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The Impact of Recruitment and Selection Practice on Employee Turnover in
Costa Coffee UK

Submitted to:

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Declaration

I, **Ana Cojocari**, a student at the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David**, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “**The Impact of Recruitment and Selection Practices on Employee Turnover in Costa Coffee UK**” is my own original work and has been completed in accordance with the requirements of my academic programme.

The purpose of this study is to examine how recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover and service quality within Costa Coffee UK, with a particular focus on employee satisfaction and customer experience in the hospitality sector.

This research has been conducted ethically, ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of all respondents. Data were collected via structured questionnaires distributed to employees and customers and analysed quantitatively, including descriptive and correlational analyses.

I confirm that this dissertation has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for any degree or academic award at this or any other institution. All sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and referenced. No external funding was received for this research, and there are no conflicts of interest to declare.

I affirm that this work complies with the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David's ethical standards and academic regulations**.

Ana Cojocari

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14.12.2025

Abstract

Employee turnover poses a persistent challenge in the UK hospitality sector, especially in frontline service organisations such as Costa Coffee. Elevated turnover rates lead to higher recruitment costs, diminished service quality, and operational instability. This dissertation examines the influence of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK, with particular attention to employee satisfaction and customer experience.

This study employs a positivist research philosophy and a deductive, quantitative methodology. Data collection involved two structured questionnaires: one for employees to assess recruitment experiences, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, and another for customers to evaluate perceptions of service quality. The research utilised a total population sample of 15 employees and a convenience sample of around 50 customers. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied to identify relationships among recruitment practices, employee attitudes, and service outcomes.

The findings indicate that recruitment and selection practices significantly affect employee satisfaction and turnover intentions. Employees noted that although recruitment processes were generally transparent, they did not consistently reflect actual job conditions, resulting in moderate job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Customer feedback reflected generally positive service experiences, but inconsistencies were observed, potentially attributable to workforce instability. The study concludes that enhancing the realism, fairness, and employee development in recruitment can improve retention and service quality. Practical recommendations are provided to support more effective human resource management at Costa Coffee UK and across the broader hospitality sector.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Employee turnover presents a persistent challenge in the UK hospitality sector, where the demand for service excellence is accompanied by high workforce volatility. Among prominent organisations in this industry, Costa Coffee UK—a leading coffeehouse chain—experiences high staff turnover, particularly among frontline employees. High employee turnover can lead to increased operational costs, reduced service quality, and disruption in team cohesion, all of which can adversely affect organisational performance and customer satisfaction.

Recruitment and selection practices are integral to human resource management and play a critical role in shaping workforce stability. Ineffective or poorly aligned hiring strategies can result in the appointment of individuals who lack the requisite skills, motivation, or cultural fit, thereby contributing to early exits and higher turnover rates. Conversely, well-structured recruitment and selection processes that align with organisational goals and employee expectations can enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and retention.

Despite the significance of recruitment and selection practices in influencing workforce outcomes, there remains a limited understanding of how these processes impact employee turnover within specific organisational contexts. This research seeks to address this gap by focusing on Costa Coffee UK. The study aims to examine the relationship between the company's recruitment and selection practices and its employee turnover rates, to identify factors contributing to employee attrition, and to propose strategies to mitigate turnover through improved hiring practices.

Through a combination of literature review, empirical investigation, and data analysis, this dissertation intends to provide evidence-based insights into how Costa Coffee UK can enhance its recruitment and selection methods to support long-term employee retention. The research will contribute to the broader academic and practical understanding of effective human resource management in the hospitality sector.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Employee turnover remains a persistent and costly challenge in the UK hospitality industry. Frontline hospitality workers frequently report low job satisfaction, limited career progression, and a mismatch between job expectations and working conditions, often linked to shortcomings in recruitment and selection processes (CIPD, 2023; Davidson et al., 2010). Costa Coffee UK experiences similar challenges, with considerable turnover among baristas and other customer-facing employees.

Although Costa Coffee UK uses formal recruitment and selection procedures, it is unclear whether these practices effectively identify candidates who possess the necessary skills, motivation, and cultural fit to thrive in a demanding service environment. Poor alignment between recruitment messages, selection criteria, and the realities of the job may contribute to early exits, lower engagement, and ongoing cycles of hiring and training (Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Existing research frequently examines recruitment, selection, and turnover from a broad hospitality or service-sector perspective (Khatiri et al., 2001; Lucas et al., 2013), but there is a lack of organisation-specific studies focusing on Costa Coffee or comparable coffeehouse chains. As a result, managers and HR practitioners at Costa Coffee have limited evidence on which aspects of their recruitment and selection processes support retention and which may be contributing to turnover.

This study is therefore needed to address this gap by examining the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover within Costa Coffee UK. It will contribute to both theory and practice by linking recruitment and selection concepts—such as Person–job fit and realistic job previews—to actual turnover outcomes in a specific organisational context.

1.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Key theories and concepts from human resource management and organisational behaviour underpin this study.

First, **Person–Job Fit (P–J Fit) Theory** suggests that employees are more likely to experience satisfaction, commitment, and retention when their abilities, needs, and preferences align with the demands and characteristics of their jobs (Edwards, 1991). Poor fit can lead to stress, dissatisfaction, and higher turnover intentions. Recruitment and selection processes that accurately assess candidate skills and match them to role requirements are, therefore, crucial for reducing turnover (Breaugh, 2008).

Second, **Person–Organisation Fit (P–O Fit) Theory** emphasises the alignment between an individual's values and the organisation's culture, norms, and goals. When employees perceive a strong value congruence, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and remain with the organisation (Kristof, 1996). Recruitment messages and selection criteria that highlight and assess for cultural fit can strengthen retention (Cable and Judge, 1996).

