

# Factors Influencing Value Proposition in Hospitality Businesses (Case Study: Restaurants in Tehran)

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**Abstract:** The tourism and hospitality industry is among the most active and thriving sectors in many countries, where examining the characteristics, needs, and preferences of customers holds significant importance. Restaurants, as a core component of hospitality, must possess a sound understanding of the needs of their target market. In this regard, identifying value propositions and customer demands—especially in family-oriented restaurants—holds particular relevance. The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing value proposition in hospitality businesses, with a specific focus on family-oriented restaurants. This research is applied in terms of its objective and employs a descriptive-survey method for data collection. It is conducted based on qualitative data using the grounded theory approach. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which continued until theoretical saturation was reached. In total, 15 interviews were conducted with restaurant managers in the city of Tehran. The analysis process involved three stages of coding: open, selective, and axial. Ultimately, the data were condensed into 97 secondary codes. The resulting categories were classified into six theoretical groups derived from the data. The findings of the study led to the identification of key value propositions for family restaurant guests. The results of this research can serve as a practical guide for restaurant managers in designing and offering more appropriate services and facilities for families, thereby enhancing the customer experience.

**Keywords:** Business, Hospitality, Tourism, Restaurant, Tehran.

## 1. Introduction

The tourism and restaurant industry is undergoing transformation in response to evolving preferences and needs of families. Families, as one of the most important target groups and customer segments in the hospitality sector, seek unique experiences that include services and amenities suitable for all family members. Restaurants, in this context, must be able to attract families by offering value propositions tailored to their expectations. As a key component of the tourism industry, restaurants not only meet the nutritional needs of customers but also function as venues for social interaction and cultural experiences [1].

These value propositions must encompass aspects such as spatial design, menu diversity, child-friendly services, and sensitivity to cultural needs. However, many restaurants have failed to adequately respond to these critical

needs, thereby missing out on the potential benefits of the family market in the hospitality industry [2]. Consequently, the central challenge lies in identifying effective value propositions for family-oriented restaurants in the tourism sector so they may secure their position in this competitive market. Addressing this challenge requires a thorough examination of the needs, desires, and expectations of families to provide optimal solutions for enhancing their customer experience.

Today's restaurant customers expect more than quality food; they demand excellent service and a pleasant dining environment [3, 4]. Restaurants are places where individuals can experience excitement and joy in the form of memorable experiences [5-7]. The need for an appropriate atmosphere can significantly influence their decision-making when choosing a restaurant. Families often look for high-quality food and a variety of menu options to meet the diverse tastes of their members. Ignoring these needs may lead to decreased customer satisfaction and, ultimately, diminished customer loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988). Families require spaces that are equally appealing and suitable for both adults and children. Thus, restaurants must pay close attention to interior design and seating arrangements. In fact, environmental dimensions such as the restaurant's layout and the view from its windows influence families' and customers' sense of satisfaction [1, 8].

This model allows restaurants to respond to the specific needs of their customers, thereby fostering loyalty and satisfaction. Families usually seek reasonable pricing and special packages for their members to avoid the high costs of dining out. Pricing strategies—especially during competitive periods—play a significant role in shaping the customer experience and require detailed analysis [9]. Offering special discounts and meal packages can increase a restaurant's appeal to families. Transparent and reasonable pricing is also a critical factor that families consider when selecting a restaurant [10]. The fairness of pricing is a psychological element that significantly affects customers' responses to payment [4]. Given these needs and conditions, developing a comprehensive value proposition model for family-oriented restaurants necessitates deep market analysis and an accurate understanding of customer desires. Such a model may include specific strategies for attracting and retaining family customers, including loyalty programs and targeted advertising [11].

