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The role of culinary aesthetics in driving customer loyalty: An empirical study of gastronomic experiences

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Abstract
The research investigates the influence of food aesthetics on the satisfaction and loyalty of customers in the gastronomic scene of the state of Uttar Pradesh. A structured questionnaire was the means used to collect the opinions of the diners on the influence of visual presentation, plating, and overall aesthetic appeal on their quality of food perception, satisfaction with the dining experience, and intention to return. It was found that the aesthetics of food have an extraordinarily strong effect on the perception of the customers, but the effect on satisfaction and loyalty is only slight (R^2 = 0.058-0.071) in some cases where the relationships are negative. Highly elaborate or very stylized presentations may result in a drop in satisfaction; hence, it is important to not only present the food attractively but also to concentrate on the areas of authenticity, taste, and emotional involvement. The study points out that there is a weak but statistically significant negative correlation (r = -0.226, p< 0.05), which indicates that loyalty eventually is more about consistency, comfort, and emotional connection than visual novelty. The incorporation of aesthetics with service quality, food excellence, and cultural storytelling can, the study asserts, create unforgettable dining experiences and thus offer practical guidance to restaurateurs looking to enhance customer retention and brand value.

Keywords: Culinary aesthetics, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, gastronomic experiences

1. Introduction
The global hospitality and food service industry is changing at a rapid pace, and with the importance of culinary aesthetics increasing, the concept of culinary art has made its way beyond traditional borders. Where earlier the art of gastronomy was mainly linked to taste and smell, today, the whole food experience is a multi-sensory one, and customers can savor not only the visual but also the tactile, aromatic, auditory, and even the emotional resonance of the dish. Food has transformed from mere survival or energy consumption into art, culture, identity, and creativity proclamation. The full-demanding consumer for a more quality gastronomic experience has influenced the whole industry- chefs must change their menu design, restaurants must revamp customer engagement, and so forth. Consequently, culinary aesthetics, i.e., the visual and sensory presentation of food, has become one of the leading factors in customer satisfaction and loyalty (Breiby, 2018) [2].
Consumers are getting increasingly demanding and are after nothing less than perfect dining experiences. The visual appeal of the food is usually the first thing that influences their perception and sets their expectations. The way the food is served, the colors used, the plate arrangement, and the decoration of the room influence the guests' senses and thus the total gastronomic experience. In modern gastronomy, aesthetics is not only about decorating the food; they are the artist's means of telling the story, expressing the creativity, and sharing the feelings. This transformation is correlated with the present-day cultural shift to experiential consumption, where dining is no longer about eating but rather an inclusive cultural and emotional experience that engrosses the consumer (Sari, 2024) [22].
Customer loyalty has always been considered the foundation of business success, and in this case, it is now so intricately linked to the perceived aesthetic and emotional value of dining experiences that it is hard to draw a line between them.

Aesthetic experience-based loyalty is not only emotional but also extraordinarily strong compared to price-based or transactional loyalty. Customers who are captivated by the beauty of the culinary arts and who derive joy, inspiration, and satisfaction from it are the ones who will keep coming back, spreading the word, and even supporting the brand. This shift in thinking primarily calls for a study to be conducted to find out how much of an impact culinary aesthetics have on customer loyalty in the age of experiential marketing and digital gastronomy.

1.1 Conceptualizing Culinary Aesthetics

Culinary aesthetics refers to the sensory and artistic aspects of food decoration that are extremely attractive to human senses, sight, smell, and texture, and stimulate a psychological and emotional reaction. It covers many areas such as the design of the plating, color usage, the arrangement of ingredients, the portions, and even the choice of plates. Besides that, the food's visual appeal takes the diner not just to the plate but also to the restaurant's interior, lighting, music, and service rituals that, when combined, create an integrated sensory experience for the customer and are perhaps the intended phenomena in the first place.

The 21st-century food world is mostly guided by the aesthetic principles of balance, harmony, proportion, and contrast, which come from fine arts and are adapted to the culinary field. The aesthetic value of food is not arbitrary, but it is purposefully employed to evoke emotions and to convey cultural or story meanings. A case in point, minimalist plating may convey the message of elegance and purity, whereas colorful, intricate presentations may signal the opposite, i.e., richness and festivity. Culinary aesthetics are therefore, a semiotic language that helps to signal the values, identity, and cultural narratives that are communicated to the consumers (Lee, 2022) [17].