Third, the **Realistic Job Preview (RJP) Theory** proposes that providing candidates with honest, balanced information about both the positive and challenging aspects of a job helps set accurate expectations, reducing the likelihood of shock, dissatisfaction, and early exit after hiring (Premack & Wanous, 1985). In a hospitality context, where roles can be physically and emotionally demanding, RJP's are particularly relevant.

Drawing on these theories, the conceptual framework for this study proposes that:

- Recruitment and selection practices influence the degree of Person–job and Person–organisation fit.
- Higher levels of perceived fit and accurate job expectations are associated with greater job satisfaction and commitment.
- Increased satisfaction and commitment are associated with lower turnover intentions and actual turnover (Hom et al., 2017).

Empirical studies in hospitality and service industries have found that effective recruitment and selection, including rigorous screening, structured interviews, and realistic job information, are associated with reduced turnover and improved retention (Khatri et al., 2001; Davidson et al., 2010). However, there is limited empirical work applying these concepts directly to Costa Coffee UK, which this study seeks to address.

1.3 Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover within Costa Coffee UK. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how existing recruitment and selection methods influence employees' decisions to remain with or leave the organisation and to identify strategies to enhance employee retention through improved hiring practices.

1.4. Objectives

To identify and describe the current recruitment and selection practices used by Costa Coffee UK.

To explore employee perceptions of these recruitment and selection practices.

To assess how these recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover within Costa Coffee UK.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve this purpose, the study is guided by two core research questions:

1. What recruitment and selection practices are currently employed by Costa Coffee UK, and how do employees perceive them?
2. How do these recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK?

1.6 Justification of the Research

The issue of employee turnover is particularly pronounced in the UK hospitality sector, where high attrition rates pose significant operational and financial challenges. According to industry reports, front-line hospitality workers often experience low job satisfaction, inadequate career progression opportunities, and poor alignment between job expectations and actual working conditions—factors that are frequently linked to shortcomings in recruitment and selection processes (CIPD, 2023). Given this context, there is a clear need to investigate how

recruitment and selection strategies influence employee retention, especially within large organisations such as Costa Coffee UK.

Costa Coffee, as one of the most recognised coffeehouse chains in the UK, employs a diverse and high-volume workforce across multiple locations. Turnover among its baristas and customer-facing staff not only disrupts operations but also incurs considerable costs related to hiring, onboarding, and training. Despite the importance of effective human resource management, there is a limited amount of academic research specifically examining the relationship between recruitment and selection practices and employee turnover within Costa Coffee or similar hospitality settings.

This research is therefore justified on both practical and academic grounds. Practically, the study provides insights that can inform evidence-based HR strategies aimed at enhancing recruitment effectiveness and minimising unnecessary turnover. By identifying which aspects of recruitment and selection contribute most significantly to employee retention or attrition, Costa Coffee can enhance its hiring processes, reduce costs, and improve organisational performance.

Academically, the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in human resource management and organisational behaviour by addressing a gap in empirical studies focusing on the hospitality industry in the UK. The study employs a quantitative approach, enabling the identification of statistically significant relationships and patterns that support generalisable conclusions and recommendations.

1.7 Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity, the following key terms are defined as they are used in this study:

- **Recruitment:** The process of attracting and generating a pool of suitable candidates for employment within Costa Coffee UK, including job advertising, sourcing methods, employer branding, and initial screening activities (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).
- **Selection:** The process of evaluating and choosing candidates from the applicant pool through methods such as application review, interviews, assessments, and reference checks, to appoint the most suitable individuals for specific roles (Marchington et al., 2016).
- **Employee Turnover:** The rate at which employees leave Costa Coffee UK over a specified period, whether voluntarily (resignation) or involuntarily (dismissal), and are replaced by new hires (Hom et al., 2017).
- **Frontline Employees:** Staff who interact directly with customers in-store, primarily baristas, team members, and shift leaders.
- **Person–Job Fit (P–J Fit):** The degree of alignment between an employee's skills, abilities, and preferences and the requirements, tasks, and conditions of the job role (Edwards, 1991).

- **Person–Organisation Fit (P–O Fit):** The degree of compatibility between an employee's values, beliefs, and personality and the culture, values, and norms of Costa Coffee UK (Kristof, 1996).
- **Realistic Job Preview (RJP):** Any communication or process that provides candidates with accurate and balanced information about both the positive and challenging aspects of the job before they accept an offer (Premack & Wanous, 1985).
- **Retention:** Costa Coffee UK's ability to retain employees over time, as reflected in lower levels of voluntary turnover.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of literature on recruitment and selection practices and their impact on employee turnover, with a focus on the hospitality sector. Although recruitment is recognised as a central human resource management (HRM) function, debate persists about whether effective recruitment alone can resolve ongoing turnover challenges in hospitality organisations. By examining both strategic HRM theories and hospitality-specific research, this chapter identifies areas of consensus, contradiction, and limitation in the literature. The review concludes by outlining a research gap that supports the rationale for the current study on Costa Coffee UK.

2.2 Strategic Perspectives on Recruitment and Selection

From a strategic HRM perspective, recruitment and selection are considered essential mechanisms for achieving long-term organisational performance and workforce stability. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) contend that recruitment should extend beyond filling vacancies to include alignment between employee capabilities, organisational culture, and job requirements. Their argument centres on the concepts of person–job fit and the psychological contract, which indicate that employees are more likely to remain with an organisation when recruitment expectations are met in practice.

Similarly, Phillips and Gully (2015) take a strategic, evidence-based approach, asserting that systematic recruitment practices, such as structured interviews, competency testing, and realistic job previews, are associated with lower turnover and greater employee commitment. Their empirical findings indicate that inadequate selection decisions contribute to early employee departures and increased organisational costs. However, these studies often assume that organisations possess the necessary time, resources, and stability to implement best-practice recruitment methods.