The body of literature examining value proposition in tourism and hospitality businesses—especially family-oriented restaurants—reveals a multifaceted and evolving understanding of how customer experiences can be optimized through strategic design and service delivery. Maridata and Aprirachman (2024) emphasize the critical role of aligning business models with customer needs in the tourism sector, asserting that properly designed value propositions lead to competitive differentiation, especially in family-centered dining experiences [12]. Supporting this, Jayathunga et al. (2024) demonstrate how social media marketing significantly enhances brand awareness and customer acquisition in the fast-food industry, suggesting that these digital tools are directly relevant to value proposition enhancement in family-focused restaurants [13]. Similarly, Daradkeh et al. (2023) highlight the importance of digital presence in boosting customer value, loyalty, and sales, offering insights directly applicable to tourism-based food services [6]. Carvalho and Alves (2022) provide a broad theoretical foundation on customer value creation in the hospitality and tourism industry, underlining that value formed through service delivery is central to customer satisfaction—an idea that supports the design of tailored offerings in restaurants [14]. Ahad Motlaghi and Tahmouresi (2017) focus on key factors affecting customer satisfaction in restaurants, reinforcing the importance of understanding these drivers for value proposition development [15]. Mojtabavi and Azari Saljoui (2020) examine the physical attributes of restaurants and their impact on customer satisfaction, concluding that environmental design contributes significantly to value creation and repeat patronage [16]. Altogether, these studies provide a rich, evidence-based framework highlighting that value proposition in family-oriented

restaurants must encompass strategic pricing, diverse menus, child-centered services, emotional resonance, physical design, and digital engagement—all integrated to deliver a compelling, loyal, and differentiated customer experience.

Since families are recognized as one of the most vital target groups in the restaurant and hospitality industry, neglecting their needs and expectations may result in lost business opportunities. Therefore, this study aims to identify the value propositions of tourism-related businesses, with a focus on family-oriented restaurants, and seeks to develop a model through a detailed examination of families' needs and expectations. The proposed model is intended to enhance the family customer experience and improve their satisfaction and loyalty. The primary objective of this study is to identify the value proposition model for this type of restaurant.

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the value proposition in family-oriented restaurants?
- What distinguishes family-oriented restaurants from other competitors, and how does this differentiation create a value proposition?
- How does the value proposition in family-oriented restaurants contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty?

## **2. Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative approach with an inductive reasoning method, wherein a theoretical model is developed through detailed empirical data, establishing connections between concepts and categories. The study is applied in nature and descriptive-survey in terms of methodology. The statistical population of the research includes restaurant managers in Tehran. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured field interviews with managers in the hospitality industry. A total of 15 interviews were conducted using the snowball sampling technique until theoretical saturation was reached. Subsequently, the relevant codes were extracted from the interviews and coded in three stages: open, selective, and axial coding. Data analysis followed grounded theory methodology based on Strauss and Corbin (2008), with the results presented in the findings section.

Next, by establishing relationships between the emerging concepts and categories during the coding phase, the final model was conceptualized. The findings were then evaluated and validated through expert review to assess the reliability and validity of the research. The study was conducted from February 2025 to April 2025. Validity was assessed through triangulation, while reliability was calculated based on inter-coder agreement, yielding a coefficient of 0.7778. This indicates acceptable reliability in the coding process and, consequently, the overall consistency of the study. Achieving validity in data analysis was ensured through precise triangulation, offering a comprehensive and balanced perspective on value propositions in family-oriented restaurants.

To this end, diverse sources and methods of data collection were employed, including in-depth interviews with managers of large and chain restaurants in Tehran, drawing on their experiences and viewpoints. The data were analyzed using grounded theory to identify patterns and key themes. Multiple angles of analysis were employed. Results from different data sources (interviews, documents) were compared to identify commonalities and differences. Participant feedback was solicited to validate the findings, and the results were shared with hospitality and restaurant industry experts, whose feedback confirmed the accuracy of the outcomes.