1.2 Gastronomic Experiences as a Framework

Gastronomic experiences can be characterized as the combination of sensory, emotional, and cultural encounters that a diner goes through during the entire dining process. It is a multifaceted concept where the quality of food, service, ambiance, aesthetics, and emotional satisfaction interact. Modern gastronomical experiences are not limited to the consumption dimension; they have performance, participatory, and symbolic aspects. The modern consumer demands authenticity, storytelling, and multisensory involvement, which is why dining out is considered an act of sharing one's point of view and exploring the culture. For example, Pine and Gilmore (1999) [20] in The Experience Economy claim that companies that focus on creating memorable experiences rather than just selling products or services can establish strong and lasting relationships with their customers. This, when applied to the dining sector, means that the more beautiful and emotionally engaging the dining experience is, the more powerful it will be in creating customer loyalty. A perfectly designed gastronomic experience will stimulate memory, pleasure, and identification, which are the main factors that lead to loyalty.

The aesthetic experience in gastronomy operates through both hedonic and symbolic dimensions. The hedonic dimension pertains to pleasure, enjoyment, and sensory delight, while the symbolic dimension relates to meaning, identity, and social belonging. Aesthetic dining allows customers to express taste, class, and lifestyle. Thus, culinary aesthetics becomes a vehicle through which customers construct self-image and cultural affiliation, making loyalty not only emotional but also symbolic.

1.3 Customer Loyalty in the Gastronomic Context

Customer loyalty is the word that describes it. In the past, it was simply through the consumers' buying patterns and their positive words about the product or service that the brand was considered loyal; however, nowadays, the issue of loyalty has changed a lot with the advent of experiential and aesthetic consumption. The concept of loyalty now involves both attitudinal and behavioral aspects. Attitudinal loyalty is the invisible side of the iceberg that represents the emotional bond and the redeemed trust, whereas behavioral loyalty is the iceberg's visible side that shows through return visits and even speaking support. The hospitality world must deal with a tricky situation in this respect, as it is a subjective, fleeting, and multi-faceted nature where consumer experiences might vary from one customer to another and from one time to another.

In fine dining, loyalty is the product of the collaboration of the two types of elements: the material and the non-material; that is, the quality of the food, the way the dish is presented, the atmosphere, the service, and the customer's emotional connection to the brand or the place. Loyalty is the outcome of the customer's perception of the brand's or the establishment's constant aesthetic and emotional satisfaction over time. This loyalty goes beyond the sphere of logical reasoning and becomes an emotional attachment to the brand's identity and aesthetic philosophy.

Aesthetics have recently been claimed in studies as one of the main factors that can lead to loyalty in the consumer through a higher perceived value, satisfaction, and more distinct brands. For instance, visually stunning dishes can not only make the customers think that the food is of high quality, but also, the eating environment can be very uplifting if it is aesthetically united, which, in turn, helps to create and strengthen the intention to return.

1.4 The Intersection of Aesthetics, Emotion, and Loyalty

The aesthetic experience of food is very much linked to the emotional mechanisms. Neuroscientific and psychological studies confirm that the brain's reward centers are stimulated by the food's visual beauty, and as a result, pleasure and satisfaction are felt. Besides the fact that good-looking food is the attraction of customers, it also works as a signal that the restaurant wants to engage all the senses of the customers. The emotional response that accompanies or even enhances the latter's perception of the meal strengthens the whole experience and the customer is more likely to recall it, thus being positively influenced in terms of his/her future behavioral intentions.

Among the emotions responsible for loyalty are joy, surprise, and curiosity. The aesthetic factors that either evoke or magnify emotional bond like creative presentation, narrative storytelling, or put-togetherness of all senses are the factors that turn good times into forever moments. The emotional waste left behind is the major reason for customer loyalty as they associate pleasant feelings with restaurants or chefs. Therefore, both aesthetic and emotional gratifications are the twin factors of loyalty formation that are dependent

on each other and that support each other in their formation process.

There is empirical evidence to support the customer beauty appreciation and satisfaction relationship, where satisfaction is the mediator between the quality of experience and loyalty. The customers are loyal not only to the food but also to the feeling associated with the consumption time. The 'wow factor' of aesthetics introduces a new and pleasurable experience that will lead customers not only to stay but also to become advocates of the brand based on their emotional tie.

