



THE TREND OF “EATING OUT” AND RESTAURANT SERVICES: CASE STUDY OF SAMARKAND CITY

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Abstract: The article deals with the issues of improving the quality of life of the population, the qualitative development of the service sector, including the restaurant business. The development of restaurant services is substantiated as an indicator of improving the quality of life of the population and a stimulus for the growth of expenses associated with eating out.

Key words: public catering, consumer preference, service cape, restaurant services, recipes, average check



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INTRODUCTION

In improving and enhancing the standard of living and well-being of the population, alongside external environmental factors, the role of quality nutrition is truly invaluable. As a process that meets physiological needs, nutrition has a positive impact on individuals' age, gender, type of activity, health, and work capacity. Moreover, food and various dishes and beverages prepared from diverse products serve as the primary resource base for human physical activity (Nasirov, 2013). On the one hand, this involves the consumption of material goods, and on the other, it supports the restoration of the population's labor capacity or workforce, playing a vital role in both physical and spiritual development.

The public catering sector, on the one hand, allows for the saving of time resources associated with meal preparation at home, promotes the rational use of food products, and ensures the organization of nutritious and balanced meals for the

population. On the other hand, by organizing out-of-home dining, it expands individuals' opportunities for leisure and recreation. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, extensive reforms are being implemented to improve the quality of life, enhance the quality development of service sectors, including the restaurant business, and strengthen the sector's material and technical base with innovative technologies to increase its competitiveness. In this regard, measures are being taken for the "...rapid development of the service sector,... and a fundamental transformation of the range of services provided, especially through the inclusion of modern, high-tech types." Therefore, public catering entities not only serve to meet people's physiological needs but also address social needs related to hosting cultural, business, and family events.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Role and Importance of Restaurants in Improving Living Standards Research aimed at highlighting the role and significance of restaurant services in improving the population's living standards has focused on developing an effective marketing mix for restaurants and improving their marketing strategies (Ramadhan, R.N, 2017). Special attention has been given to service landscapes in restaurants, such as establishing themed restaurants and opening national-style establishments (e.g., Japanese-style) by individualizing service types (Oktavina Dia Puspita, 2015). Studies have also emphasized the efficiency, transaction costs, and their optimization in the food service sector, which is considered a key link in domestic trade (Abdukarimov, 2013). Moreover, it has been suggested that the improvement of organizational and economic mechanisms to increase efficiency in public catering enterprises must be studied based on national characteristics, with services categorized according to the population's cultural and national specifics (T.S. Sharipov, 2011).

Attention has also been given to managing service quality in restaurants (S. Safoyeva, 2009), developing marketing programs for the restaurant service sector (Ibodov, 2022), and improving competitive strategies aimed at ensuring competitive advantages by optimally aligning restaurant resources and market opportunities (Ibodov, 2024; Ibodov, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a combination of induction and deduction, average quantitative measures, grouping, social surveys, questionnaires, and logical analysis methods. To present the research results in a comprehensive and cohesive manner, tables and figures were utilized. The research methodology is based on the hypothesis that when a customer places an order outside the predetermined service levels outlined in the dish's recipe, this creates a form of material utility, which can, in turn, improve the population's quality of life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The expansion of market relations and the intensification of competitive struggle compel public catering enterprises to attract customers, achieve business

success, and ensure competitiveness by enhancing the quality of services provided and fundamentally improving service processes based on customer preferences.

The development of restaurant services is primarily explained by the growing demand for the quality and composition of services offered by public catering enterprises and the increasing individualization of customer needs and demands in line with quality principles. On the other hand, the high-speed qualitative development of the catering network and the organization of production based on efficient models foster the formation of consumption habits that increase utility. This is reflected in the rising tendency of consumers to place customized orders beyond the standard service levels specified in dish recipes, leading to individualized meal preparation and an increase in added value.

One of the prominent trends in the development of restaurant services is the proliferation of national cuisines, the improvement of restaurant service quality, and the growth of affordable, fast-service restaurants with distinctive service landscapes offering services accessible to all social segments. As an integral part of the service sector, restaurant services possess unique economic and social functions (Figure 1).

Economic function	Social function
• development of recreational and hordiq release infrastructure; • promote the development of related infrastructures such as road surface, transport, trade sector; • Participation in the formation of GDP; • increase tax revenues to local budgets; • promoting the employment of the population (especially women)	• formation of consumer culture of the population; • formation of consumer dishes of the population; • Organization of a healthy diet; • formation of gastronomic tourism infrastructure; • the development of international relations serves as a kind of bridge; • expression of the historical and national-cultural values of the country; • Organization of a healthy lifestyle of the population; • ensuring the harmony of economic entities, population, family members

Figure 1. The Socio-Economic Functions of the Restaurant Services Sector

With the continuous rise in living standards in our country, the growth rate of the public catering sector has also been accelerating. A clear indicator of this trend is the increase in household expenditures related to out-of-home dining over the past 10 years, as well as the rising number of food service establishments per 1,000 people.