These assumptions may not be applicable in hospitality settings. Strategic HRM models typically reflect large corporate or professional environments and may

overlook operational pressures faced by hospitality managers, including labour shortages, demand volatility, and budget constraints. Consequently, although strategic recruitment models are theoretically robust, their practical relevance for coffeehouse chains such as Costa Coffee UK warrants further empirical investigation.

2.3 Recruitment Practices in the Hospitality Sector

Literature focused on the hospitality sector provides a more critical and contextualised perspective on recruitment and turnover. Baum (2015) contends that recruitment in hospitality is often reactive rather than strategic, driven by immediate operational demands rather than long-term retention goals. This short-term approach, according to Baum, leads to minimal screening, ambiguous job descriptions, and limited induction, all of which contribute to elevated turnover rates.

Kusluvan, Ilhan, and Buyruk (2010) reinforce this perspective, suggesting that hospitality organisations frequently regard employees as expendable, resulting in underinvestment in recruitment and development. Their research demonstrates that superficial recruitment processes, inadequate induction, and limited career advancement opportunities diminish employee commitment and heighten turnover intentions. This issue is especially pertinent for frontline hospitality roles, where employees may feel easily replaceable and undervalued.

However, this body of literature has been criticised for attributing excessive responsibility to employers. Davidson et al. (2010) argue that high turnover in hospitality is not exclusively caused by inadequate HR practices but is fundamentally linked to structural features of the sector, such as low wages, unsocial working hours, and limited advancement opportunities. From this perspective, even well-designed recruitment processes may be insufficient to address these persistent challenges. Therefore, recruitment should be considered as one element within a comprehensive retention strategy rather than a standalone solution.

2.4 Realistic Job Previews and Expectation Management

A significant area of debate in the literature involves the effectiveness of realistic job previews (RJPs) in reducing employee turnover. Premack and Wanous (1985) argue that offering accurate information about job demands during recruitment aligns expectations and decreases early departures. Subsequent studies, including Breaugh (2008), corroborate this view, indicating that transparency fosters trust and job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, hospitality researchers have questioned the feasibility of implementing RJPs in high-volume recruitment contexts. Baum (2015) observes that hospitality managers may refrain from highlighting negative aspects of the job due to concerns about discouraging applicants in a competitive labour market. This creates a tension between attracting candidates and managing realistic expectations.

Moreover, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of RJPs in fast-paced hospitality environments is limited. While RJPs may prove beneficial in professional or managerial roles, their impact on entry-level hospitality positions, where high pressure and turnover are often anticipated, is less certain. This inconsistency underscores the need for organisation-specific research, such as the current study on Costa Coffee UK.

2.5 Person–Job Fit and Person–Organisation Fit

Theories of person–job fit and person–organisation fit are commonly referenced as mechanisms connecting recruitment to retention. Kristof (1996) posits that employees who perceive alignment between their values and those of the organisation are more likely to remain committed. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) similarly contend that recruitment based on fit enhances engagement and reduces turnover.

However, critics maintain that fit-based recruitment can be challenging to implement in hospitality contexts. Edwards (1991) observes that fit theories frequently depend on subjective assessments, which may be impractical in high-volume recruitment settings. Additionally, hospitality roles are often highly standardised, providing limited opportunities for individual alignment. These factors call into question the universal applicability of fit theories across occupational contexts.

Some scholars further caution that an excessive emphasis on fit may unintentionally diminish workforce diversity or reinforce managerial bias. Therefore, although fit-based recruitment is theoretically attractive, its implementation in hospitality settings such as Costa Coffee requires careful assessment rather than uncritical adoption.

2.6 Critical Synthesis and Research Gap

In summary, the literature broadly agrees that recruitment and selection practices affect employee turnover. However, notable differences exist between strategic HRM perspectives, which stress long-term planning and structured processes, and hospitality-specific research, which emphasises operational constraints and structural labour challenges. While strategic models promote systematic recruitment to enhance retention, hospitality scholars question the practicality and sufficiency of these approaches in high-turnover environments.

A major limitation in the existing research is the scarcity of organisation-specific empirical studies, especially within UK coffeehouse chains. Much of the hospitality literature focuses on hotels and tourism, leaving limited exploration of retail hospitality. Additionally, few studies combine employee perspectives with recruitment theory to evaluate how recruitment experiences shape turnover intentions.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating recruitment and selection practices at Costa Coffee UK and analysing their relationship with employee

turnover. By integrating strategic HRM theory with hospitality-specific realities, the research aims to offer a more nuanced and contextually informed understanding of recruitment and retention in the UK hospitality sector.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to investigate the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK. It explains how the study has been designed and conducted to address the research aim and the following research questions:

1. What recruitment and selection practices are currently employed by Costa Coffee UK, and how do employees perceive them?
2. How do these recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK, and how might this be reflected in customer perceptions of service quality?

The chapter begins by presenting the research philosophy and approach to theory development, followed by the methodological choice and survey strategy. It then describes the time horizon, target population, sampling, and data collection methods used for both employees and customers. Finally, the chapter outlines the planned techniques for data analysis, and (in later sections) will discuss issues of reliability, validity and ethical considerations.

By clearly setting out these elements, this chapter provides a transparent justification for the research design. It ensures that the study is rigorous, replicable, and aligned with the dissertation's objectives.

3.1. Study Design

The overall research aim has shaped the design of this study: to examine the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK, and to explore how these practices may be reflected in customer perceptions of service quality. In line with this aim, the study adopts a **quantitative, cross-sectional survey design** within a **positivist, deductive** research framework (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman & Bell, 2015).

