



The Effectiveness of Pet-Friendly Guidelines on Customer Satisfaction of Red Lotus Restaurant in Bonifacio Global City

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ABSTRACT

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With many people now considering pets as integral family members, pet owners prefer to keep them close for comfort and companionship during their travels. In response, business establishments are increasingly implementing pet-friendly guidelines allowing pets in designated areas and ensuring that both the owner and their furry companion can enjoy a comfortable and welcoming environment. However, while some establishments claim to be pet-friendly, the actual experience can differ significantly. The objective of this study was to explore how the implementation of pet-friendly guidelines affects customer satisfaction. Data were gathered through a structured survey distributed to customers who dined at the establishment. The findings revealed that the pet-friendly guidelines significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Pet owners expressed higher satisfaction due to the availability of designated pet-friendly amenities and accommodating staff. In addition, non-pet owners also acknowledged the establishment's effort to maintain cleanliness and comfort for all guests. Statistical analysis confirmed a positive correlation between the perceived effectiveness of the guidelines and overall customer satisfaction, indicating that the guidelines contributed to a more enjoyable dining experience. The results provided valuable insights for establishments aiming to implement or refine pet-friendly guidelines such as introducing food options for pets, further enhancement of communication to customers with regards to the guidelines, which demonstrates the potential of such initiatives to improve customer satisfaction which leads to loyalty. By addressing the needs of both pet and non-pet owners, pet-friendly establishments can create an inclusive and satisfying environment for all.

KEYWORDS:

Effectiveness; Pet-Friendly; Pet-Friendly Guidelines; Customer; Customer Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

As noted by Pet Travel Center (2020), the term “pet-friendly” can mean different things depending on the restaurant establishments. While many restaurants allow pets, typically in outdoor seating areas, the specific rules they follow may vary. In some cases, other restaurants may only allow dogs, while others might accept other pets like cats or small animals. Additionally, some establishments may require pets to be kept on a leash or in a carrier, while others

might offer amenities. Since there's no standard definition of “pet-friendly,” every restaurant has the freedom to set its own policies or guidelines, leading to a variety of experiences for pet owners. Therefore, it is important for pet owners to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations of every restaurant before visiting, as they can differ significantly.

The popularity of pet-friendly establishments is also on the rise, reflecting broader trends in pet ownership. With many people now considering pets as integral family members, pet owners prefer to keep them close for comfort and companionship during their travels. According to American Pet Products Association (2023), over 55% of pet owners indicated that having their pets along would enhance their comfort at outdoor restaurants. This growing demand for pet-friendly venues reflects a changing cultural perspective, where pets are increasingly seen as a family member. In response, business establishments are increasingly

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implementing pet-friendly guidelines, allowing pets in designated areas and ensuring that both pet owners and their furry companions can enjoy a comfortable and welcoming environment while dining, shopping, or relaxing - ultimately enhancing satisfaction for all involved. For this reason, offering pet-friendly policies provides restaurants with the ability to capture a wider clientele in order to cater to both pet and non-pet owners. As noted by Feldman (2023), younger pet owners, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, feel deeply connected to their pets and are more inclined to support businesses that welcomes them. As the demand for pet-friendly establishment grows, businesses that follow these guidelines can enhance customer satisfaction. By providing a welcoming environment for pets, these businesses not only attract more customers, but also build loyalty as pet owners are more likely to return to places that accommodate them and their furry companion, leading to repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.

In line with this, the Bistro Group introduced its first modern chic Chinese resto-bar, the Red Lotus Restaurant, which opened its doors last April 1, 2024. In addition for offering a cozy, stylish atmosphere, and complemented ambient music, Red Lotus is also a pet-friendly establishment. The restaurant welcomes pets of all sizes and breeds, as long as they are well-behaved and non-aggressive, with no height, weight, or breed restrictions. To further cater to pet owners, Red Lotus offers treats for pets, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable experience for both guests and their furry companions.

However, while some establishment claims to be pet-friendly, the actual experience can differ significantly. The issue at Balay Dako, where the restaurant denied the entry of an aspin (asong Pinoy) named Yoda - despite its claim that they are pet-friendly, highlighted a significant gap in the understanding of what it truly means to be a pet-friendly establishment. This case underscored how such contradictions can aggravate customers and damage brand image, in which it also shows the need for policies that will properly state what it means to be pet-friendly.

