Study on Managerial Strategies in the HoReCa Industry from the Customer Perspective

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Abstract
This study is of particular importance because the HoReCa industry plays an extremely important role in economic and social development, and the analysis of management strategies from the customer perspective is necessary especially in the context of a market that is characterized by intense competition. To carry out the work, we used a questionnaire as a research tool and, based on the responses obtained, we analyzed customers' perceptions regarding their experience in HoReCa units. From the analysis of the results, we observed that customers place great emphasis on operational efficiency and human interaction, considering it necessary to reduce waiting time, improve staff behavior, but also access to lower prices. The success of businesses in the HoReCa industry depends on the existence of well-defined management strategies, but also on the ability of the staff to implement them, and to constantly adapt to consumer behavior that is constantly changing and to technological evolution.

Keywords: competition, customer perspective, managerial strategies.

1. Introduction

The HoReCa industry (Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes) represents one of the sectors that have an extremely important role in economic and social development. In this context, managerial strategies are essential factors for the success of the organization. According to Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, services are intangible and perishable, so customer experience management has become a critical success factor in the hospitality industry.
Consumer behavior has changed and the current customer is more informed and more demanding. [1] In the specialized literature there are several studies about consumer behavior and their perception of service quality, but also about the role of managers in this sector [2-7,8].
According to Porter, an organization's competitive advantage is obtained through differentiation, low cost or concentration strategies. These strategies can be applied in HoReCa units, where competition is intense and customer loyalty is an important strategic objective.
In HoReCa, success is not accidental. It is the result of [9]:
-constant measurement,
- correct interpretation,
-quick decisions,
- supported teams
Customer interaction, business promotion, and post-consumer service evaluation are important aspects that determine the delivery of quality services[10].
Also, building loyalty is a long process that takes time, but it only brings benefits because a happy customer means more sales. [11].

2. Materials and methods

In this paper, we analyzed the customers' perception of the managerial strategies implemented in the HoReCa industry (hotels, restaurants, cafes), and the research method we used was a questionnaire-based survey. The

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questionnaire included both closed questions and was structured in several directions: the respondent's profile, the perception of the quality of services and managerial strategies in the HoReCa industry.

3. Results and discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perception of customers and identify the factors that influence their satisfaction with the implementation of management strategies in the HoReCa industry. The questionnaire included several questions that reveal the respondent's profile.

From figure 1 it can be seen that 46% of the respondents are between 18-25 years old, 27% are between 26-35 years old, 16% are between 36-50 years old and 11% are over 50%.

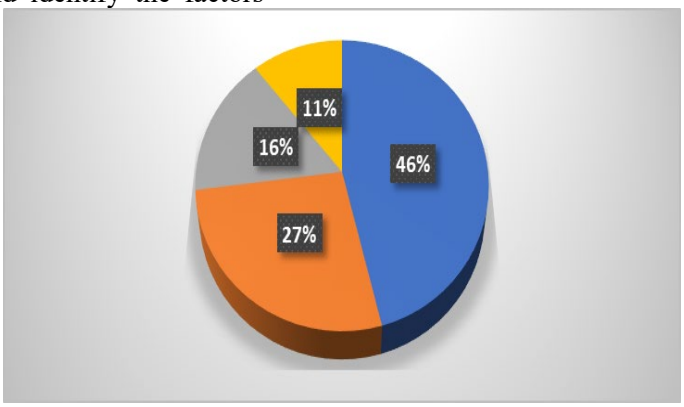

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by age

Regarding the gender of the respondents, we observe from figure 2 that 73% of the respondents were female and 27% were male. Women were willing to take the time to answer the questionnaire, while at the same time being interested in spending time with friends and family in HoReCa Industry establishments.