A **positivist philosophy** underpins the study, assuming that social reality can be observed and measured objectively through empirical data. This is appropriate because the research seeks to identify measurable relationships between variables such as perceived fairness of recruitment, clarity of job information, job satisfaction, turnover intentions and customer perceptions of service quality. A **deductive approach** is employed, whereby existing theories—such as Person–Organisation Fit Theory and Herzberg’s Motivation–Hygiene Theory—inform expectations about how recruitment and selection practices should influence

employee outcomes. These expectations are then tested using data collected from Costa Coffee employees and customers.

To operationalise this, the study uses a **survey strategy** with a **mono-method quantitative** choice. Two structured questionnaires are developed: one for employees and one for customers. The **employee survey** collects standardised data on recruitment and selection experiences, perceived fit, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The **customer survey** collects data on perceptions of service quality, which indirectly reflects the effects of staff stability and HR practices. Surveys are widely recognised as an efficient means of collecting quantitative data from relatively large samples. They are appropriate for studies seeking to describe patterns and examine relationships between variables at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study is **cross-sectional**, with data collected once during a defined period. This time horizon is suitable given the dissertation's practical constraints and the focus on capturing a "snapshot" of current perceptions among Costa Coffee employees and customers. The employee population consists of approximately 15 staff members in a selected store, all of whom will be invited to participate (total population sampling). For customers, a convenience sample of around 50 respondents will be surveyed in the exact location.

Each step in the execution of the research will be carried out systematically:

Development of two structured questionnaires based on the literature and theoretical framework.

Pilot testing of the employee survey (and, where possible, the customer survey) to ensure clarity and relevance.

Distribution of questionnaires to employees and customers, accompanied by an information sheet and consent statement.

Collection and coding of responses into a statistical package (e.g., Excel or SPSS).

Analysis of data using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means) and correlation/cross-tabulation to explore relationships between recruitment practices, employee turnover intentions and customer perceptions.

By combining a positivist philosophy, deductive reasoning, and a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, this study is well-suited to generating objective, comparable data and providing evidence-based conclusions about the impact of recruitment and selection practices on turnover at Costa Coffee UK.

3.1 Participants

This study involves two groups: Costa Coffee employees and Costa Coffee customers. Including both groups allows the research to explore how staff experience recruitment and selection practices internally and how these practices' outcomes may be reflected in customer perceptions of service quality.

3.2.1 Employee Participants

The employee participants will consist of approximately **12 frontline staff members** working at a selected Costa Coffee store in the UK. This group may include baristas, team members and shift leaders. All frontline employees in the selected store will be invited to participate using a **total-population sampling** approach.

Recruitment of Employees

Employees will be informed about the study via an invitation from the researcher and/or store management. They will receive:

- A brief explanation of the purpose of the research
- An information sheet attached to the questionnaire (or on the first page of an online form)
- A consent statement confirming that participation is voluntary and anonymous.

Employees may complete the questionnaire at their convenience, either on paper or online. One polite reminder may be given after the initial invitation to encourage participation, but no pressure will be applied. No financial incentives will be offered; instead, employees will be informed that their participation may help improve understanding of recruitment and working conditions at Costa Coffee.

3.2.2 Customer Participants

The customer participants will comprise approximately **50 customers** who visit the same Costa Coffee store during the data collection period. They will be invited to complete a short survey about their perceptions of service quality in the store. A convenience sampling method will be used. Customers will be approached in-store by the researcher and briefly informed that:

The survey is part of an academic dissertation.

It is anonymous and voluntary.

It will take only a few minutes to complete.

Customers who agree to participate will receive a paper questionnaire or be directed to an online survey via a QR code. A short information statement and consent question will be included at the beginning of the survey. Customers will not be required to provide any personal demographic information. No incentives are planned; participants will be thanked for their time and contribution.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses findings from two questionnaires conducted at Costa Coffee UK. One questionnaire addresses employee satisfaction, recruitment, and turnover intention, while the other examines customer

experience and perceptions of service quality. The results are analysed in relation to the research aim and questions and interpreted within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. By integrating employee and customer perspectives, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of how recruitment and selection practices influence employee retention and how these internal human resource outcomes are reflected in customer service experiences.

4.2 Findings from the Employee Satisfaction Questionnaire

4.2.1 Recruitment and Selection Experiences

The employee questionnaire revealed mixed perceptions of Costa Coffee's recruitment and selection practices. Some respondents expressed satisfaction with the recruitment process, while a substantial proportion selected neutral responses, particularly regarding whether the process accurately reflected job realities. This neutrality suggests a lack of engagement rather than explicit dissatisfaction, as it indicates neither strong approval nor disapproval.

These findings align with Armstrong and Taylor (2020), who argue that recruitment should extend beyond filling vacancies to ensure long-term alignment between employee expectations and organisational realities. The responses suggest that Costa Coffee may provide basic job information but not deliver sufficiently realistic job previews. As Breaugh (2013) highlights, when recruitment fails to present a clear picture of job demands, employees are more likely to experience unmet expectations, which can lead to dissatisfaction and early turnover.

4.2.2 Job Satisfaction and Motivation

Employee job satisfaction levels were generally moderate. While some respondents reported satisfaction with their roles, many selected neutral responses, indicating limited emotional engagement with their work. This pattern aligns with Herzberg's Motivation–Hygiene Theory (1959), which distinguishes between factors that prevent dissatisfaction and those that actively promote satisfaction. The findings suggest that Costa Coffee may be meeting fundamental hygiene factors, such as providing employment and a structured role. Still, they may lack in delivering motivators such as recognition, career development, and meaningful involvement.