Thus, this study, entitled "The Effectiveness of Pet-Friendly Guidelines on Customer Satisfaction of Red Lotus Restaurant in Bonifacio Global City," explored how the implementation of pet-friendly guidelines impacted customer satisfaction. By assessing the effectiveness of these guidelines, the research sought to understand how accommodating pets influenced customers' dining

experiences and overall satisfaction. The findings offered insights into the benefits of being a pet-friendly establishment, helped determine whether this guidelines should be enhanced, and provided recommendations for creating a more inclusive and enjoyable environment for all patrons.

METHODS

The study utilized a quantitative research approach, specifically descriptive-correlational research design, which provided an essential knowledge on the relationship between the given variables. This design helped to explore the existing connections between these variables under the given conditions, making it the most appropriate approach for this study. Data was collected through structured surveys distributed to the customers who dined at the establishment. This research used non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling technique, wherein a total of 187 customers were selected to participate in the study. Respondents were chosen based on their voluntary participation and their general experience with the establishment's pet-friendly guidelines

This study used a researcher-made survey questionnaire that gathered the necessary information and data from the participants. The instrument consisted of twenty-five (25) items, which was divided into two (2) parts, namely: Part 1 was to determine the level of effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines as assessed by the customers which utilized a 4-Point Likert Scale with the given interpretation for evaluation: Highly Effective (4); Effective (3); Slightly Effective (2); and Not Effective (1); and Part 2 was to determine the level of customer satisfaction on the establishment's pet-friendly guidelines which also used a 4-Point Likert Scale with the following interpretation for evaluation: Strongly Agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2); and Strongly Disagree (1). The survey questionnaire undergone validation processes which includes consulting with the adviser to evaluate the content and seeking opinion from experts to ensure appropriateness of the instrument. The data gathered were then tabulated, interpreted, analyzed, and processed using the following statistical tools: Weighted Mean was used to evaluate the mean scores of the responses on each item in terms of the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines and the level of customer satisfaction; and Pearson Correlation Coefficient was utilized to test the relationship between the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines and the level of customer satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Level of Effectiveness of Pet-Friendly Guidelines of Red Lotus Restaurant

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Rank Interpretation	
1. Pets wearing a full diaper.	3.61	Highly Effective	3
2. Keeping pets on a leash.	3.46	Highly Effective	5
3. Allowing pets in strollers.	3.35	Highly Effective	9
4. Pet owners are accountable for cleaning up after their pets.	3.70	Highly Effective	1
5. Accommodate all pets regardless of breed and size.	3.60	Highly Effective	4
6. Managing disruptive behavior.	3.37	Highly Effective	8
7. Offering complimentary treats.	3.26	Highly Effective	11
8. Providing pet-friendly amenities.	1.51	Not Effective	15
9. Providing pet-friendly meal options.	1.56	Not Effective	14
10. The limit on the number of pets per owner.	3.24	Effective	12
11. Pets must be accompanied by their owners at all times.	3.66	Highly Effective	2
12. Allowing service animals in all areas of the restaurant.	3.33	Highly Effective	10
13. Pets should not be allowed to sit on furniture or tables.	3.12	Effective	13
14. I feel that the pet-friendly guidelines are clearly communicated and easy to follow.	3.38	Highly Effective	7
15. The restaurant's pet-friendly guidelines ensure that pets do not negatively impact the overall dining experience for customers.	3.43	Highly Effective	6
Average Weighted Mean	3.17	Effective	

Exhibited in Table 1 is the effectiveness of pet-friendly guidelines as assessed by the customers of Red Lotus Restaurant which had an average weighted mean of 3.17 and an overall response of Effective. This revealed the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines in terms of having the pet owners be responsible in cleaning up after their pets, as well as having them accompany their furry companions at all times while inside the establishment.

Among the given indicators, eleven (11) items had a response of 'Highly Effective', namely: Indicator 4 "Pet owners are accountable for cleaning up after their pets" ranked 1st; Indicator 11 "Pets must be accompanied by their owners at all times" ranked 2nd; Indicator 1 "Pets wearing a full diaper" ranked 3rd; Indicator 5 "Accommodate all pets regardless of breed and size" ranked 4th; Indicator 2 "Keeping pets on a leash" ranked 5th; Indicator 15 "The restaurant's pet-

friendly guidelines ensure that pets do not negatively impact the overall dining experience for customers" ranked 6th; Indicator 14 "I feel that the pet-friendly guidelines are clearly communicated and easy to follow" ranked 7th; Indicator 6 "Managing disruptive behavior" ranked 8th; Indicator 3 "Allowing pets in strollers" ranked 9th; Indicator 12 "Allowing service animals in all areas of the restaurant" ranked 10th; and Indicator 7 "Offering complimentary treats" ranked 11th. In addition, two (2) items had a response of 'Effective', namely: Indicator 10 "The limit on the number of pets per owner" ranked 12th; and Indicator 13 "Pets should not be allowed to sit on furniture or tables" ranked 13th. Lastly, two (2) other items had a response of 'Not Effective', which are the following: Indicator 9 "Providing pet-friendly meal options" ranked 14th; and Indicator 8 "Providing pet-friendly amenities" ranked 15th.

