessively high coefficients were examined for potential redundancy. Construct validity was assessed within the SEM framework. Convergent validity was evaluated using standardized factor loadings (≥ 0.50), Composite Reliability ($CR \geq 0.70$), and Average Variance Extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$). Discriminant validity was confirmed when the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations (Hair et al., 2010; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Data Analysis and Model Fit

Data analysis proceeded in three stages. First, descriptive statistics and normality

diagnostics (skewness and kurtosis) were assessed. Second, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to examine bivariate associations. Third, SEM was performed to test measurement and structural models. Model fit was evaluated using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, with emphasis on those recommended in contemporary SEM literature: χ^2/df (< 3.00), Comparative Fit Index ($CFI \geq 0.90$), Tucker-Lewis Index ($TLI \geq 0.90$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA \leq 0.08$), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR \leq 0.08$). Although GFI and AGFI were reported for completeness, interpretation prioritized CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR (Hair et al., 2010; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH

Data of Respondents

The total number of respondents is 355 with the composition of the female as much as 73% and males are 27%. The majority of respondents are age categories which range from 25 to 34 years old with total 41%, describes the frequency of occupation of respondents, majority of them are private employees with total 59%, the figure also describes the frequency of educational background, and majority of them are bachelor degree with total 65%, describes the frequency of monthly expenses, majority of them are ranging from 20,001 and 30,000 baht, describes the frequency of most come to use the service and eat with friends and their families (69.27%)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Restaurant ambient. Based on LISREL output in Table 1, it can be seen that standardized loading factors value from each observed variables are ≥ 0.50 , which means these all of observed variables are valid and significant statistically. Based on Hair et al. (2010), the good reliability is if the Construct Reliability

(CR) $0.97 \geq 0.70$ and Variance Extracted (VE) is $0.83 \geq 0.50$. From the output calculation in Table 1 below, all of the dimensions have good reliability (X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 1 Validity and Reliability of Restaurant ambient

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	VE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Restaurant ambient				0.97	0.83	Reliable
X_1	0.87	12.08	0.41			Valid
X_2	0.86	12.44	0.47			Valid
X_3	0.85	14.94	0.31			Valid
X_4	0.88	14.76	0.38			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

Food quality. The output calculation on Table 2 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_9). The measurement equations for observed

overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 2 Validity and Reliability of Food Quality

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	VE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Perceived service quality				0.97	0.85	Reliable
X_5	0.88	14.76	0.38			Valid
X_6	0.82	13.60	0.38			Valid
X_7	0.93	13.13	0.38			Valid
X_8	0.91	15.46	0.44			Valid
X_9	0.89	16.42	0.35			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

Perceived service quality. The output calculation on Table 3 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (X_{10} , X_{11} , X_{12} , X_{13} , X_{14}). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 3 Validity and Reliability of Perceived Service Quality

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	VE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Perceived service quality				0.98	0.91	Reliable
X_{10}	0.84	12.50	0.47			Valid
X_{11}	0.85	15.82	0.44			Valid
X_{12}	0.96	16.42	0.40			Valid
X_{13}	0.94	15.91	0.45			Valid
X_{14}	0.89	16.42	0.33			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

The output calculation on Table 4 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (Y_1 , Y_2 , Y_3). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 4 Validity and Reliability of Customer Satisfaction

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	VE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Customer satisfaction				0.97	0.91	Reliable
Y_1	0.89	14.82	0.33			Valid
Y_2	0.96	19.18	0.26			Valid
Y_3	0.90	15.28	0.30			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

Behavior intention. The output calculation on Table 5 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (Y_4 , Y_5 , Y_6). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 5 Validity and Reliability of Behavior intention

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	VE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Behavior intention				0.97	0.86	Reliable
Y ₄	0.85	15.84	0.29			Valid
Y ₅	0.88	16.06	0.35			Valid
Y ₆	0.97	18.11	0.32			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

Structural Model Analysis

After doing the calculation and analysis of CFA, then, the next step researcher does is an analysis of the structural model, consists of: (1) model fit test; and (2) the analysis of causal relationships. Structural model fit test. From analysis below (see Table 5) can be seen that not all measurements of

goodness of fit show good fit value and marginal fit. However, this model qualified as good model, because the main measurements used is RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value (Hair et al., 2010). In this model, RMSEA is exactly < 0.10 which is 0.076, shows that overall model is good fit or marginal fit and has good degree of precision.