Furthermore, several employees indicated that the quality of the recruitment process influenced their job satisfaction. This finding reinforces the theoretical perspective that recruitment is a foundational human resource process shaping employee attitudes and commitment. Phillips and Gully (2015) emphasise that recruitment decisions directly affect employee engagement and retention by determining the quality of person–job and person–organisation fit.

Turnover intention emerged as a significant issue in the employee responses. A notable proportion of respondents reported considering leaving Costa Coffee in the past 12 months, and many perceived employee turnovers within the

organisation as high. These perceptions indicate a work environment characterised by instability and frequent staff changes.

The literature consistently identifies high turnover as a defining challenge in the hospitality sector. Baum (2015) argues that hospitality organisations often experience a turnover cycle driven by low wages, demanding working conditions, and limited career progression. The employee responses at Costa Coffee strongly reflect these sector-wide challenges. Kusluvan et al. (2010) further suggest that high turnover can normalise exit behaviour, reduce organisational commitment and increase the likelihood that remaining employees will also consider leaving.

4.2.4 Employee Perceptions of Service Quality

Despite moderate satisfaction and high turnover intention, employees generally agreed that enhanced recruitment and retention practices would improve service quality. This finding indicates employee awareness of the relationship between staffing stability and customer experience. Such awareness suggests that employees recognise their role in delivering service quality but may feel constrained by organisational factors such as staffing shortages or limited support.

This perception aligns with the Service-Profit Chain model (Heskett et al., 1994), which proposes that employee satisfaction and retention are critical drivers of service quality and customer satisfaction. Employees' recognition of this link highlights the strategic importance of recruitment and retention practices in customer-facing organisations such as Costa Coffee.

4.3 Findings from the Customer Experience Questionnaire

4.3.1 Overall Customer Satisfaction

The customer questionnaire results indicate generally positive perceptions of service quality at Costa Coffee UK. Many customers reported satisfaction with staff friendliness and approachability, suggesting that employees maintain acceptable service standards despite internal challenges. This outcome reflects the strong service culture typically associated with established coffeehouse brands but also reveals variability in service consistency. Some customers expressed neutral or less-positive views on service speed and staff attentiveness. Such inconsistency is particularly significant in hospitality contexts, where customer expectations are shaped by brand consistency and efficiency.

4.3.2 Service Consistency and Responsiveness

Variation in customer responses regarding service efficiency and responsiveness may indicate underlying operational challenges. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model identifies reliability and responsiveness as core dimensions of service quality. Neutral or negative perceptions in these areas suggest that service delivery may be affected by factors such as employee inexperience, understaffing, or high turnover.

Hoque (2013) argues that high turnover and limited training in hospitality organisations often lead to inconsistent service, as new employees may lack

confidence and procedural knowledge. The customer findings at Costa Coffee support this argument, as inconsistent service quality may reflect varying levels of employee experience and stability.

4.3.3 Staff Interaction and Professionalism

Customers' perceptions of staff professionalism and competence were generally positive but varied. While many customers found the staff friendly and helpful, others expressed uncertainty about the staff's competence and efficiency. This variability may be linked to differences in employee training and tenure, particularly in environments with frequent staff turnover.

Karatepe (2013) suggests that employee engagement and supportive supervision significantly influence service behaviours in hospitality settings. Where employees feel supported and confident, they are more likely to deliver high-quality service interactions. The mixed customer responses, therefore, indirectly reflect the employee satisfaction findings, reinforcing the connection between internal HR practices and external service outcomes.

4.4 Comparative Discussion: Linking Employee Satisfaction and Customer Experience

Taken together, the employee and customer questionnaires reveal a clear relationship between recruitment practices, employee satisfaction, turnover intention, and customer experience. Employees reported moderate satisfaction and high turnover intention, while customers reported generally positive but inconsistent service quality. This pattern suggests that although Costa Coffee maintains baseline service standards, workforce instability may impede the delivery of consistently high-quality service.

These findings support the Service-Profit Chain model (Heskett et al., 1994), which posits that employee satisfaction and retention underpin service quality and customer satisfaction. At Costa Coffee, low employee engagement and high turnover intention lead to service variability rather than widespread customer dissatisfaction. This suggests that improving recruitment and retention practices could enhance service consistency and strengthen customer loyalty.

The findings also reinforce the relevance of Person–Job Fit and Psychological Contract theories. Employees who perceived that recruitment did not accurately reflect job demands reported lower satisfaction and higher turnover intentions, which may, in turn, affect service delivery. This demonstrates that recruitment practices have both direct and indirect impacts on organisational performance.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has analysed and discussed findings from employee satisfaction and customer experience questionnaires at Costa Coffee UK. The results indicate that recruitment and selection practices play a critical role in shaping employee satisfaction and turnover intentions, which, in turn, influence customer service

quality. While Costa Coffee generally delivers positive customer experiences, inconsistencies in service delivery reflect underlying human resource challenges, particularly high turnover and moderate employee engagement. The following chapter will present conclusions and recommendations based on these findings, offering strategies to enhance recruitment effectiveness, employee retention, and service quality at Costa Coffee UK.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the dissertation by summarising the key findings regarding the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK. It provides conclusions aligned with the research aim and questions, offers practical recommendations for Costa Coffee, and outlines the study's limitations and suggests future research.

5.2 Conclusions

The present study examined the impact of recruitment and selection practices on employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK, as well as the extent to which these practices are reflected in customer perceptions of service quality. The conclusions are organised according to the two research questions that guided the investigation.

