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# **ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN BURGER KING AND KFC IN TIRANA, ALBANIA**

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## **Abstract**

*The fast-food industry is a significant part of the global food service market, characterized by quick service, standardized menus, and a focus on convenience and affordability. In Tirana, the fast-food industry has grown as international brands such as Burger King and KFC have expanded their presence. By comparing these popular brands this empirical paper offers new insights into customer perceptions in the Albanian market, a relatively under-researched context, on factors such as food quality, service, pricing, and restaurant ambiance. The results indicate that KFC outperforms Burger King in food quality, service,*



*and overall satisfaction, but both brands have similar perceptions in terms of price-value. While KFC enjoys a higher level of customer satisfaction overall, both brands must focus on improving food quality, service, and the customer experience to maintain a competitive edge.*

*Keywords: Fast-food industry, Albania, Customer satisfaction, Food and service quality*

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary fast-food landscape, customer satisfaction emerges as a critical determinant of success and brand loyalty, particularly in urban centers like Tirana, Albania. As consumers increasingly prioritize experiences alongside nutritional value, understanding the factors influencing satisfaction becomes essential for restaurant brands. This study aims to assess customer satisfaction levels specifically between two prominent players in the fast-food industry—Burger King and KFC. By examining various elements such as service quality, product consistency, and overall dining experience, this research seeks to elucidate how these factors differ between the two establishments. With Tirana's unique cultural backdrop and evolving consumer preferences, the comparative analysis shed light on how each brand responds to these dynamics while catering to the needs of their customer base. Ultimately, this assessment provides valuable insights that can inform strategic enhancements for both Burger King and KFC in the local market.

The fast-food industry in Tirana has seen significant growth in recent years, reflecting broader global trends toward convenience and rapid service. As urbanization and lifestyle changes continue to shape consumer behavior, fast food outlets have emerged as crucial players in meeting the demands of a busy population. Notably, brands like Burger King and KFC have established a prominent presence, offering a variety of menu items that cater to local tastes while maintaining their global identity. This growing competitiveness not only drives innovation among these establishments but also highlights the importance of service quality and customer satisfaction in retaining loyal patrons. Research shows that dimensions such as tangibles, responsiveness, and assurance are pivotal in determining customer satisfaction in fast food settings, particularly in markets like Tirana, where these factors significantly influence consumer choices (Saporna & Claveria, 2019.). Ultimately, the fast-food industry's evolution in Tirana underscores its integral role in both the culinary landscape and the economy.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The fast-food industry is a significant part of the global food service market, characterized by quick service, standardized menus, and a focus on convenience and affordability. In many regions, including Europe and the U.S., the industry has grown rapidly, driven by consumer demand for quick, affordable, and accessible food options.

The global fast-food industry has seen a shift towards healthier menu options, digital ordering, and environmentally sustainable practices. As consumer expectations evolve, fast food chains are facing increasing pressure to maintain high levels of service while adapting to new consumer trends.

In Tirana, the capital of Albania, the fast-food industry has grown as international brands such as Burger King and KFC have expanded their presence. Despite the popularity of traditional Albanian cuisine, global fast-food chains cater to consumers seeking familiar international food brands. The competitive landscape in Tirana provides an interesting context for examining customer satisfaction at these global brands.

Customer satisfaction is a critical factor for the success of businesses in the food service industry, especially in the highly competitive fast-food sector. Customer satisfaction is the overall feeling a customer has about a service or product, often measured by the difference between customer expectations and perceived performance (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the fast-food context, satisfaction can result from a combination of food quality, service efficiency, price value, and restaurant ambiance. Various studies have explored how satisfaction is linked to loyalty, repeat visits, and overall brand success. Studies highlight that customer satisfaction directly influences customer loyalty, repeat business, and word-of-mouth promotion (Oliver, 1997). In the fast food industry, where choices are abundant, customer satisfaction is vital for retaining customers and achieving competitive advantage. Key factors influencing satisfaction in the fast food industry include:

- **Food Quality:** Taste, freshness, presentation, and portion sizes. The quality of food is one of the primary drivers of customer satisfaction in fast food restaurants. Studies show that food taste, freshness, and consistency across different locations are highly valued by customers (Choi & Chu., 2006). For global chains like Burger King and KFC, food quality can directly affect customer loyalty and brand perception.
- **Service Quality:** Speed of service, friendliness of staff and accuracy of orders. Service quality is crucial in fast food restaurants, where customers often expect quick and efficient service. The speed of service, staff attitude, and order accuracy are key components of service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Research by Boulding et al. (1993)

demonstrates that customer satisfaction increases when service is perceived as friendly and efficient.

- **Price and Value:** Perceived fairness of pricing in relation to food quality and service. Price perception plays a significant role in fast food customer satisfaction. If customers perceive the price to be too high for the quality and quantity of food provided, their satisfaction will decrease (Dube et al., 1997). In the context of fast food chains like Burger King and KFC, customers expect reasonable prices that reflect the value of the experience (including food quality and service).
- **Ambiance:** Cleanliness, comfort, and atmosphere of the restaurant. While ambiance may be less important than food or service, it still plays a role in customer satisfaction. Cleanliness, seating comfort, and atmosphere significantly influence the customer experience (Jang & Namkung., 2009). For fast food chains that focus on quick dining, the ambiance should be clean and inviting without being overly formal.