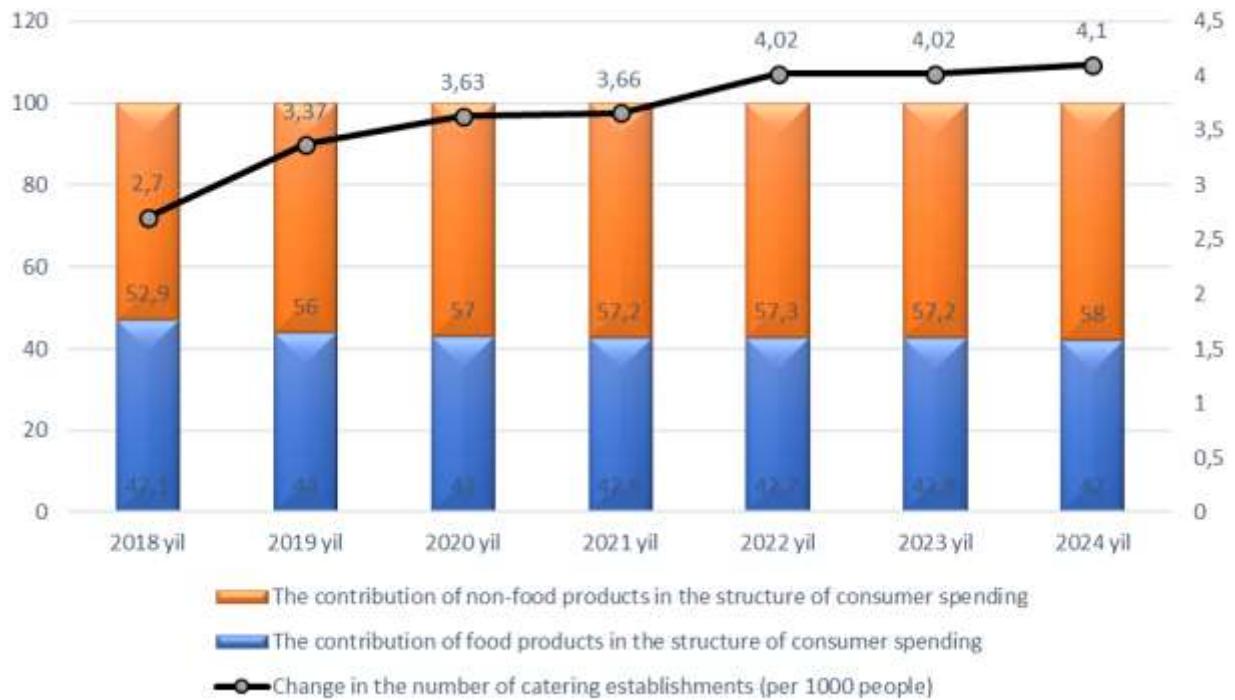


Figure 2. Dynamics of Per Capita Consumer Expenditures and Number of Restaurants in the Republic of Uzbekistan

According to statistical data, the real income levels of the population in our republic have been steadily increasing year by year. Analyzing by region, the average monthly income per capita in 2024 was highest in Tashkent city (9.1 million UZS), followed by Navoi (6.7 million UZS), Tashkent region (5.1 million UZS), Andijan (4.6 million UZS), and Bukhara (4.3 million UZS). Meanwhile, relatively lower figures were recorded in Kashkadarya (3.8 million UZS), Surkhandarya (3.8 million UZS), and Namangan (3.9 million UZS).

In terms of real income growth rates, the highest increases were observed in Tashkent city (15.4%), Navoi (7.9%), Tashkent region (6.4%), Samarkand (5.3%), Andijan (4.8%), Khorezm (4.7%), Syrdarya (3.7%), Kashkadarya (3.2%), Bukhara (2.4%), Karakalpakstan Republic (2.4%), Jizzakh (2%), Fergana (1.1%), Namangan (0.5%), and Surkhandarya (0.2%).

When analyzing Uzbekistan's inflation indicators for 2024, the following trends were noted: prices for rice fell slightly (between 2.3–2.4%), first-grade wheat flour dropped by 1.3%, while rice and rice bran saw a sharper decrease of 6.3%. On the other hand, significant price increases were observed for cucumbers (52.7%), tomatoes (22.4%), and onions (5.7%).

