

# Restaurant Customers' Responses to Waiting Time

## A Study of Eat-in Restaurants in Ahmedabad, India

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**Research Question:**  
How do customers of restaurants in Ahmedabad respond to waiting time and to what extent does this affect their satisfaction?

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Ahmedabad is one of the largest cities of India. Despite accounting for nearly 18% of the world's population, there is a scarcity of studies on Indian restaurant customers and their reaction to waiting time.

Eating-out habits have been increasing in the country and a lot of multinational and local restaurants, cafes and bars have sprung up recently. Moreover, existing studies cannot be applied in the case of India, as there are cross-cultural differences in the perception of waiting time, physical environment and service delivery (Gallarza-Granizoa, Ruiz-Molinaa and Schlosser, 2020).

Hence, this study was conducted to understand the reaction of eat-in restaurant customers of Ahmedabad (India) to waiting time and to what extent it negatively impacts their satisfaction.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the key theories pertaining to service quality, perceived waiting time and customer satisfaction.
2. To examine the ways in which customers respond to the waiting time at restaurants and the differences in the perception of waiting time among various customers
3. To analyse the findings and identify how waiting time impact customer satisfaction
4. To interpret the findings based on the data collected and previous research, derive meaningful conclusions and implications for restaurant managers.

### METHODOLOGY

Adopting a quantitative and deductive approach to the collection of data

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Designing an online questionnaire using Qualtrics

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Pilot test conducted using 10 responses

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Self-selection sampling method was utilised, and the questionnaire was sent to WhatsApp and Instagram social media groups

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212 responses received

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45 responses were removed (due to refusal of consent, very incomplete information provided and some survey previews)

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167 responses were used for the purpose of data analysis, using SPSS and Microsoft Excel

Figure 1: Methodology and data analysis procedure followed in this research

### FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Age profile of the respondents

Age of customers (years)	Number of customers	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
18-25	135	80.8	80.8
26-35	14	8.4	89.2
36-45	10	6.0	95.2
46-55	5	3.0	98.2
Over 55	3	1.8	100.0
Total	167	100.0	