Several studies have explored customer satisfaction specifically in the context of fast-food chains, with some focusing on global. For instance, Choi & Chu (2006), observed that McDonald's customers rated food quality higher than competitors, but service speed was a common challenge across many chains. Some studies focus on emerging markets where global fast-food chains are expanding. Research by Cha et al (2019) on the effects of the consumption motivations of restaurant customers on their perception of the importance of restaurant attributes. suggests that food quality and service play even more significant roles in regions where international brands are newer to the market. This is particularly relevant for Tirana, where local perceptions of global brands like Burger King and KFC are still being shaped.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study provides a systematic approach to investigating customer satisfaction in Burger King and KFC in Tirana. The use of a quantitative, comparative research design, combined with surveys and statistical analysis, will allow for an in-depth understanding of customer satisfaction and differences between the two brands.

Descriptive design helped to provide a clear picture of customer satisfaction at both fast - food chains, identifying factors that influence their satisfaction levels, while comparative design: is chosen to compare customer satisfaction between the two brands based on various dimensions like food quality, service, ambiance, and price.

The target population for this study consists of customers who visit Burger King and KFC restaurants in Tirana, Albania. Since the research focuses on customer satisfaction, only individuals who have recently visited these restaurants are included. A convenience sampling

method is used for this study. Customers are approached directly at the Burger King and KFC locations in Tirana and asked to participate in the survey. A total of 200 respondents participated in the survey (100 customers from each restaurant). A sample size of this magnitude ensured that the study had enough power to detect meaningful differences between the two restaurants and provide reliable.

Data are collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire is distributed to customers at Burger King and KFC in Tirana after they finish their meals ensuring that responses are based on their most recent experience. The instrument (questionnaire) is structured to assess customer satisfaction across multiple dimensions including:

- a) Demographic Questions to collect basic information about the participants (e.g., age, gender, frequency of visit).
- b) Customer Satisfaction Questions: These questions measured various aspects of satisfaction (e.g., food quality, service, ambiance, price). A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied) is used for most of these questions (Oliver & Swan, 1989), (Parasuraman et al, 1988), Namkung & Jang, 2008), (Shaharudin et al., 2011), (Xia et al., 2004), (Anderson et al., 1994).
- c) A very limited number of Open Questions which allowed participants to provide additional feedback or suggestions for improvement (*ex. What did you like the most about your experience at Burger King/KFC?; What could Burger King/KFC improve in order to enhance your customer experience?*).

Once data is collected descriptive and inferential statistical methods are applied as followed:

- A two-sample t-test is used to compare the means of customer satisfaction scores for Burger King and KFC. This helped in determining whether there are statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction between the two brands.
- ANOVA is used to compare satisfaction levels across different demographic groups (e.g., age groups).
- Correlation Analysis helped to explore potential relationships between satisfaction factors (e.g., food quality and service quality), correlation analysis will be performed

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from customers at Burger King and KFC in Tirana. The results are analyzed to compare customer satisfaction across various dimensions, including food quality, service, price, ambiance, and overall

The demographic information of respondents is crucial to understanding the profile of participants and ensuring that the sample represents the target population. Table 1 represents demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	55
Female	45
<b>Age</b>	
18 – 25 yrs.	40
26 – 35 yrs	35
36 – 45 yrs.	15
46 or above	10
<b>Frequency of visits</b>	
Frequently ( <i>multiple times a month</i> )	60
Occasionally ( <i>a few times a year</i> )	30
Rarely ( <i>once a year or less</i> )	10
<b>Restaurant preference (restaurant visited more frequently)</b>	
Burger King	55
KFC	45

The following table provides an overview of customer satisfaction ratings on a 5-point Likert scale for both Burger King and KFC, based on the key factors of satisfaction: food quality, service quality, price-value perception, and ambiance.

Table 2: Customer satisfaction ratings on key factors

Factor	Burger King (Mean Rating)	KFC (Mean Rating)
Food Quality	4.1	4.3
Service Quality	3.8	4.0
Price-Value Perception	3.9	4.1
Restaurant Ambiance	3.7	3.9
Overall Satisfaction	4.0	4.2