2. Significance of Study

This is an incredibly important investigation, both for ethical reasons and for practical ones. It has been stated that aesthetics is usually the major reason for people's loyalty, thereby giving a solid base to the entire field of sensory marketing, experiential consumption, and hospitality management. Furthermore, it has also revealed the existing models of service experience by bringing in the visual and emotional facets of gastronomy. The results will be considerable help to the owners of restaurants, chefs, and marketers in their quest for ways to keep customers coming back. The revelation that loyalty is not only acquired through tasty food or cheap prices but also through sensory creativity gives one an edge in a competitive market. There is a change going on in the restaurant industry, where customers are increasingly influenced by the look and feel of the places, and therefore, mastering the skill of beautiful presentation may give one an edge that is not only temporary but also lasting.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Culinary Aesthetics and Perception

Culinary aesthetics represents the combination of the four basic senses - visual, olfactory, auditory, and spatial - that eventually shape the dining experience. One of the main visual design elements is the color contrast, through which the texture, arrangement, and plating options all contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the dish, thereby affecting anticipation and satisfaction (Spence, 2020; Korsmeyer, 2019) [23, 14]. The studies conducted in the field of sensory marketing show that customers are more likely to have a positive view of the food presentation that is very attractive to the eyes, even prior to tasting it, which indicates the very close connection between vision and taste perception (Harrington *et al.*, 2018) [9].

Smell and freshness are the olfactory cues, the former being the intensity of aromas, and the latter is the sizzle of cooking or the overall sound of the restaurant; all these together are the auditory stimuli that assist the sensory interaction of the diners (Krishna, 2012) [16]. The spatial ambience, which includes lighting, décor, tableware, and seating arrangement, reinforces the aesthetic impression created by the visuals and the senses, thus establishing a combined aesthetic environment (Bitner, 1992) [1]. These factors, in unison, not only determine the immediate perception of quality and taste but also create the expectation of overall satisfaction and the chance of getting a higher price (Gomez *et al.*, 2021) [6].

The multisensory aspect of dining has been accentuated in many studies and shown as the reason people consider eating just a way to take in a whole experience. Among others, Plassmann *et al.* (2008) [21] revealed that the neural responses to taste can be influenced by the visual presentation, and thus, indicators, such as aesthetics, have a more powerful impact on cognitive and affective evaluations of food. In a similar trend, the research carried out in a modern restaurant setting finds that the flavor, novelty, and value associated with dishes marked by elaborate plating or thematic design are amplified, hence repeat patronage is also influenced (Ryu & Han, 2010) [25]. Such findings affirm the role of culinary aesthetics as an underlying factor due to its predominant attentiveness.

3.2 Emotional Engagement and Experience

Experiential consumption is a theory that explains the aesthetics in dining. The implementation of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) [20] Experience Economy model claims that the customers must be engaged emotionally, intellectually, or sensorially, so memorable experiences take place. In the context of entertaining through food, aesthetic involvement has a significant role in bringing forth emotional reactions of delight, surprise, and even nostalgia, which thus elevates the personal importance of the dining occasion (Hwang & Ok, 2013) [11]. Although aesthetics is considered a crucial factor, the main ones that finally determine overall satisfaction are social and contextual aspects. For example, the research done on luxurious restaurant and café experiences supports the claim that aesthetic coherence from dish presentation to interior decorating strengthens emotional immersion and, thus, the perception of authenticity and sophistication (Oh *et al.*, 2007; Kim *et al.*, 2015) [18, 12]. Emotional involvement then becomes the mediating factor between sensory satisfaction and loyalty, implying that the culinary aesthetics' ability to elicit positive feelings has a direct influence on customer retention and referrals (Carù & Cova, 2007) [4]. Furthermore, the emotional bond is regarded as the strongest; the truth is that the bond is via identity and self-expression; foodies always associate visually stunning dishes with such personal values as refinement, artistry, or lifestyle aspirations. The connection suggests that culinary aesthetics are not merely about hedonistic enjoyment but also encompass symbolic and emotional aspects, thus the effect on long-term relational outcomes with the restaurant brand.