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The findings of this study supported the claims of Petroff (2023) that pet-friendly practices, such as keeping pets on a leash and encouraging responsible pet ownership, makes dining safer and more enjoyable for everyone. Providing stations for pet waste disposal and ensuring pet owners clean up after their pets are critical steps towards maintaining a clean and comfortable environment. These measures are essential, not only to address concerns from non-pet owners, but also to foster an atmosphere of shared responsibility, mitigating potential conflicts and improving the overall dining experience for all patrons. Further emphasizing the role of pet owners, Dee (2023) highlighted the importance of responsible pet ownership in public spaces like restaurants, recommending that pet owners keep their

companions leashed, clean, and calm to promote a pleasant atmosphere for all customers. This aligns with the growing emphasis on creating harmonious environment that balances the needs of both pet and non-pet owners. In addressing the lowest indicators, the study of Graze (2022) may be of reference, which highlights the importance adopting a pet-friendly guidelines, which include designing pet-safe spaces and specific pet amenities such as water bowls and pet-safe treats, than can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. For this reason, these guidelines not only improves the customer experience, but also strengthens the restaurant's brand image.

Table 2. Level of Customer Satisfaction on Red Lotus Restaurant's Pet-Friendly Guidelines

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I believe that the pet-friendly guidelines at Red Lotus contribute to a positive experience for both pet and non-pet owners.	3.61	Strongly Agree	2
2. The staff at Red Lotus managed interactions between pets and other customers ensuring a pleasant dining experience.	3.27	Strongly Agree	10
3. The presence of pets in the establishment enhances the overall dining experience making the experience more enjoyable.	3.38	Strongly Agree	8
4. The establishment's pet-related rules helped maintain a comfortable atmosphere, making the experience more enjoyable.	3.56	Strongly Agree	3
5. Red Lotus maintain a clean and tidy environment, even with its pet-friendly guidelines.	3.64	Strongly Agree	1
6. The availability of pet-friendly menus for pets in restaurant increases customer satisfaction.	3.51	Strongly Agree	5
7. Pets are well-behaved and do not cause disruptions during my dining experience at Red Lotus.	3.43	Strongly Agree	7
8. The pet-friendly experience at Red Lotus positively influences my decision to visit again.	3.37	Strongly Agree	9
9. I would recommend Red Lotus to others who are looking for a restaurant that accommodate pets without compromising the quality of the dining experience.	3.44	Strongly Agree	6
10. The pet-friendly guidelines contribute positively to my overall satisfaction with my dining experience at Red Lotus.	3.54	Strongly Agree	4
Average Weighted Mean	3.47	Strongly Agree	

Presented in Tables 2 is the customer satisfaction on Red Lotus Restaurant's pet-friendly guidelines with an average weighted mean of 3.47 and an overall response of Strongly Agree. This shows that with its implemented pet-friendly guidelines, the establishment maintained its clean environment as well as providing both pet and non-pet owners a positive dining experience while inside the restaurant. In addition, these guidelines helped maintain a comfortable atmosphere which results in a more enjoyable experience.

With the above-mentioned indicators, all ten (10) items received a response of 'Strongly Agree', namely: Indicator 5 "Red Lotus maintain a clean and tidy environment, even with its pet-friendly guidelines" ranked 1st; Indicator 1 "I believe that the pet-friendly guidelines at Red Lotus Restaurant contribute to a positive experience for both pet and non-pet owners" ranked 2nd; Indicator 4 "The restaurant's pet-related rules help maintain a comfortable atmosphere, making the experience more enjoyable" ranked 3rd; Indicator 10 "The pet-friendly guidelines contribute positively to my overall satisfaction with my dining experience at Red Lotus" ranked 4th; Indicator 6 "The availability of pet-friendly menus for pets in restaurants increases customer satisfaction" ranked 5th; Indicator 9 "I would recommend Red Lotus to others who are looking for a restaurant that accommodates pets without compromising the quality of the dining experience" ranked

6th; Indicator 7 "Pets are well-behaved and do not cause disruptions during my dining experience at Red Lotus" ranked 7th; Indicator 3 "The presence of pets in the restaurant enhances the overall dining atmosphere, making the experience more enjoyable" ranked 8th; Indicator 8 "The pet-friendly experience at Red Lotus positively influences my decision to visit the restaurant again" ranked 9th; and Indicator 2 "The staff at Red Lotus managed interactions between pets and other customers, ensuring pleasant dining experience" ranked 10th.