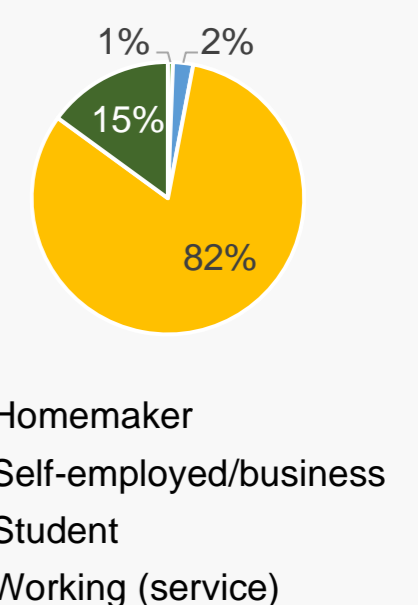


Figure 2: Educational and occupational profile of the respondents

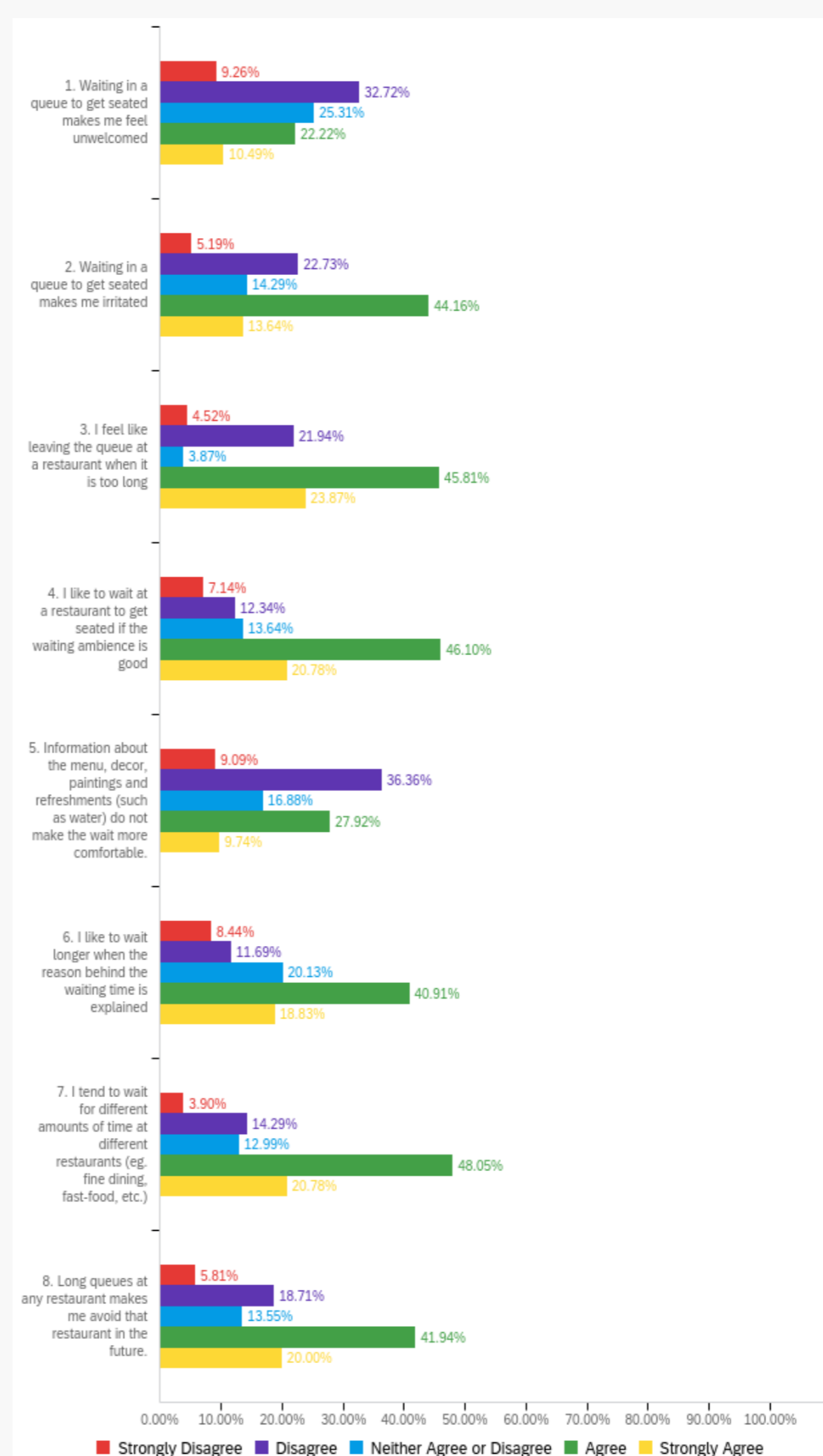


Figure 3: Percentage of the responses to the Likert-scale questions

1. The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group 18-25 and identified themselves as students.
2. More than 60% of the customers tend to avoid restaurants with long queues.
3. A comfortable waiting ambience and activities to keep customers occupied can reduce the negative impact of waiting time on customer satisfaction (Fang, 2015).
4. There is a tendency among customers to leave a queue and go to another restaurant if the queue is too long.
5. Customers wait for different amounts of time at different restaurants (Dharmawirya, Oktadiana and Adi, 2012)
6. Gender of the respondents impacts the longest amount of time they are willing to wait in queues.
7. Overall, waiting time has a negative effect on customer satisfaction.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Waiting time at restaurants leads to lower customer satisfaction, which can make customers avoid a restaurant in the future.
- A comfortable waiting ambience and activities to keep customers occupied can help restaurants manage the wait better.
- Restaurants should encourage pre-booking and discourage walk-ins to reduce the waiting time.
- Efficiency of back-of-house operations can be increased to reduce the waiting time for restaurant customers.
- Technology (eg. Electronic screens) can be adopted to inform customers of the wait.

### REFERENCES

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