Regarding the first research question, which concerns the recruitment and selection practices currently employed by Costa Coffee UK and employee perceptions of these practices, the findings indicate that Costa Coffee utilises standardised recruitment and selection methods typical of the hospitality sector. These methods include online job advertisements, brief interviews, and basic role explanations prior to appointment. Employees generally regarded these practices as procedurally adequate and fair; however, they did not consider them effective in preparing candidates for the realities of frontline work. Many respondents expressed neutral views about whether recruitment accurately reflected job demands, suggesting limited engagement rather than strong satisfaction. This suggests that, although recruitment processes are in place, they may lack depth, particularly in providing realistic job previews, structured assessment, and clear communication of workload expectations. These findings are consistent with Armstrong and Taylor (2020) and Breaugh (2013), who argue that recruitment processes prioritising speed over realism often fail to ensure a strong person–job fit.

In relation to the second research question, which examines how recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK and how this may be reflected in customer perceptions of service quality, the findings demonstrate a clear relationship between recruitment quality, employee

satisfaction, and turnover intention. Employees who perceived recruitment as insufficiently realistic or poorly aligned with actual job demands reported lower satisfaction and higher intentions to leave. This finding supports psychological contract theory, which posits that unmet expectations formed during recruitment can lead to disengagement and increased turnover. High turnover intention was widely reported, reflecting both recruitment shortcomings and broader challenges within the hospitality sector, such as demanding working conditions and limited opportunities for career progression.

The influence of recruitment and turnover extended beyond internal organisational outcomes and was evident in customer experiences. While customers generally reported positive service encounters, notable inconsistencies were observed in service speed, responsiveness, and professionalism. These inconsistencies reflect the employee findings and suggest that workforce instability, partly resulting from recruitment and retention challenges, negatively affects service consistency. This relationship is consistent with the Service-Profit Chain model, which posits that employee satisfaction and retention underpin service quality and customer satisfaction. In this study, moderate employee engagement and high turnover intention did not eliminate service quality but contributed to variability rather than consistently high standards.

In summary, the conclusions confirm that recruitment and selection practices at Costa Coffee UK play a significant role in shaping employee expectations, satisfaction, and turnover, with tangible implications for customer experience. Enhancing recruitment realism, strengthening onboarding processes, and improving retention strategies would likely reduce employee turnover and support more consistent, higher-quality customer service delivery.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for Costa Coffee UK. First, the organisation should enhance recruitment practices by providing more realistic job previews. Clearly communicating job demands, workload, and expectations would better align candidate expectations and reduce early turnover. Second, Costa Coffee should ensure consistency and fairness in recruitment and selection processes across all stores. Implementing standardised recruitment procedures and providing training for hiring managers would improve transparency and enhance employee perceptions of fairness.

Third, the company should invest in structured induction and practical training programmes. Enhanced training would increase employee confidence, reduce stress, and improve service quality, particularly for new hires.

Finally, greater emphasis should be placed on employee recognition and development. Providing regular feedback, appreciation, and clear career pathways could improve motivation, engagement, and long-term retention.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The sample size was small and restricted to a single Costa Coffee store, which limits the generalisability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported questionnaires may also introduce response bias. Future research should include multiple stores, larger samples, and longitudinal designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of recruitment, retention, and service quality in the hospitality sector.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that recruitment and selection practices significantly impact employee turnover and service quality at Costa Coffee UK. Enhancing recruitment realism, training, and employee support would improve retention and enable more consistent customer experiences.

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Appendix

Participant Information and Consent

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted as part of an academic dissertation at the **University of Wales Trinity Saint David**. Before deciding whether to participate, please read the information below carefully.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how recruitment and selection practices influence employee turnover at Costa Coffee UK and how these practices may affect customer perceptions of service quality.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without incurring any negative consequences.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. No personal or identifying information will be collected. Data will be used solely for academic purposes and will be reported in aggregated form.

Data Collection

You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire, which will take approximately 5–10 minutes. The questionnaire includes statements relating to recruitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions (for employees) or service quality perceptions (for customers).

Data Storage and Use

All data collected will be securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. The data will be used exclusively for this dissertation and will not be shared with third parties.

Ethical Approval

This research has been conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines and academic regulations of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Consent Statement

Please confirm your consent by ticking the box below or by proceeding with the questionnaire.

- ☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information above.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time.
- ☐ I understand that my responses will remain anonymous and confidential.
- ☐ I consent to take part in this research study.

Participant Signature (if paper-based): _____

Date: _____

You may decline to participate in this study. You may end your participation in this study at any time. If you decide to remain anonymous, your anonymity will be prioritised, and every practical precaution will be taken to protect your identity. If you prefer anonymity, there will not be any identifying information on audiotapes or transcripts of this or any interview. No one will hear any audiotapes or see any transcripts without your prior consent. All materials generated from this or any interview will remain confidential. When completed, please return it in the envelope provided. One copy will be given to you, and the original to be kept in the file of the research team at:

Ana Cojocari

105 Norwich walk

SS143QZ

University of Wales Trinity Saint David (London Campus)

Winchester House

11 Cranmer Road

London – SW9 6EJ

Tel: +442075667600

Email: info.london@uwtsd.ac.uk

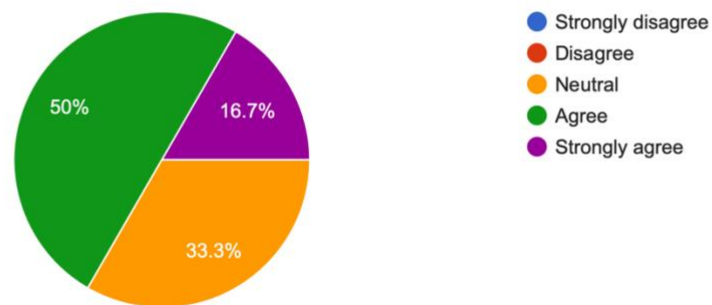
———: londonstudentservice@uwtsd.ac.uk

Form - Costa Shop: Recruitment, Job Satisfaction, & Turnover is valid in this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeuC2a2J5cnbWa6NnEJjbt3zm_EiOjX0WysEdaYZbVvV-DCog/viewform?usp=header