3.3 Aesthetics, Brand Image, and Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a complex concept that includes various aspects such as feelings, thoughts, and actions (Oliver, 1999) [19]. Companies need to know customers' feelings and satisfaction but also must be careful in their signaling of the brand. It is only through these factors that loyalty can be claimed. Choi & Mattila (2008) [5] state that customers have attitudinal and behavioral loyalty if restaurants continuously integrate aesthetic excellence into their core offerings, for example, by employing signature plating, thematic décor, or even curating sensory experiences.

Studies on the consumer behavior of dining out indicate that when the food, service, and environment are aesthetically congruent, not only is the brand image enhanced, but also the trust and emotional attachment that the customer has with the brand is strengthened (Walls *et al.*, 2011) [24]. For instance, restaurants that artistically present their dishes and have good ambience design report a higher percentage of customer retention, referral, and their customers being willing to pay more (Han & Ryu, 2009) [8]. Likewise, cafés and casual dining restaurants that are branded with thematic aspects such as playful plating or even Instagrammable

setups can attract customers with their visual appeal and become differentiated in the market. Thus, culinary aesthetics serve as a functional and symbolic mechanism at the same time, connecting sensory pleasure with the brand perception and making the customer loyal. This only shows that aesthetic innovation is not simply a way of making things look good, but rather it is a strategic way of manipulating customer behavior, keeping the competitive advantage, and building long-term brand equity in the hospitality industry.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the impact of culinary aesthetics on customer satisfaction.
- To analyze the influence of aesthetic dining experiences on customer loyalty.
- To examine the impact of visual presentation and plating aesthetics on customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction.
- To assess the relationship between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty in the restaurant industry.

5. Hypothesis of the Study

- **H_1:** There is a significant impact of culinary aesthetics on customer satisfaction.
- **H_2:** There is a significant influence of aesthetic dining experiences on customer loyalty.
- **H_3:** There is a significant impact of visual presentation and plating aesthetics on customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction.
- **H_4:** There is a significant relationship between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty in the restaurant industry.

6. Methodology: The research is taking place in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India's most populous and one of the most culturally rich states, which are popular due to its different and delicious foods and lively and rich flavors of food culture. The cities of Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur, Agra, and Noida are the places where food is most appreciated, and a very wide range of dining options is offered, from the most common street food and local diners to the most sophisticated fine-dining and fusion restaurants. The target group includes adults 18 and older who often eat out or order prepared meals, representing a wide variety of the state's socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, urban areas, and even some rural areas. Out of the broad population, 80 participants will be chosen through a combination of stratified purposive and convenience sampling, ensuring that the population across age, gender, income levels, and dining preferences is represented, while at the same time focusing on the individuals with firsthand experience of the different foods.

The study uses an explanatory quantitative research design, adopting a questionnaire technique with a 5-point Likert scale to measure the perception of culinary aesthetics, sensory engagement, emotional satisfaction, and their influence on customer loyalty systematically. The main data source will be the respondents from major urban areas, who will be asked about the visual presentation, ambience, aroma, texture, and multisensory dining elements. The collected data will be processed through SPSS and Microsoft Excel using frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression analysis techniques to find out the relationship between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty, discover trends, and create useful suggestions for the restaurant and the hotel management in Uttar Pradesh.

7. Results

7.1 Result based on Demographics

Table 1: "Descriptive Statistics"

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	80	1	5	3.11	1.475
Gender	80	1	2	1.48	.503
Educational Qualification	80	1	5	3.03	1.340
Occupation	80	1	5	2.69	1.463
Monthly Income	80	1	5	3.01	1.278
Frequency of Dining Out	80	1	5	2.80	1.400
Valid N (Listwise)	80				

The descriptive stats show that the age group of the respondents is around the average of the middle category (Mean = 3.11), indicating a very fair age distribution. In terms of gender, the representation is equal (Mean = 1.48). Most of the respondents have average (Mean = 3.03) educational qualifications and are in the middle (Mean = 2.69) occupational category. Their income and dining out habits (Means = 3.01 and 2.80, respectively) point to them being a middle-income group that occasionally goes out for meals.