Table 6 Fit Test (Goodness of Fit Structural Model)

Measurements GOF (goodness of fit)	Standard of measurement	Estimation result	Description
Measurement of absolute fit			
GFI (goodness of fit index)	GFI > 0.90	0.85	Marginal fit
RMSEA	< 0.074 RMSEA 0.088	0.081	Good fit
Measurement of absolute fit			
NNFI (non-normed fit index)	NNFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	Good fit
NFI (normed fit index)	NFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	Good fit
AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index)	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0.82	Marginal fit
RFI (relative fit index)	RFI > 0.90	0.98	Good fit
IFI (incremental fit index)	IFI > 0.90	0.99	Good fit
CFI (comparative fit index)	CFI ≥ 0.90	0.99	Good fit

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

Path analysis. After analyzing the results of the structural model fit, the following analysis is done by performing an analysis of path. Statistical testing for path analysis of

structural model is made with a level of significance of 5%, so the critical value from t-value is ± 1.96 . Table 6 and Figure 7 show that hypothesis is not significant, there are RA

(restaurant ambient)-CS (customer satisfaction)
and FQ (food quality)-CS (customer satisfaction)

with $1.86 < 1.96$ and PSQ (perceived service
quality)-CL (customer loyalty) with $-0.43 < 1.96$.

Table 7 Path Analysis

Path	Standardized koefisien	t-value/F	Conclusion
RA → CS	0.25	1.86	Significant
FQ → CS	0.69	4.95	Significant
PSQ → CS	0.53	3.67	Significant
RA, FQ and PSQ → CS	0.13	783	Significant
RA → BI	0.95	84.47	Significant
FQ → BI	0.28	0.43	Significant
PSQ → BI	0.30	0.24	Significant
CS → BI	0.24	2.24	Significant
RA, FQ and PSQ → BI	0.24	370	Significant

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

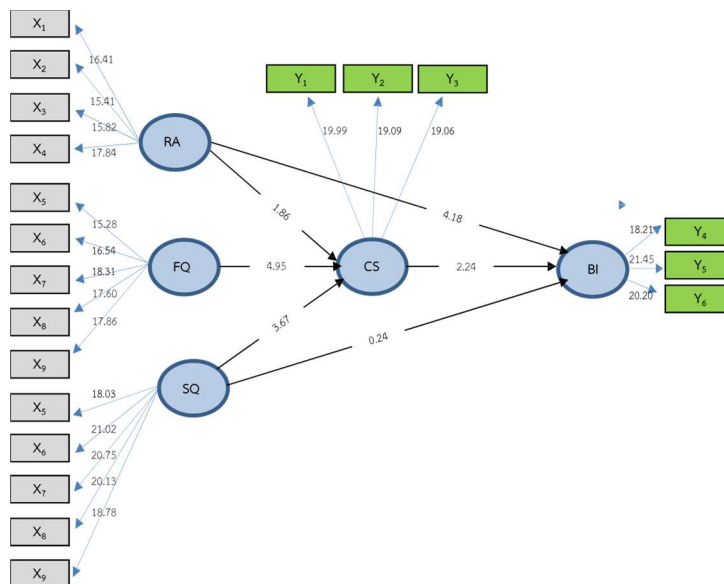


Figure 1. t-value model. Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7. Notes. X1 = RA; X2 = FQ (Food Quality); X3=PSQ (Perceived Service Quality); Y1 = CS; Y2 = BI.

Hypothesis Testing

Analysis of hypothesis testing is performed with a 5% significance level

resulting in a t-value ± 1.96 . The hypothesis was accepted when the t-value obtained ≥ 1.96 , on the other side of the hypothesis will

be rejected when the t-value obtained ≤ 1.96 . Based on this t-value, we can see that this model can support the data. The conclusion

of hypothesis testing shows (see Table 8) that two hypotheses declined, they are:

Table 8 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Description	Conclusion
H1	Restaurant ambient influences on customer satisfaction	Hypothesis accepted
H2	Food quality influences on customer satisfaction	Hypothesis accepted
H3	Perceived service quality influences on customer satisfaction	Hypothesis accepted
H4	Restaurant ambient, food quality, and service quality simultaneously influences on customer satisfaction	Hypothesis accepted
H5	Restaurant ambient influences on behavior intention	Hypothesis accepted
H6	Food quality influences on behavior intention	Hypothesis accepted
H7	Perceived service quality influences on behavior intention	Hypothesis accepted
H8	customer satisfaction influences on behavior intention	Hypothesis accepted
H9	Restaurant ambient, food quality, and service quality simultaneously influences on behavior intention	Hypothesis accepted