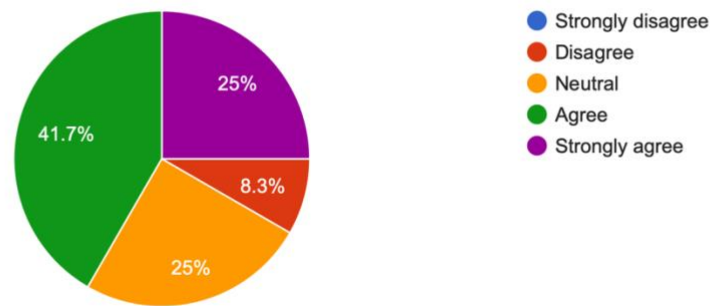
I was satisfied with the recruitment and selection process when I joined the company.

12 responses



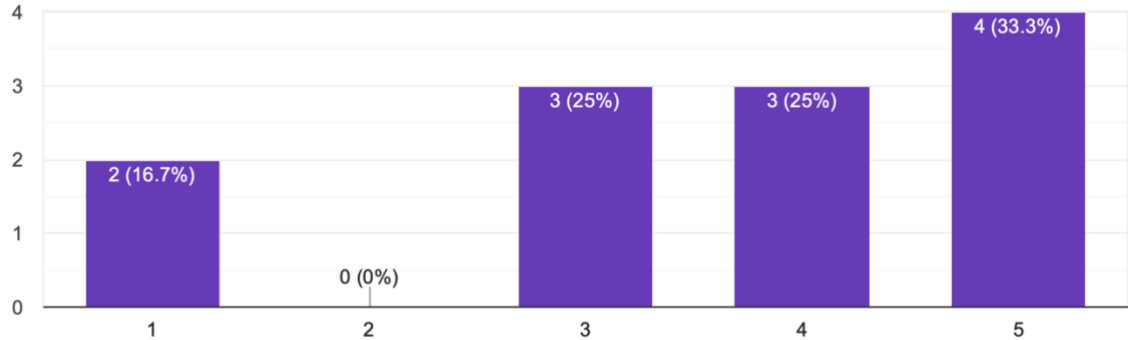
The job role and responsibilities were clearly explained during recruitment.

12 responses



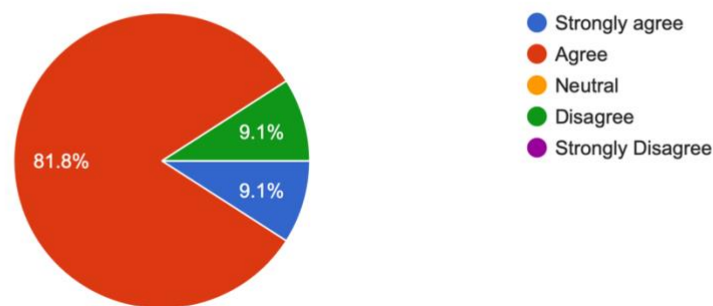
My skills and qualifications are well matched to my job.

12 responses

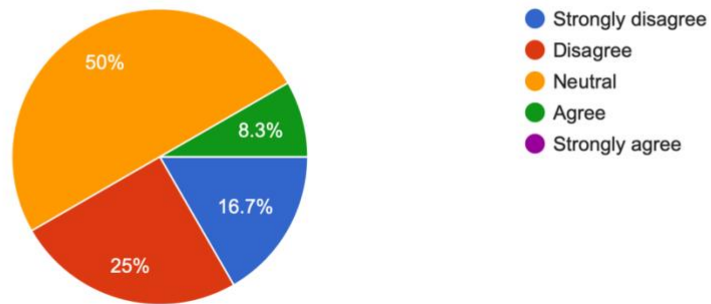


I receive sufficient training and support to perform my duties effectively.

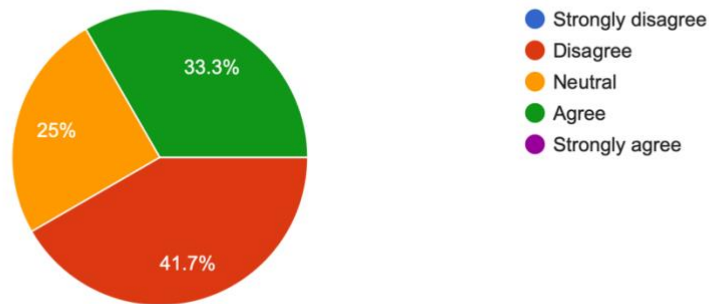
11 responses



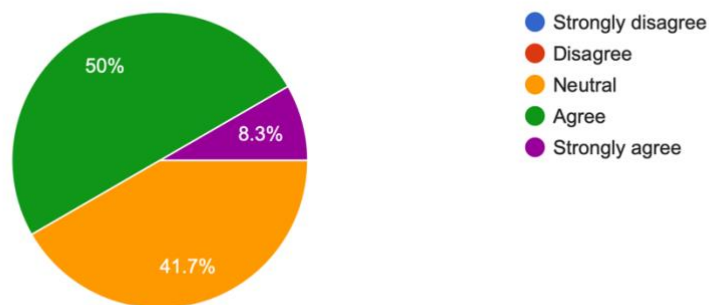
. I feel valued and recognised for the work I do
12 responses