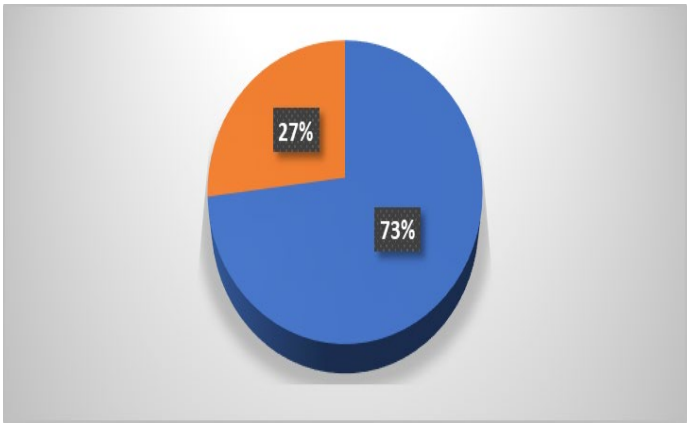

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by gender

From the analysis of the responses regarding the frequency of visits to HoReCa units, it is observed in figure 3 that 89% of respondents frequently used services from the HoReCa industry, 8% responded that they do not use them frequently and 3% responded that they cannot appreciate them. We note that most respondents have direct experience with this sector, being familiar with the services offered and can realistically appreciate the quality of services and the managerial strategies implemented.

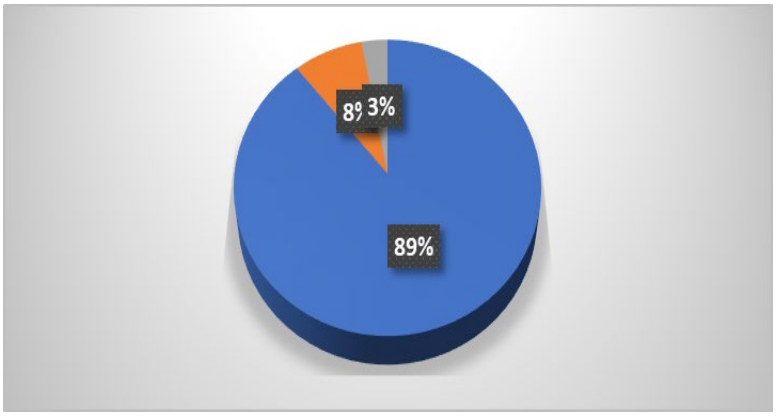

Figure 3. Distribution by frequency of visits

From figure 4 we can see that the majority of respondents (96%) consider service quality to be extremely important as one of the factors in the consumption decision, and 4% consider it not important.

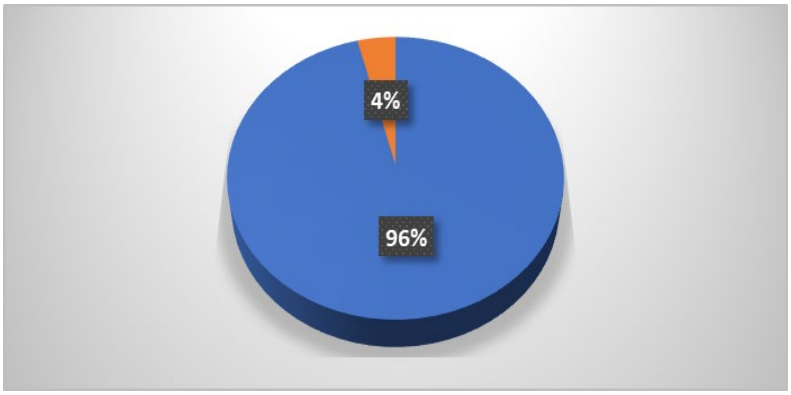

Figure 4. Distribution according to service quality

From figure 5 it can be seen that 93% of respondents consider that the kindness of employees in the HoReCa sector is an important factor, 5% answered that it is not a very important factor, and 2% cannot appreciate that this aspect influences their decision. We can see that the human resource in this sector plays a very important role in the customer experience

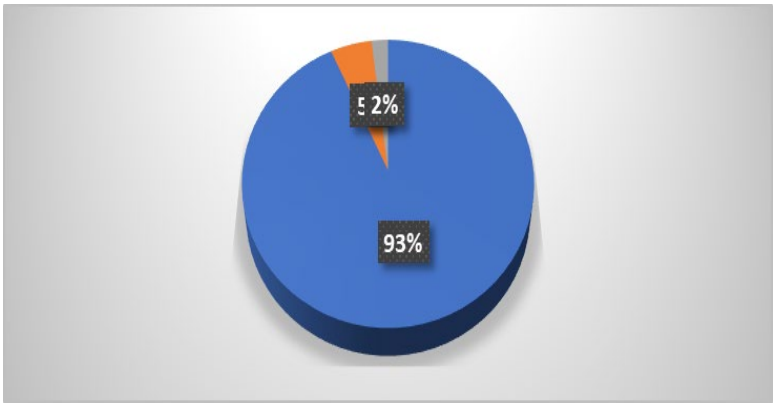

Figure 5. Distribution of respondents according to employee friendliness

From figure 6 it can be seen that cleanliness is also a very important aspect considered by 97% of respondents, and 3% do not consider this aspect an important factor. We can see that the majority of respondents are very demanding and consider their hygiene and safety to be very important and influence their decision to return to that location.