## **3. Findings and Results**

According to Strauss and Corbin's (2008) approach, the core narrative of the model and each of its components are described below along with quotes from the interviews:

### **Causal Conditions: Digital Family Interactions and Communications**

Dining out at restaurants is currently one of the most popular forms of recreation and entertainment among Iranians. Due to the rise in female employment and profound lifestyle changes, the use of restaurant and fast food services has increased. Restaurants are not merely service venues but also recreational spaces for families and their children [3]. Indeed, restaurants, as a critical segment of the tourism industry, fulfill not only nutritional needs but also serve as spaces for social connection and cultural experiences. Given their significant role in the hospitality sector, restaurant managers must foster strong and positive brand-consumer relationships to attract and retain customers. Brands that reflect family values in their operations may be better positioned to draw new customers and maintain existing ones. As Interviewee 2 stated: "Based on conducted surveys, families seek environments that respect family values and decorum, creating a space for interaction and empathy."

The main product in the tourism and hospitality industry is the experience itself [17]. Restaurants should aim to enhance customer experience. A positive experience can foster loyalty and repeat patronage, necessitating serious attention to customer experience. Interviewee 5 noted: "It is the positive feeling and experience of the customer within the restaurant environment that forms a pleasant memory in their mind and encourages them to return and repeat the experience."

### **Core Phenomenon: A Worry-Free and Unique Experience for Each Family**

At this stage, personalized services tailored to the needs and demands of the family customer group, along with accessibility and comfort, emerged as the central phenomenon. A personalized experience creates a sense of delight for customers.

Restaurants strive to create a pleasant and satisfying environment for families, transforming it into a unique experience for special occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, or weddings. Interviewee 6 remarked: "Many families look for a suitable venue to celebrate their children's birthdays. Restaurants can support these customers by offering them special discounts."

Successful family-oriented restaurants are characterized by their friendly and comfortable atmosphere—spaces that are equally attractive to both adults and children. This includes appropriate interior design, soft lighting, and the use of cheerful and welcoming colors. As Interviewee 7 stated: "Families usually avoid dimly lit restaurants."

A well-designed menu should include options that cater to different tastes, such as healthy foods, vegetarian options, low-calorie meals, and special dishes for children [10].

Restaurants should also offer specialized services for children, such as child-friendly menus, highchairs, trained staff, and engaging activities. These services allow parents to enjoy their meals with peace of mind. Interviewee 7 added: "When families come to a restaurant and know that there is always a child seat available, even on busy days, and their young child feels comfortable, it leads to their overall satisfaction."

### **Actions and Interactions: A Comprehensive Family Tourism Experience in Restaurants**

Dining out has become one of the most popular recreational activities among Iranians today. Global studies indicate that restaurants account for the highest employment rates and economic turnover in the tourism sector [2]. Restaurants aim to provide a comprehensive and pleasant experience for all family members—from the youngest to the oldest. This experience extends beyond simply consuming a meal and encompasses various dimensions. Convenient locations, accessible by both private vehicles and public transportation, and the availability of dedicated or nearby parking alleviate concerns about transportation. Interviewee 6 stated: "Given that finding

parking is a serious issue in major cities, having dedicated parking can offer families a sense of comfort and satisfaction.”

The restaurant environment and space are designed with the needs of families in mind. A calm and pleasant ambiance, large and comfortable tables for family groups, and a safe and engaging play area for children allow parents to enjoy their meals with peace of mind. Appealing décor and appropriate lighting also contribute to a warm and intimate atmosphere [8]. The restaurant’s ambiance stimulates positive emotions. Interviewee 4 remarked: “The space and atmosphere of the restaurant greatly influence customer satisfaction. We typically update the décor every few years to provide a fresh and enjoyable experience for returning customers.”

When dining out, people seek a different experience than eating at home. Hence, they choose places that not only serve healthy food but also offer a pleasant atmosphere. Many factors—such as interior design, proper temperature, cleanliness, aromas, colors, and music—enhance the restaurant’s ambiance [5].

Staff services and interactions are grounded in kindness and attentiveness to family needs. Personnel are trained to engage positively with children and are always patient and responsive to parents’ inquiries and requests. Interviewee 5 noted: “Well-trained staff can greatly assist family customers and contribute to their satisfaction.”