KFC received a slightly higher rating (4.3) for food quality compared to Burger King (4.1). This suggests that customers perceive KFC's food quality to be slightly better, possibly due to

its diverse menu options and perceived freshness of ingredients. KFC also had a higher rating (4.0) for service quality compared to Burger King (3.8), indicating that KFC's staff and service efficiency were rated more favourably by customers. Both brands received relatively similar ratings for price-value perception, with KFC slightly ahead (4.1) of Burger King (3.9). This suggests that customers feel they are getting better value for money at KFC compared to Burger King, though the difference is not substantial. The ambiance ratings for both brands were relatively similar, with KFC scoring slightly higher (3.9) compared to Burger King (3.7). The difference may be attributed to factors such as restaurant layout, cleanliness, and customer comfort. KFC scored higher in terms of overall satisfaction (4.2) compared to Burger King (4.0). This suggests that, on average, customers are slightly more satisfied with their experience at KFC. Despite these results, a t-test was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in customer satisfaction scores between Burger King and KFC for each factor. Results indicated that the difference in food and service quality satisfaction as well as in overall satisfaction is statistically significant with KFC receiving higher ratings since p – values reported from the t-test are lower than 0.05. This pattern aligns with the findings of previous studies that emphasize the importance of food quality and service efficiency in customer satisfaction (Choi & Chu, 2006; Zeithaml et al., 2018). The higher satisfaction with KFC's food quality suggests that KFC's menu offerings are perceived as more flavourful, diverse, and fresh. This aligns with studies that show how diverse menus and high-quality ingredients can significantly enhance customer satisfaction in the fast food industry (Choi & Mattila, 2004). KFC's specialization in chicken-based products, as well as its perceived freshness, appears to resonate well with customers in Tirana. The higher rating for KFC's service compared to Burger King's reflects the importance of staff interaction, order accuracy, and efficiency in enhancing customer experiences. Studies consistently show that service quality is one of the most influential factors in determining overall customer satisfaction in restaurants (Boulding et al., 1993). KFC's investment in staff training, professionalism, and speed of service may be contributing factors to its higher ratings in this area. KFC received higher ratings for overall satisfaction compared to Burger King. This indicates that customers are generally more satisfied with their dining experience at KFC. The higher overall satisfaction score for KFC is likely a result of the combined effect of its superior food quality, service, and perceived value. As Oliver (1997) suggests, overall satisfaction is a key driver of customer loyalty, and the higher satisfaction at KFC may contribute to stronger customer retention in the long term. As per price – value perception and ambiance results indicated that differences are not statistically significant since p-values reported from the t-test are higher than 0.05. The price-value perception aligns with Dube et al. (1997), who found that consumers often weigh the trade-off



between quality and price when determining satisfaction in fast food setting while for ambiance finding is consistent with research by Mittal et al. (1999), which indicated that while ambiance contributes to customer satisfaction, its impact is often secondary to other factors such as food and service. Such a finding is also supported by Jang & Namkung (2009), who found that while ambiance plays a role in customer satisfaction, its effect is often less significant compared to food and service quality. In the fast-food sector, where customers seek convenience and quick service, the physical environment may not be as critical as other factors. On the other hand, the ANOVA results indicate that customer satisfaction did not vary significantly by age group ( $F(3, 196) = 0.87, p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that customers of all age groups had similar levels of satisfaction while a significant difference was found in overall satisfaction based on frequency of visits ( $F(2, 197) = 5.43, p < 0.01$ ). Customers who visited more frequently rated their overall satisfaction higher than those who visited occasionally or rarely.

Participants were also asked to provide open-ended feedback on their dining experience at Burger King and KFC. Some of the common themes that emerged from the responses include:

- **Burger King:**
  - Positive feedback focused on the variety of burgers and quick service.
  - Suggestions for improvement included improving food freshness and offering more healthy options.
- **KFC:**
  - Positive feedback emphasized the flavor and variety of chicken-based dishes.
  - Suggestions for improvement included enhancing the consistency of service speed and adding more seating options.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results show that KFC generally receives higher ratings than Burger King across several satisfaction dimensions, including food quality, service quality, and overall satisfaction. However, both restaurants perform similarly in terms of price-value perception and restaurant ambiance. Statistical tests confirm that the differences in satisfaction between the two brands are statistically significant for food quality, service quality, and overall satisfaction, but not for price-value perception and ambiance. These findings suggest that KFC may have a slight edge in customer satisfaction, but both brands have room for improvement in certain areas. KFC's higher ratings in food quality, service, and overall satisfaction suggest that the restaurant is meeting or exceeding customer expectations in these key areas. To maintain this competitive advantage, KFC should focus on maintaining the consistency of its offerings, ensuring high-



quality ingredients, and continuing to train staff to improve service delivery. Additionally, given that food quality was the highest-rated factor, KFC should continue to emphasize the freshness and taste of its products, which customers clearly appreciate. Although Burger King also performed well overall, the slightly lower satisfaction scores in food quality and service quality suggest areas for improvement. Burger King may want to consider expanding its menu to include more diverse options or healthier choices, which could improve customer satisfaction and attract a broader customer base. Moreover, improving the efficiency and friendliness of service could enhance customer experiences, particularly in terms of speed and order accuracy. Addressing these areas could help Burger King compete more effectively with KFC.

Both brands received relatively similar scores for price-value perception, which implies that customers view both restaurants as offering reasonably priced meals. However, KFC's slightly higher rating suggests that it is perceived as offering better value. To stay competitive, Burger King could consider introducing more promotions or value meal options that could help enhance the perceived value for money.

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