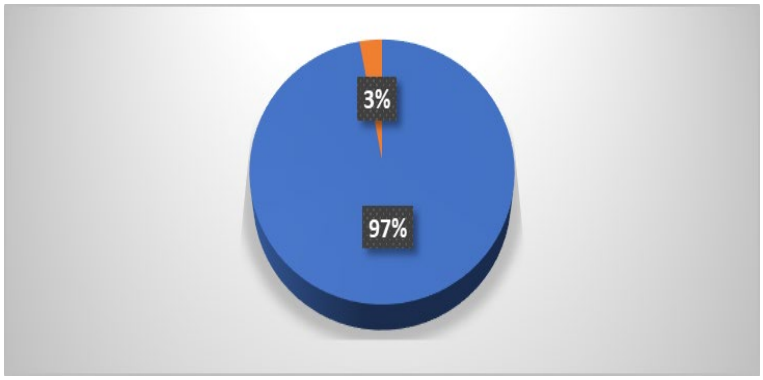

Figure 6. Distribution of responses after cleaning of the locations visited

Most respondents (92%) say that the quality-price ratio is very important, so in this sector it is necessary to implement a balanced pricing policy, 7% believe that the quality-price ratio is not important, and 1% cannot appreciate it because there are other influencing factors.

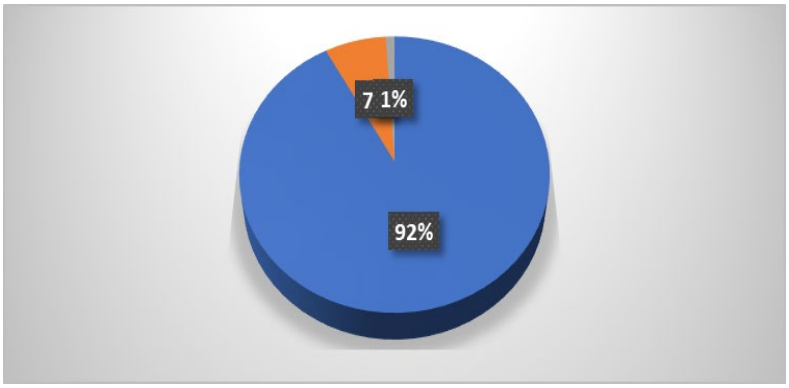

Figure 7. Distribution of answers according to quality-price ratio

The questionnaire also included a question on the influence of marketing strategies, namely how promotions influence the consumer decision. From figure 8 we can see that 72% of respondents believe that promotions influence their choice, which reflects a moderate impact of promotional strategies, and 28% of respondents are not influenced by promotional strategies.