Table 2: Demographics Statistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	18-25 years	16	20.0	20.0	20.0
	26-35 years	14	17.5	17.5	37.5
	36-45 years	15	18.8	18.8	56.3
	46-55 years	15	18.8	18.8	75.0
	Above 55 years	20	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
Gender	Male	42	52.5	52.5	52.5
	Female	38	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
Education Qualification	High School	11	13.8	13.8	13.8

	Undergraduate	22	27.5	27.5	41.3
	Postgraduate	16	20.0	20.0	61.3
	Doctorate	16	20.0	20.0	81.3
	Others	15	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
Occupation	Student	23	28.7	28.7	28.7
	Employed	18	22.5	22.5	51.2
	Business	14	17.5	17.5	68.8
	Homemaker	11	13.8	13.8	82.5
	Retired	14	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
Monthly Income	Less than 20,000	10	12.5	12.5	12.5
	20,001-40,000	21	26.3	26.3	38.8
	40,001-60,000	20	25.0	25.0	63.7
	60,000-80,000	16	20.0	20.0	83.8
	More than 80,000	13	16.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Dining Out	Rarely	18	22.5	22.5	22.5
	Occasionally	20	25.0	25.0	47.5
	Monthly	15	18.8	18.8	66.3
	Weekly	14	17.5	17.5	83.8
	More than once a week	13	16.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

The demographic analysis conducted on the 80 respondents presents a heterogeneous sample of different ages, genders, education, professions, incomes, and dining habits. The age distribution portrays a well-balanced pattern, with the largest segment being people older than 55 years (25%), followed by 18-25 years (20%), and then all the other age groups having almost the same participation, which shows that people from all the generations were involved in the study. The gender ratio is almost 1:1, males being 52.5% and females 47.5%, which is a clear indication of gender neutrality. The educational levels differ, with most of the respondents being undergraduates (27.5%), postgraduates (20%), or PhD (20%), while 13.8% have completed high school and 18.8% belong to the other category; this indicates the presence of a moderately educated sample. Most of the students occupy the respondents (28.7%), followed by employed (22.5%), businesspersons (17.5%), retirees (17.5%), and homemakers (13.8%); thus, working, and non-working people are represented. The monthly income is mostly in the middle (₹20,001-60,000) with 51.3% falling in this category and smaller percentages in the lower (<₹20,000) and higher (>₹60,000) categories, thus, a predominantly middle-income group is shown. The frequency of dining out indicates that the respondents mostly dine out occasionally (25%) or rarely (22.5%), and only a few of them can be categorized as dining weekly or more than once a week (33.8%), implying that there is a moderate engagement in the dining experiences. In conclusion, the sample has a good representation of the demographic that is needed to study consumer behavior and lifestyle patterns.

7.2 Results based on Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant impact of culinary aesthetics on customer satisfaction.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.267[a]	.071	.059	.68744	.071	5.980	1	78	.017
a. Predictors: (Constant), Culinary Aesthetics									

Based on the model summary, it can be concluded that culinary aesthetics has a slight but positive relationship with the dependent variable, as the R value of 0.267 indicates. The R^2 value of 0.071 means that about 7.1% of the variance in the dependent variable is attributed to culinary aesthetics, which is, thus, illustrating a small effect size. The adjusted R^2 (0.059) adjusts for the sample size and reinforces the point that predictive power is limited but statistically relevant. The F-change of 5.980 at the p-level of 0.017 signifies that the model is statistically significant and, thus, culinary aesthetics has an impact on the outcome variable that is meaningful, even though the effect is not extraordinarily strong. Overall, even though culinary aesthetics helps to account for the variation, other factors may still have a substantial impact on the dependent variable.

Table 4: ANOVA

"Model"		"Sum of Squares"	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.826	1	2.826	5.980	.017[b]
	Residual	36.861	78	.473		
	Total	39.687	79			
a. Dependent Variable: Customers' Perception of Food Quality and Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Culinary Aesthetics						

The results of ANOVA assert that the regression model is significant in a statistical sense predicting customers' opinion about food quality and satisfaction. Regression sums of squares (2.826) and mean square (2.826) compared to the residual mean square (0.473) produce an F-value of 5.980, with a significance level of 0.017. Given that the p-value is below 0.05, it is affirmed that the aesthetic quality of the food has a considerable impact on the perception of food quality and satisfaction of the customers. This implies that the changes in food aesthetics have a significant role in the customers' judgments about the quality of food and their overall satisfaction, even though the total variance accounted for by the model is still quite small.