Food and beverages must be prepared with all family members’ tastes in mind. A diverse menu with appealing options for adults and a special children’s menu with appropriate pricing ensures satisfaction across preferences. The ability to customize meals for children reflects the restaurant’s flexibility in meeting specific needs. Interviewee 9 stated: “Some families value nurturing independence in their children. They order half-portions for them, which gives the child a sense of autonomy and brings them joy. Our half-portion meals are accompanied by small gifts for children and cater to the needs of family customers.”

### **Intervening Conditions: Creating a Sense of Family-Oriented Security**

Restaurants must not only aim to deliver high-quality food but also proactively foster a supportive and inviting environment for families. From the moment of planning the visit to the moment of departure, every aspect of the restaurant experience should instill a sense of complete satisfaction, safety, trust, and fond memories.

Creating a sense of safety and trust for families is a multifaceted and essential priority that permeates all levels of service and environment. Families choosing a dining location seek spaces that are not only enjoyable and suitable for all members but also uphold the highest standards of health, safety, and peace of mind. Interviewee 12 explained: “Families prioritize a healthy space where they can comfortably enjoy lunch or dinner together. Smoking areas should not exist in family restaurants to prevent discomfort and dissatisfaction.”

Physical safety in the restaurant is paramount. A safe and supervised play area enables children to play freely, while surveillance cameras in public areas enhance overall security [18]. Interviewee 1 mentioned: “Our waste disposal units are placed at a distance from the restaurant to avoid environmental damage and not cause inconvenience to neighbors.” In addition, the presence of first aid kits and staff trained in emergency response indicates preparedness for critical situations. Interviewee 14 stated: “Red Crescent courses were held for restaurant staff so they are adequately equipped to handle crises and emergencies.”

Fostering trust relies on transparency and accountability. Clear policies on handling customer complaints assure patrons that their feedback will be heard and addressed [19]. Interviewee 6 added: “Online surveys sent after patrons leave the restaurant significantly contribute to a sense of appreciation and guide us in identifying customer needs and expectations.”

Restaurants’ efforts to create a secure and trustworthy experience for families must be integrated and comprehensive. With a focus on health, safety, and transparency, restaurants must strive to establish an



environment where families can spend joyful, worry-free time together. This commitment forms the foundation of a safe and reliable dining experience.

### **Contextual Foundation of the Model: Sustainable Development**

Sustainability in the hospitality industry encompasses multiple dimensions. Public awareness regarding environmental conservation and the preservation of natural resources plays a vital role in shaping sustainable practices. Social sustainability refers to a community's ability to deliver services and fulfill functions without conflict or disruption [20].

Sustainable hospitality addresses four main areas [21], with environmental sustainability being a key focus. In today's world, environmental and social sustainability have become critical topics in the food industry. The use of organic and locally sourced ingredients is an effective strategy for reducing environmental impact and supporting sustainable farmers and producers. This approach not only protects the environment but also generates fair employment opportunities in local communities [1]. Interviewee 12 stated: "At our restaurant, we strive to purchase organic ingredients and support local businesses, placing strong emphasis on sustainability and economic dimensions."

One of the most important aspects of sustainability in the food industry is sourcing sustainable ingredients. This involves selecting food supplies with minimal environmental impact and reducing food waste through strategic planning and creative reuse. Sorting and recycling waste (paper, plastic, glass) and composting food waste help with better waste management. Interviewee 1 added: "We have three differently colored waste bins in the restaurant for better waste sorting. Families pay attention to the colors and try to separate their waste accordingly."