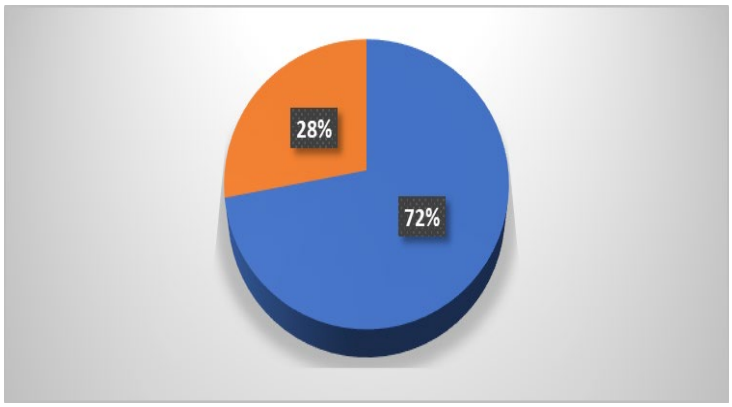

Figure 8. Distribution according to marketing strategies

Also, 84% of the people surveyed believe that recommendations influence their choice of a HoReCa establishment, and 16% stated that they are not influenced by recommendations on their consumption decision.
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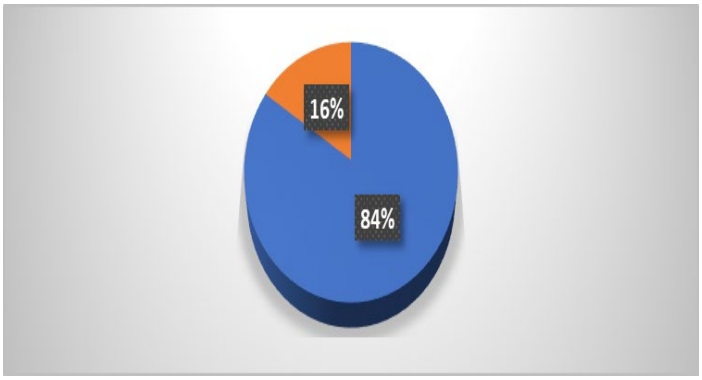

Figure 9. Distribution of responses by recommendations

From figure 10 it can be seen that the majority of respondents (71%) believe that managers in this sector are oriented towards meeting customer needs, while 29% believe that they are not oriented towards customer satisfaction.

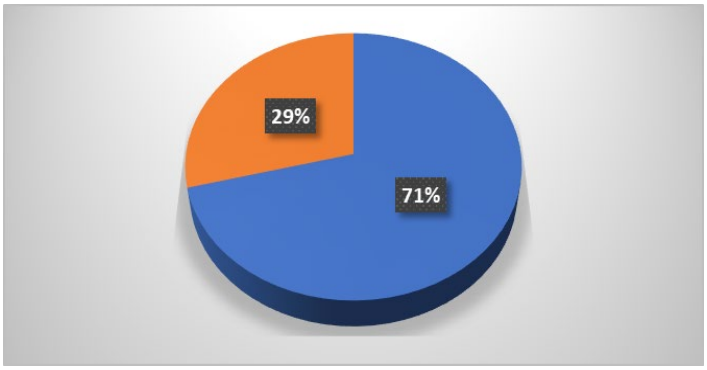

Figure 10. Distribution of responses by customer satisfaction orientation

From figure 11 it can be seen that 63% of respondents believe that customer feedback is taken into account, which indicates that more management strategies are implemented, but 37% believe that it is not taken into account, so there is room for improvement.

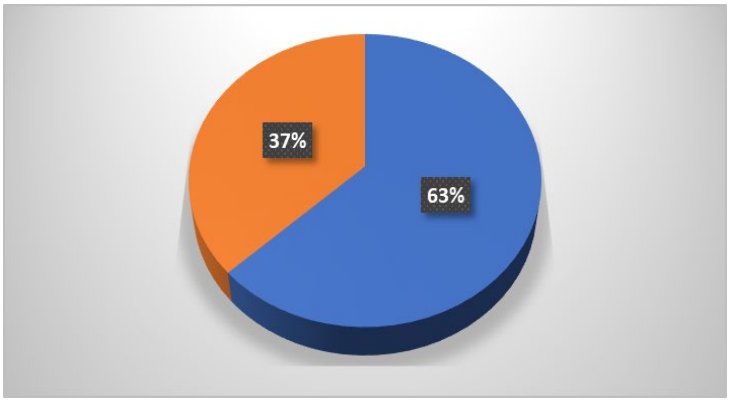

Figure 11. Distribution based on feedback

The results indicate that 78% of respondents believe that employees in this sector are well-prepared, as opposed to 22% of respondents who believe that they are not well-prepared, and managers should be concerned about this aspect.

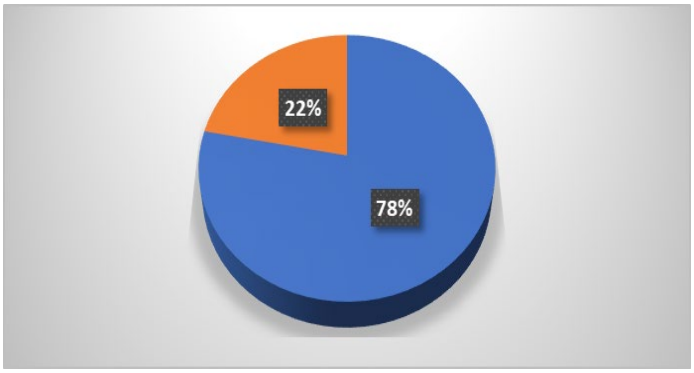

Figure 12. Distribution of answers after employee training

In figure 13 we can see the respondents' answers regarding their degree of satisfaction with the service, we see that 69% are satisfied, but there is also a percentage of 31% who are not satisfied with the service.