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	4.278	.527		8.117	.000	3.229	5.328
	Culinary Aesthetics	-.461	.189	-.267	-2.445	.017	-.836	-.086
a. Dependent Variable: Customers' Perception of Food Quality and Satisfaction								

The coefficients table exposes the nature and strength of the connection between the culinary aesthetics and customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction. The constant (interception) value of 4.278 comes with an extremely high statistical significance ($p< 0.001$), which means it shows the level of customer perception when no culinary aesthetics at all are applied. The unstandardized coefficient for culinary aesthetics is -0.461, which comes with a negative standardized Beta of -0.267; thus, it can be said that that, in contradiction to the expectations, enhancement of culinary aesthetics has an inverse relationship with customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction and results in a very small decrease. This relationship is further supported by being statistically significant (t = -2.445, p = 0.017) and having a 95% confidence interval (-0.836 to -0.086) that does not contain zero, thus the significance is reinforced. To put it briefly, the results imply that the customer perception in this sample is not only influenced by culinary aesthetics, which is a significant influence, but nonetheless, the latter is negative; thus, other factors might moderate or interact with aesthetics to impact satisfaction.

- **Hypothesis 2: "**There is a significant influence of aesthetic dining experiences on customer loyalty".

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.242[a]	.058	.046	.57169	.058	4.840	1	78	.031
a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Loyalty									

The model summary indicates that customer loyalty has a modest positive relationship with the dependent variable, with an R value of 0.242. "The R^2 value of 0.058 indicates that around 5.8% of the dependent variable's variance is accounted for by the customer loyalty factor which is a small effect. The adjusted R^2 of 0.046 indicates limited but meaningful predictive power, as it accounts for the sample size. The F-change value of 4.840 at a significance level of 0.031 shows that the model is statistically significant, which means that customer loyalty has a significant impact on the outcome variable, even though the total variance explained is quite low. This suggests that the customer loyalty factor is one of the contributors to the variations in the dependent variable, but still, other factors are likely to be more influential."

Table 7: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.582	1	1.582	4.840	.031[b]
	Residual	25.493	78	.327		
	Total	27.075	79			
a. Dependent Variable: Aesthetic Dining Experiences						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Loyalty						

The outcomes of the ANOVA procedure show that the regression model can predict the aesthetic dining experiences with statistical significance. "The regression sum of squares (1.582) has been compared to the residual mean square (0.327) that resulting in an F-value of 4.840 with a significance level of 0.031. The conclusion drawn here is that the p-value being lower than 0.05, customer loyalty has a significant effect on aesthetic dining experiences." The model, to some extent, explains the total variance, but the results still indicate that customer loyalty variations have a significant impact on the diners' perceptions regarding aesthetic experiences.

Table 8: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	6.084	1.415		4.301	.000	3.268	8.900
	Customer Loyalty	-.701	.319	-.242	-2.200	.031	-1.336	-.067
a. Dependent Variable: Aesthetic Dining Experiences								

The coefficients table illustrates the connection between the loyalty of customers and the aesthetic dining experience. The constant (interception), which is the expected level of aesthetic dining experience with zero customer loyalty, is 6.084 and highly significant statistically ($p< 0.001$). The unstandardized coefficient for customer loyalty is -0.701, and the standardized Beta is -0.242, both indicating negative relationship; it means that with the increase of customer loyalty, the aesthetic dining experience in this sample would slightly decrease. The relation turns out to be significant statistically (t = -2.200, p = 0.031), and the 95% confidence interval (-1.336 to -0.067) does not include zero, which is a further confirmation of the significance of the relationship. To sum up, customer loyalty is a strong factor in determining the aesthetic dining experience; however, the negative correlation implies that a situation where a customer has high loyalty is likely to have low perceived aesthetic experience, thus revealing the role of other moderating factors or contextual differences in the dining perception.

- **Hypothesis 3:** There is a significant impact of visual presentation and plating aesthetics on customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction.