Source: Questionnaire, processed by LISREL 8.7.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the structural relationships among restaurant ambience, food quality, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention in premium Japanese shabu restaurants in Bangkok. The results indicate that restaurant ambience, food quality, and service quality exert positive and statistically significant effects on customer satisfaction. In turn, customer satisfaction significantly influences behavioral intention, operationalized as revisit intention, positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to pay a premium price. In addition to these direct effects, food quality and service quality also demonstrated significant indirect effects on behavioral intention through customer satisfaction.

When satisfaction was introduced as a mediator, the direct effects of food and service quality on behavioral intention were reduced but remained significant, indicating partial mediation. This finding suggests that while experiential attributes directly shape behavioral intention, a substantial portion of their influence operates through customers' evaluative judgments of satisfaction.

This study contributes to service marketing literature in three important ways. First, it extends prior research (Hamza, 2013; Clemes et al., 2011; Kitapcia et al., 2014) by integrating restaurant ambience, food quality, and service quality within a single structural framework in the context of premium Japanese restaurants. While previous studies often examined these constructs

independently or in general restaurant settings, this study contextualizes their interrelationships within a high-involvement, premium dining segment. Second, the findings reinforce and refine the theoretical mechanism underlying behavioral intention. Consistent with expectancy-disconfirmation and service quality theories, experiential attributes influence behavioral intention both directly and indirectly through satisfaction. The mediation analysis clarifies that customer satisfaction functions as a central psychological mechanism translating service evaluations into future behavioral commitment. Third, by focusing on premium Japanese shabu restaurants in Bangkok, the study contributes context-specific evidence to the growing body of hospitality research in emerging Asian markets, where cultural authenticity, premium positioning, and experiential consumption play increasingly important roles.

The findings offer several actionable implications for restaurant managers and entrepreneurial firms operating in the premium Japanese segment. First, food quality remains a core strategic driver. Investment in premium ingredients, freshness assurance systems, transparent sourcing, and consistent taste execution is critical for sustaining satisfaction and behavioral loyalty. Menu innovation should align with health-conscious consumer trends while preserving authenticity. Second, service quality requires structured capability development. Managers should implement systematic staff training programs emphasizing responsiveness,

product knowledge, cultural etiquette, and personalized attention. Performance evaluation systems should integrate real-time feedback mechanisms and complaint recovery protocols to strengthen customer trust and assurance.

Third, restaurant ambience should be strategically designed rather than aesthetically incidental. Lighting, spatial layout, privacy design, and Japanese-inspired décor should be intentionally aligned with brand positioning. Sensory consistency enhances experiential differentiation and reinforces premium perception. Collectively, these strategies support repeat patronage, positive recommendation behavior, and long-term profitability.

The statistically significant relationships identified in the structural model confirm the practical relevance of experiential quality dimensions. The strength and direction of the structural paths demonstrate that improvements in food and service quality meaningfully increase satisfaction levels, which subsequently enhance behavioral intention. The mediation findings indicate that satisfaction partially explains how operational excellence translates into customer loyalty behaviors. These findings are consistent with prior empirical evidence (Hamza, 2013; Clemes et al., 2011; Kitapcia et al., 2014), yet they provide refined insight within a premium Japanese restaurant context.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, data were collected from customers of premium

Japanese shabu restaurants in Bangkok using purposive sampling. Therefore, generalizability to other restaurant categories or geographic regions is limited. Second, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference and does not capture changes in customer perceptions over time. Third, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce common method bias despite procedural controls. Future research may expand this framework in several directions. Longitudinal studies could examine how satisfaction and behavioral intention evolve over repeated dining experiences. Comparative studies across different restaurant formats (e.g., casual dining vs. premium dining) may reveal segment-specific dynamics. Additionally,

incorporating moderating variables such as cultural authenticity perception, perceived value, or customer involvement may provide deeper theoretical insight into behavioral formation mechanisms.

Overall, this study demonstrates that restaurant ambience, food quality, and service quality are not merely operational elements but strategic determinants of customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in premium Japanese restaurants. By clarifying the mediating role of satisfaction and contextualizing the model within Bangkok's premium dining market, the study advances both theoretical understanding and managerial practice in hospitality research.