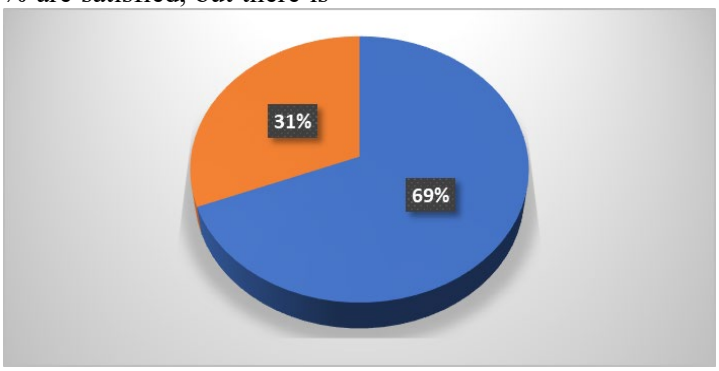

Figure 13. Distribution of answers regarding serving

From the responses obtained, we can observe a high level of professionalism, but the existence of negative responses indicates that there are variations between HoReCa units, a fact determined by the type of location or the level of management. From Figure 14 it can be seen that 75% of respondents believe that modern technologies (online reservations, digital menus, etc.) improve the customer experience, and 25% do not appreciate the technology as much.

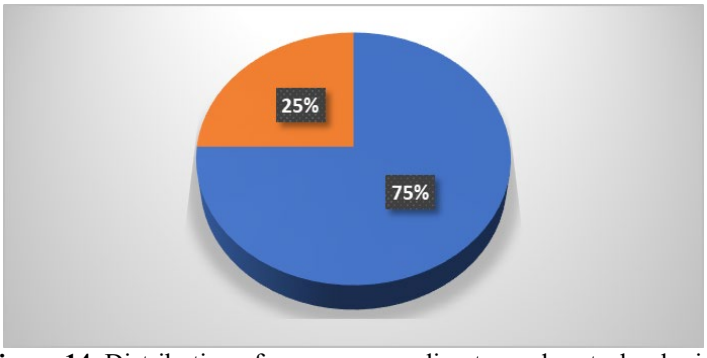

Figure 14. Distribution of answers according to modern technologies

From the analysis of the responses, we observe that 68% of respondents believe that the existence of loyalty programs influences their return to certain locations, and 32% responded that such programs do not cause them to become loyal.

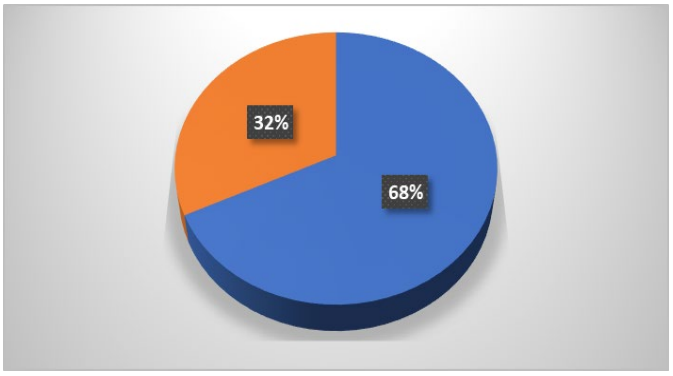

Figure 15. Distribution of responses by loyalty

At the same time, the majority of respondents (87%) consider the atmosphere to be an extremely important factor, unlike 13% of respondents who answered that it is not important.