Table 9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.265[a]	.070	.058	.58309	.070	5.895	1	78	.017
a. Predictors: (Constant), Customers' Perception of Food Quality and Satisfaction									

Based on the model summary, the customers' view of food quality and satisfaction has a positive but weak correlation with the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient, R, amounts to 0.265. The coefficient of determination, R^2, of 0.070 indicates that approximately 7% of the variations in the dependent variable are due to customers' perception, which is regarded as a small impact. The adjusted R^2 of 0.058, which considers the size of the sample, reinforces the limited predictive power. The F-change statistics of 5.895 at a significance level of 0.017 suggest a statistically significant model and thus demonstrate that customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction is an important variable in determining the outcome, while other factors may still be playing a role in the remaining variance.

Table 10: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.004	1	2.004	5.895	.017[b]
	Residual	26.520	78	.340		
	Total	28.524	79			
a. Dependent Variable: Visual Presentation and Plating Aesthetics						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customers' Perception of Food Quality and Satisfaction						

The regression models the ANOVA results imply are statistically significant for forecasting the visual presentation and plating aesthetics. By comparing the regression sum of squares (2.004) to the residual mean square (0.340), one gets an F-value of 5.895 with a p-level of 0.017. Since the p-value is below the cutoff of 0.05, one can infer that the customers' perception of food quality and their level of satisfaction have a considerable impact on visual presentation and plating aesthetics. While the model does not account for a substantial portion of the variance, the findings endorse that food quality perceptions are of immense importance in the evaluation of visual and plating aspects of the dining experience by customers.

Table 11: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	4.606	.694		6.635	.000	3.224	5.988
	Customers' Perception of Food Quality and Satisfaction	-.414	.171	-.265	-2.428	.017	-.754	-.075
a. Dependent Variable: Visual Presentation and Plating Aesthetics								

The coefficients table reveals the influence of customers' perception of food quality and satisfaction on visual presentation and plating aesthetics. The constant term (intercept) is 4.606, and the statistical significance of it is remarkably high ($p< 0.001$); it indicates the predicted level of visual presentation when the perception is zero. The unstandardized coefficient for customers' perception is -0.414, with a standardized Beta of -0.265, which points to a negative correlation in such a way that with the increase of customers' perception of food quality the visual presentation and plating aesthetics of this sample go down slightly. This relationship is significantly proven by the statistic value (t = -2.428, p = 0.017), and the range of 95% confidence (-0.754 to -0.075) is not overlapping with zero indicating the conclusion of significance is right. In general, customer perception of food quality and satisfaction plays a vital role in visual presentation; however, the negative sign of the coefficient suggests the possibility that other factors might be at work which would intervene this link, or in that case, that high perception does not always equal high evaluation of plating aesthetics in this situation.

- **Hypothesis 4:** There is a significant relationship between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty in the restaurant industry.

Table 12: Correlations

		Culinary Aesthetics	Customer Loyalty
Culinary Aesthetics	Pearson Correlation	1	-.226*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	80	80
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	-.226*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	80	80
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation table shows a significant inverse relationship between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty, which is represented by a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.226 (p = 0.043). This means that an increase in the perception of culinary aesthetics will slightly decrease customer loyalty, and vice versa: low culinary aesthetics will mean high customer loyalty. The correlation, although it reached a statistically significant level of 0.05, is nonetheless weak in terms of its strength; therefore, one can say that an association exists, but other factors might be important in determining customer loyalty.

8. Discussion

The results uncovered in this study uncover an entire range of amazing aspects regarding the role of the aesthetics in food in customer satisfaction and their retention, whereby some of the results are just slightly in line and at times completely contrary to previous studies. The use of regression analyses uncovers that the links between the variable's culinary aesthetics, customer perception, satisfaction, and loyalty are of great statistical significance; however, in some instances the links are negative, which was an unexpected finding. The emphasis of most previous literature confirmed the opposite, that aesthetic appeal is a characteristic feature facilitating the customers' satisfaction and loyalty in the food context (Korsmeyer, 2019) [15].

According to historiographers like Breiby (2018) [3], culinary aesthetics has not only been a treat for our senses but has emotionally engaged us and thus led to consumer satisfaction and intention to visit again. In the same vein, Pine and Gilmore (1999) [20] in their work The Experience Economy, stated that memorable experiences involvement often aesthetically make customers more emotionally attached and thus create loyalty. The modest but significant correlations (R^2 = 0.071 and 0.058) reported in the current study seem to suggest that aesthetics have a sizeable role to play in the areas of perception and satisfaction, but at the same time, there are factors like taste, quality, service interaction or emotional resonance which could even overshadow aesthetic appeal in customer loyalty over the long term.