Despite the fact that general living standards remain below the average in certain regions, the price levels in restaurant and café-type food establishments across the country remain noticeably high and are primarily targeted toward population segments with above-average incomes. Nevertheless, local cafés and national eateries also exist, where the average check size is relatively lower. In Uzbekistan's largest cities, such as Tashkent and Samarkand, the average daily expenditure on dining-related services is as follows:

Table 2. Average Purchase Price of Selected Dining-Related Services in Tashkent and Samarkand Cities

Types of services	Average price
Lunch in a restaurant in the average price segment	62 700,0
Fast food restaurants (McDonalds or similar	29 900,0
Lunch in national cuisines	40 000,0
Cool drinks (Coca-Cola/Pepsi (0.5 l))	6 840,0
Lunch in ordinary cafes	18000,0 -23000,0
Tea, coffee	2000,0 – 5300,0

The majority of the population in our country prefers to organize meal preparation and consumption at home. This is considered a significantly economical approach, as food products grown in local household plots or purchased from farmers' markets are relatively inexpensive, with ample opportunities to benefit from discounts. Accordingly, especially in rural areas, organizing meals at home is viewed as the most cost-effective option. This can also be observed in the data presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Analysis of the Average Market Price of Selected Commonly Used Food Products in Daily Life in Samarkand City

Food products	Average price	5 servings of spent product for pilaf, som
Vegetable oil (1 kg)	20240,0	(0,5) 10120,0
Bread (1 piece)	3000,0-4200,0	(1,0) 4200,0
Rice, (1 kg)	21500,0	(1,0) 21500,0
Beef (1 kg)	110000,0	(0,5) 55000,0
Onion (1 kg)	4500,0	(1,0)4500,0
Carrots (1 kg)	3000,0	(1,0)3000,0
Tomatoes (1 kg)	21 000,00	(0,5) 10000,0
Cucumber (1 kg)	9800,0	(1,0) 9800,0
Drinking water, (1.5 l)	3534,0	(1,5) 3534,0
Total		121654,0
1 serving price		24330,8

Based on the data from Table 3, we can also calculate the cost price of preparing lunch or dinner for ourselves according to a specific recipe. Within the framework of this study, we will review the calculation of plov (Uzbek national dish) based on Recipe No. 480 (Ibodov, 2024). The calculations have been carried out according to the standard norms designed for all types of restaurants and public catering enterprises (see Table 4).

Table 4. Calculation of Plov (Uzbek National Dish) Based on Recipe No. 480 Using Current Market Prices [4]

Product names			price, kg / sum	spent per 1 serving, sum	5 servings, sum	per serving, sum
	netto	brutto				
Beef (thigh and thigh)	162	119	110000	17820	89100	
Rice	670	670	21500	1440,5	7202,5	
Cottonseed oil	150	150	19200	288	1440	
Onion	180	150	4500	81	405	
Carrots	190	150	3000	57	285	
Total	1352	1239		19686,5	98432,5	19686,5
<i>Savdo ustamasi, 52%</i>					149617,4	
<i>Xizmat haqi, 10,0%</i>					164579,1	
Total					164579,1	32916,8

Analyses show that the price difference between home-cooked meals and restaurant-prepared meals amounts to +26.1%. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this price difference in restaurants primarily arises from the intention to increase the utility level of consumption, as customers place customized orders beyond the standard service level specified in the dish's recipe. This leads to individualized service and an increase in added value.

It is evident that the development of modern dining service infrastructure, the organization of rational nutrition, and the transformation of the public catering sector into the restaurant services sector as one of the strategic industries provide the necessary foundation for the establishment and delivery of modern restaurant services, making this a growing requirement of today's society.

CONCLUSION

In Uzbekistan, the increase in household monetary incomes and economic activity is expected to lead, in the future, to a rise in consumer spending on out-of-home dining, a decrease in the average per capita check size, an increase in the number of chain restaurants, and a growing frequency of the population's visits to mass-market restaurants.

Amid changing consumption patterns, in a country home to over 120 nationalities and ethnic groups, innovations in the consumption process are driving the popularization of national cuisines (Caucasian, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Uyghur cuisines, among others). This, in turn, is leading to growing demand for restaurant services.

As the opportunity to customize orders beyond the standard service level in restaurant recipes expands, the population is increasingly associating the dining

process with cultural, business, family, and celebratory events. This creates new forms of material utility.

Improving the quality of food-related services provided to the population will help ensure the transformation of this sector into a full-fledged restaurant services industry.

These proposals, taken together, will enable the restaurant services sector to become one of the key areas for improving the population's quality of life in the future.

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