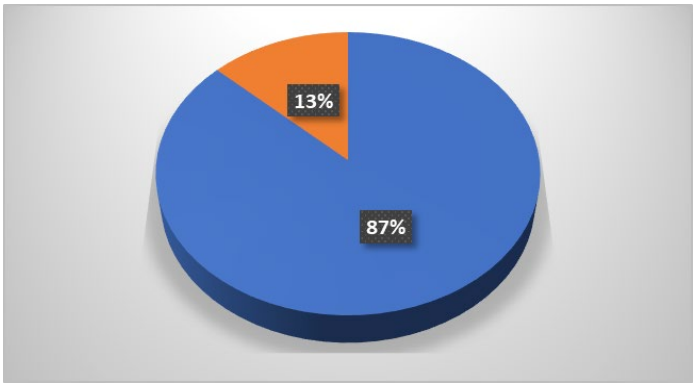

Figure 16. Distribution depending on the atmosphere in the location

From figure 17 we observe that 96% of respondents would recommend a HoReCa unit, if they are satisfied, and 4% answered no.

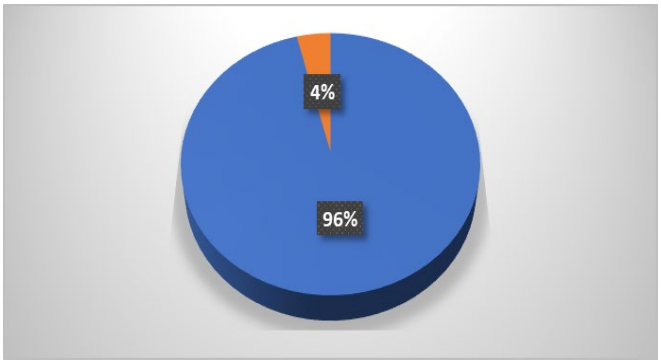

Figure 17. Distribution of responses according to recommendations

From the figure 18, we see that 86% of respondents believe that online reservations help them and thus they can more easily access services in HoReCa units, 12% answered no, and 2% did not use access to such units through online reservations.

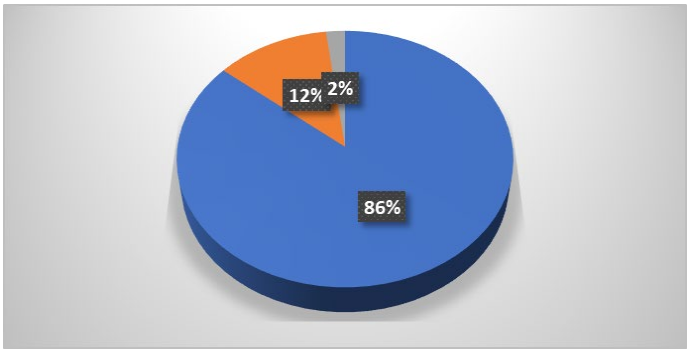

Figure 18. Distribution of responses based on online reservations

From figure 19 we observe that 89% of respondents consider the role of management to be essential, influencing satisfaction, and 11% consider it not important.

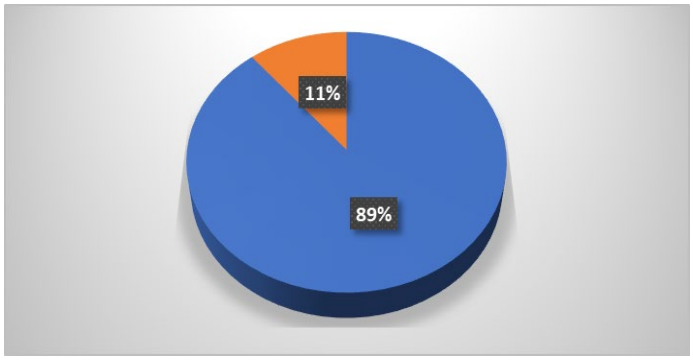

Figure 19. Distribution of answers by management role

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we analyzed customer perceptions of the management strategies applied in HoReCa units and identified the factors that influenced and led to the loyalty of the respondents.

After analyzing the answers given by the respondents, we observed that the majority appreciate the quality of the services offered, the professionalism of the human resources in this sector, the cleanliness of these locations, but also the quality-price ratio, all of which are extremely important factors in choosing a HoReCa unit.

The respondents appreciated the customer-oriented attitude and considered that the management strategies have a very great impact on the customer experience.

Most respondents are willing to recommend and return to a location when they believe it offers quality services. Customers also appreciate modern technologies, the modernization of loyalty programs and all the factors that lead to increased satisfaction.

Following the results obtained, we can observe that the success of organizations in the HoReCa industry depends on the implementation of management strategies oriented towards the needs and desires of customers, and the training of human resources, compliance with quality standards, and investment in modern technologies represent extremely important directions in increasing competitiveness.

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