REFERENCE

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Anderson, J., & Gerbing, D. (1988). Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 411-423.
- Byun, J. & Jang, S. (2018). To compare or not to compare?": comparative appeals in destination advertising of ski resorts. *J. Destin. Mark. Manag*, 10, 143–151.
- Cao, C., & Chen, J. (2011). An empirical analysis of the relationship among service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty of high speed railway based on structural equation model. *Canadian Social Science*, 7(4), 67-73.
- Clemes, M., & Gan, C., & Ren, M. (2011). Synthesizing the Effects of Service Quality, Value, and Customer Satisfaction on Behavioral Intentions in the Motel Industry: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research - J Hospit Tourism Res*, 35, 530-568. 10.1177/1096348010382239.
- Guo, X., Ling, K. C., & Liu, M. (2012). Evaluating Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction towards Online Shopping in China. *Asian Social Science*, 8, 40- 50.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J. & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. (7th Ed), Pearson, New York.

- Hamza, S. K. (2013), Airline image and service quality effects on traveling customers' behavioural intentions in Jordan. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5 (22), 20–33.
- Herington, C. & Weaven, S. (2009). E-Retailing by Banks: E-Service Quality and Its Importance to Customer Satisfaction. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43, 1220-1231.
- Japanese news agency, Embassy of Japan in Thailand. (2016). *Japanese food, popular food*. retrieved 15 April 2024, from https://www.th.emb-japan.go.jp/th/jis/publ/59_1.pdf.
- Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., & Fornell, C. (1995). Rational and adaptive performance expectations in a customer satisfaction framework. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(4), 695–707.
- Kitapci, O., Akdogan, C., and Dortyol, I. T. 2014. The Impact of Service Quality Dimensions on Patient Satisfaction, Repurchase Intentions and Word-of- Mouth Communication in the Public Healthcare Industry, ICSIM. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 161-169.
- Kwankaew, M., & Fussiri, P. (2020). Study of attitudes and perceptions of service quality in relation to decide to use the Japanese restaurant In KRunG Thep Maha Nakhon District. *15th graduate research conference 2020*, Rangsit University.
- Lernaisat, R. (2020). Evaluation of Satisfaction Level on Service Quality of Japanese Restaurant in Thailand. *TNI Journal of Business Administration and Languages*, 8(1), 28-39.
- Omar, Muhamad & Ariffin, Hashim & Ahmad, Rozila. (2015). The Relationship between Restaurant Ambience and Customers' Satisfaction in Shah Alam Arabic Restaurants, Selangor. *International Journal of Administration and Governance*, 1, 1-8.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. & Berry, L.L. (1988). SERVQUAL: a multiple item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 6(1), 12-40.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1990). *An Empirical Examination of Relationships in an Extended Service Quality Model*. Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA.
- Pheunpha, P. (2022). Service marketing mix and corporate image influence the customer satisfaction: A case study of shabu restaurants in Thailand. *Conference: Proceedings of Economics and Finance Conferences, International Institute of Social and Economic Sciences*. At: Prague, Czech Republics.
- Pornsomboonsir, C. (2016). Factors and behavior of Thai consumers affecting the decision to consume premium Japanese restaurants in Bangkok. *AN Independent study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement for the degree of Master of Business Administration*, Thammasat University.

- Puri, G., & Singh, K., (2020). Understanding the theoretical relationship between service quality & tourist satisfaction: Special reference to tourism industry. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* ,10(12), 9-15.
- Sakornratanakul, S. (2020). To explore the key factors that affect repeat patronage intention for shabu customers in Bangkok. *College of Management, the degree of Master of Management*, Mahidol University for.
- Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Group, (2023). *Growth of Japanese restaurant business in Thailand*. Retrieved 15 April 2024, from <https://www.sbcs.co.th/th/articles/?p=310>.
- Toyoshima, N. (2013). Japanese restaurants in Thailand: Dining in the ambience of Japanese culture. *Journal of Asia-Pacic Studies (Waseda University)*, 19, 279-296.
- Tu, Y. T., Wang, C. M., & Chang, H. C. (2012). Corporate brand image and customer satisfaction on loyalty: An empirical study of Starbucks Coffee in Taiwan. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences*, 3(1), 24-32.