The results of this study validated the findings of Johansen (2021) stating that creating a pet-friendly atmosphere involves balancing pet owners' needs with the importance of cleanliness and safety while making sure that non-pet owners have a positive dining experience. In addition, the study of Jardins (2022) emphasized that pet-friendly establishments significantly enhance the experience for pet owners and even for customers who enjoy interacting with pets but prefer not to have the responsibility of owning one. However, the lowest rating indicator, which highlighted the need for improvement in staff management of pet-related interactions, aligned with the findings of Ali et. al (2021) whom emphasized that the superior service quality and the capability of service staff and management plays a significant role in customer satisfaction during a dining experience.

Table 3. Test on Significant Relationship Between the Effectiveness of Pet-Friendly Guidelines as Assessed by the Customer and the Customer Satisfaction

Variables	Pearson r Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Pet-Friendly Guidelines & Customer Satisfaction	0.431	<0.01	Reject Ho Significant

Decision: If P-Value is less than 0.05, reject null hypothesis.

Discussed in Table 3 is the test of significant relationship between the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines as assessed by the customers and the customer satisfaction. The relationship between the level of effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines and the level of customer satisfaction was moderate correlation with an obtained Pearson r value of 0.431. Since the computed p-value of <0.01 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there was a significant relationship between the effectiveness of pet-friendly guidelines and the customer satisfaction as assessed by the customer of Red Lotus Restaurant in Bonifacio Global City. The results implied that the better the pet-friendly guidelines are implemented and perceived, the higher the customer satisfaction is. This finding supported the idea that such guidelines have a meaningful and positive impact on customer experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The perception of both the pet and non-pet owners were closely aligned, indicating minimal variation in their attitude towards the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines and the customer satisfaction of Red Lotus Restaurant.

With the given findings of the study, it was highlighted that the pet-friendly guidelines was deemed effective, with certain key points of strengths in maintaining the cleanliness and inclusiveness inside the establishment. It was also pointed out that the customers highly appreciated certain measures such as ensuring the pets are always accompanied by their owners as well as upholding accountability of their pet's behavior. However, some areas of concern were identified by the participants in the study,

such as the provision of pet-friendly amenities and meal options for their furry companion. In terms of customer satisfaction, the restaurant's pet-friendly guidelines was rated as high, with cleanliness being the most appreciated factor. This was revealed in the responses of the participants which recognized the effort of the establishment in maintaining a hygienic and organized environment even in a pet-friendly setting. Despite the fact that the establishment got a good feedback from the customers, findings also revealed that staff training in managing pet-related interactions and maintaining a balanced atmosphere requires improvement. Between the effectiveness of the pet-friendly guidelines and the customer satisfaction, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship wherein it implied that the better the pet-friendly guidelines are implemented, the higher the customer satisfaction is.

In light of the discussion above, it was recommended that Red Lotus Restaurant enhance the dining experience by providing essential amenities that would address the current lack of pet facilities which will create a more welcoming and accommodating environment for both pets and their owners. It was also suggested that the restaurant may introduce a small menu offering food options for pets. The absence of such option has been identified as a key gap, and by providing this would meet the expectations of the pet owners, which may attract new customers and strengthen loyalty among existing customers. Additional training for the staff that is focused on conflict resolution, understanding pet behavior, and maintaining a harmonious environment, were also needed to improve their ability to manage interactions between pets and customers. With this, staff will be better equipped to meet the needs of both pet and non-pet owners which ultimately improves the overall customer satisfaction. Enhancing the communication of the pet-friendly guidelines within the establishment through the use of signage and the provision of printed materials was also proposed to ensure all customers will be well-informed about the expectations for dining with pets. In addition, supplementary inputs from the perspective of non-pet owners may also be gathered to better understand their concerns and preferences regarding the implementation of pet-friendly guidelines. Gathering insights into their experience may be beneficial in ensuring that pet-friendly practices do not compromise the comfort and satisfaction of non-pet owners, fostering a more balanced and inclusive atmosphere for all customers. Lastly, further research of this study was recommended, specifically conducting similar study in other hospitality establishments, to explore how pet-friendly guidelines affect customer satisfaction. By focusing on these industries, future studies can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and benefits of implementing pet-friendly guidelines in various environments.

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