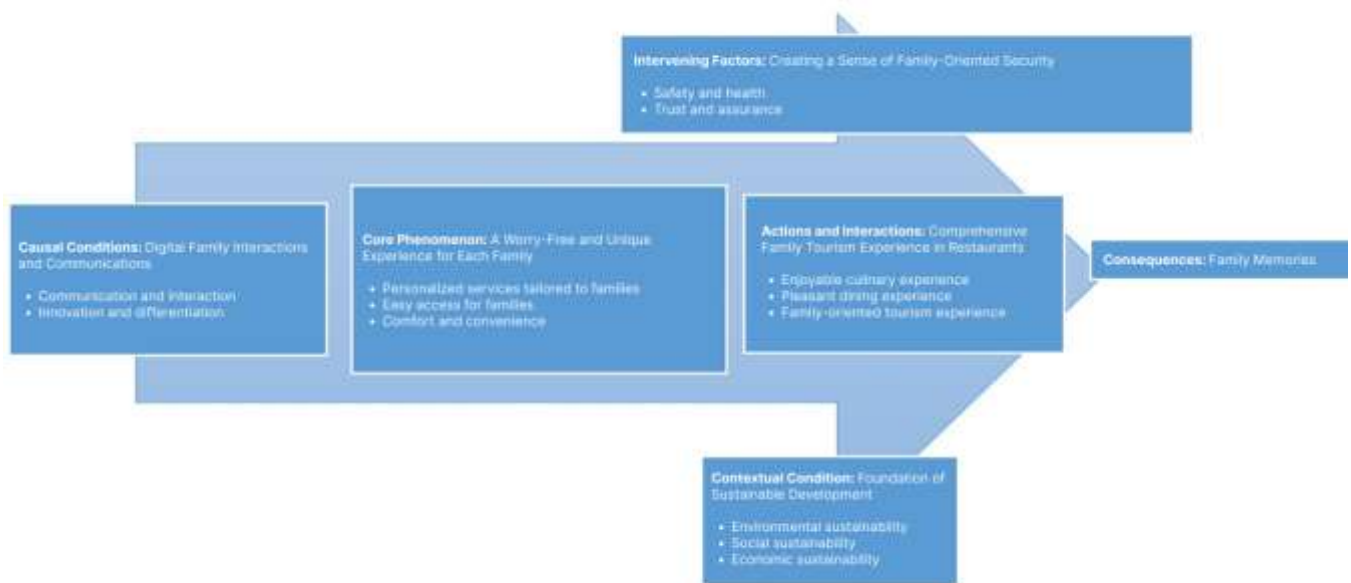
Respecting workers' rights, providing a safe and fair work environment, and maintaining transparent and equitable policies toward customers and suppliers are among the ethical and responsible principles the food industry must uphold. By adopting these principles, the industry can move toward a healthier and more sustainable future.

### **Outcomes: Family Memories**

Family-oriented restaurants help strengthen social connections and familial bonds. Due to their friendly environment and appropriate services, these restaurants can foster positive experiences and shared memories for families. Additionally, they can serve as venues for family celebrations and events. Interviewee 15 added: "Families often seek safe and comfortable environments tailored to their needs for hosting special occasions. Family and group discounts can significantly support them by offering affordable options and creating a memorable evening."

Restaurants, as integral components of the hospitality industry, play a crucial role in delivering positive experiences for customers. Beyond transportation costs, hotel and food expenses typically constitute the majority of a traveler's expenditures, with food accounting for about 18 to 23 percent of total travel costs [19]. Family restaurants, in particular, are vital for fostering social and familial cohesion and can contribute to the creation of shared memories and positive experiences.

By catering to the unique needs of families, family restaurants can offer diverse services and a welcoming atmosphere that fosters meaningful experiences and lasting memories. Today, the value proposition goes beyond food—it encompasses the overall experience. Restaurants strive to become destinations where families connect and create enduring memories.



**Figure 1. Theoretical Model Derived from Grounded Data on Value Proposition in Family-Oriented Restaurants**

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored the value proposition in tourism businesses, particularly focusing on family-oriented restaurants. By centering on the unique needs of this target group, the findings reveal that designing a value proposition strategy must be based on a deep understanding of family needs. Through the qualitative approach adopted, in-depth interviews with restaurant managers in Tehran demonstrated that the core components of value creation include: menu quality and diversity, special services for children, appropriate pricing, creation of a secure and trustworthy atmosphere, and strict adherence to hygiene protocols.