The negative correlations found between culinary aesthetics and customer perception indicate that presentation that is either too much or too stylized may create expectations that, if unfulfilled in taste and/or service, result in cognitive dissonance and lower satisfaction. This interpretation is consistent with what Kim *et al.* (2015) [13] found, as they pointed out that giving too much importance to aesthetics has the downside of making things look not so real, thus leading customers to the conclusion that the experience was artificial or shallow. Han and Ryu (2009) [8] came to a similar conclusion when they decided that fine-dining aesthetics contribute to brand image but that the overall aesthetic experience must not be inconsistent with quality if genuine satisfaction is to be achieved.

The weak negative correlation found between culinary aesthetics and customer loyalty (r = -0.226, $p < 0.05$) may also indicate that the market has reached a certain level of maturity and may have become accustomed to certain features of the product. Loyal customers, because they are familiar with what a restaurant has to offer, might prefer to have their needs regarding taste and comfort with the satisfied atmosphere rather than having new or artistic presentations made. Oliver's (1999) [19] model of loyalty development is, therefore, confirmed, as it postulates that the affective bond rather than the sensory surprise sustains long-term loyalty. Besides, Carù and Cova (2007) [4] have stated that emotional involvement and being genuine are the key factors in building lasting partnerships, with superficial aesthetics being the last thing that matters.

Overall, this research backs up the notion that culinary aesthetics are a leading, albeit not the only, factor determining customer experience. In line with past studies (Harrington *et al.*, 2018; Gomez *et al.*, 2021) [10, 7], the attraction of the presentation of the dish increases the initial impressions and the perception of the quality, but the loyalty that lasts for a period is only through the co-creation of the sensory, emotional, and symbolic aspects. The results consequently highlight the necessity for a harmonized strategy where the aesthetics take part alongside the whole gastronomic experience as a means of enhancement instead of being the main cause.

9. Conclusion: The researchers of the current study state that although culinary aesthetics played a key role in shaping the customers' initial tastes, they still had a very subtle and changing throughout different situations impact on the satisfaction and loyalty of the people eating out in Uttar Pradesh. The researchers' data showed that aesthetic presentation had a large influence on consumers' notions about the food quality, their satisfaction, and loyalty to the establishment, but the effect was not very large, as the R^2 values were between 0.058 and 0.071; hence, it could be concluded that other factors like taste, service quality, emotional engagement, and authenticity were more influential. Moreover, the authors pointed out that in the case of lavish and overly artistic presentations, customers' satisfaction and loyalty might suffer reversal as one of the possible reasons might be the mismatch of expectations and the perceived unrealness, and this finding is supported by earlier research (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Han & Ryu, 2009) [12, 8]. The weak but still significant negative correlation (r = -0.226, $p < 0.05$) indicates that the customers who come back often prefer quality over the visual aspect, and so, the company's ability to provide the same taste and atmosphere together with the customers' emotional connection with the place are more important of loyalty factors for them;

therefore, it is concluded that the long-term loyalty is built on the whole experience rather than just on the aesthetics part.

The results of the study provide important insights into the restaurateurs and the whole hospitality industry. They show that by combining visual presentation with high quality food, excellent service, and emotional storytelling, where aesthetics takes on the role of a medium and not just decoration, it is possible to convey not only cultural narratives but also the identity of the brand. Besides, the study suggests creating a long-lasting relationship between art and truth, presenting customers in a way that is deeply personal and culturally appropriate, and reinforcing sensory and emotional unity to the point where customer satisfaction is increased and thus the customers are retained. The research, however, is based only on a few chosen gastronomic places in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh which affects how the results can be applied, and the use of self-reported survey data raises the issue of response biases.

One of the avenues for future research is to look into the influence of culinary aesthetics along with other experience variables such as service innovation, emotional engagement, and digital dining, as well as to carry out comparative studies at local, national, or international levels to investigate the differences in cultures concerning aesthetic appreciation and the building of customer loyalty. In brief, the research has concluded that if time and standards are resonated, aesthetics can significantly increase customer satisfaction and create a lifetime relationship. It has put a spotlight on the fact that successful culinary experiences are the result of a perfect mix of the three: visual, sensory, and emotional elements.

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