Content analysis of the data emphasized the importance of focusing on individual needs and family motivations, indicating that each of these components constitutes a key element in developing a robust value proposition and an effective service portfolio. The results show that offering high-quality, diverse products along with specialized services and competitive pricing can attract the target consumer segment and enhance their satisfaction.

Moreover, the creation of a safe and reassuring environment—through adherence to health standards, the transmission of trust, and positive staff interaction—plays a critical role. Transparency in service delivery and proper customer communication reinforce trust and loyalty. As a result, tourism businesses that incorporate these elements into their strategies will be better positioned to improve customer experience and increase customer retention rates.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that a strong value proposition in family-oriented restaurants must operate synergistically, ensuring that all discussed dimensions work in harmony to create a positive and distinctive experience for families. This approach not only increases customer attraction and loyalty but also strengthens the resilience and sustainability of the business in the highly competitive tourism industry.

## Recommendations

**Thoughtful Design and Interior Décor:** Creating a pleasant and intimate space for families requires using warm and vibrant colors such as orange, green, yellow, and blue, which evoke feelings of joy and calmness. Lighting should be soft and balanced to maintain a peaceful ambiance. Additionally, incorporating designated play areas or cozy corners for rest and conversation enhances friendliness. Selecting comfortable, durable, and corrosion-resistant furniture is essential to ensure both functionality and aesthetic appeal.

**Menu Diversity:** A diverse menu should include healthy options like salads, low-fat dishes, and organic meals to attract health-conscious customers. Moreover, the menu should offer vegetarian and vegan options, along with appealing meals for children such as healthy burgers, colorful rice, and low-sodium, low-fat items. A variety of flavors and price points allows for broader customer satisfaction across different preferences.

**Special Services for Children:** Creating dedicated services for children—such as attractive menus, child-sized seating, and safe play areas—improves the family experience. Activities like coloring, crafting, or interactive games entertain children and offer parents peace of mind, encouraging repeat visits.

**Fair and Attractive Pricing:** Offering family packages, bundled discounts, and membership cards can make dining more affordable for families. Special occasion discounts and loyalty cards encourage return visits and enhance customer retention, ultimately boosting sales.

**Promoting a Sense of Safety:** Strict adherence to health protocols—such as regular sanitization, proper ventilation, and physical distancing—instills trust and safety in families. Staff training on positive and effective interaction with children and parents enhances customer experience and demonstrates respect for customer needs. Continuous monitoring of cleanliness and safety remains critical.

**Marketing and Communication:** Active use of social media platforms such as Instagram and Telegram to promote special events, celebrations, and offers is highly effective in increasing visibility and attracting customers. Hosting family events, competitions, and themed celebrations creates engagement and draws the attention of families. Maintaining regular and positive communication with customers builds trust and loyalty, contributing to business growth.

**Hosting Family-Centered Events and Workshops:** Organizing cooking workshops for parents and children, music contests, or family movie nights cultivates a sense of belonging and joy within families, offering customers a unique experience. These programs play an essential role in attracting and retaining loyal customers.

**Creating Outdoor and Green Spaces:** Where possible, outdoor sections with greenery, trees, playgrounds, and shaded seating create a natural and relaxing atmosphere that appeals to families who enjoy spending time in open-air environments. These areas serve as ideal venues for hosting guests on sunny days.

**Collaboration with Schools and Local Institutions:** Establishing partnerships with schools and kindergartens for hosting events, joint programs, or offering discount packages helps increase visibility and attract new customers. This strategy is particularly effective in drawing families associated with educational institutions.

Implementing these recommendations can help restaurants optimize the family customer experience and increase their satisfaction, ultimately contributing to greater success and long-term sustainability in the tourism industry.

## Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.



## Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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