I am satisfied with my current working environment.
12 responses

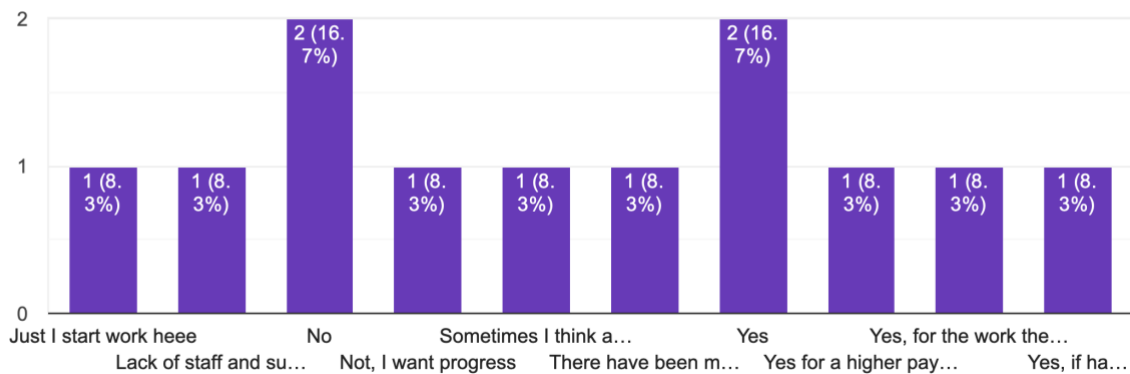


I see opportunities for career development within the company.
12 responses



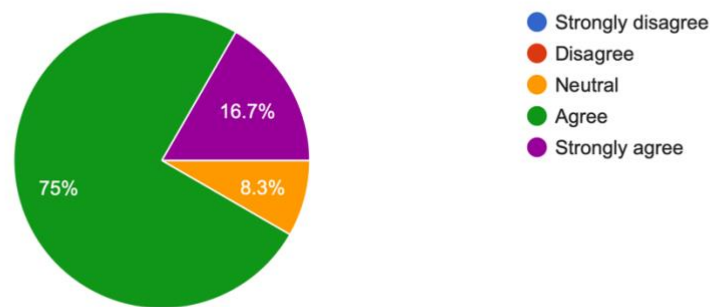
I often think about leaving this job for another.

12 responses



Better recruitment and retention practices improve service quality.

12 responses



What improvements would you suggest to improve employee recruitment and retention?

11 responses

Create a positive, supportive environment where everyone feels valued. Team-building activities or short social events help build connections.

Fairer rota planning in advance so staff can manage their personal commitments. Ensuring appropriate staffing levels to avoid burnout during busy periods.

Regular review of pay to stay competitive with the market. Benefits such as free drinks/discounts, paid breaks, or bonuses for performance

Provide structured, hands-on training so new employees feel confident quickly.

Pair new starters with experienced "buddies" to support them in the first few weeks.

To improve recruitment and retention, I'd suggest offering clearer career development opportunities, stronger onboarding and ongoing training, fair and flexible scheduling, and regular recognition for good work. Building a positive team culture and ensuring competitive pay will also help attract and keep great staff.

Listen to the staff about their concerns. Take action on important issues involving staff members. Have members of staff trained by team leaders/managers so that they know the correct procedures/cleaning tasks.

Show employees the steps to becoming a Barista Maestro, Supervisor, or Manager—regular check-ins to discuss goals and development plans.

I'm satisfied with the recruitment process

to appreciate the person on time, not after being fired

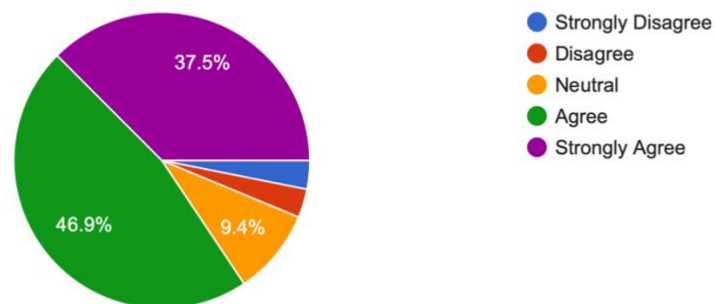
Hans on training before starting

Form - Costa Coffee: Service Quality Perception is valid on this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLu9T7-n7IUoVBy2nv3nIjfSjNMVZiLCXcjgCyx19oCwadCg/viewform?usp=header>

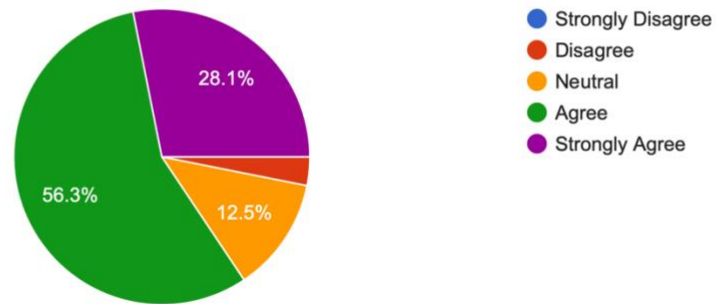
The staff were friendly and welcoming.

32 responses



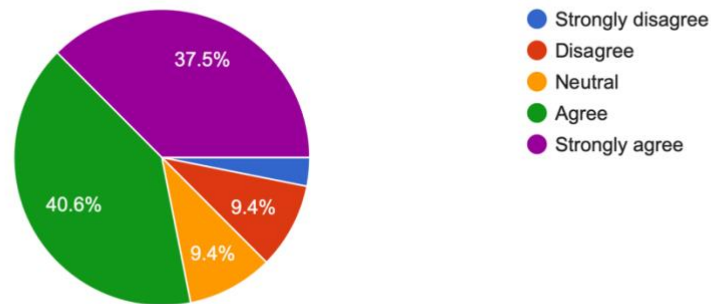
The employees seemed knowledgeable and well-trained.

32 responses



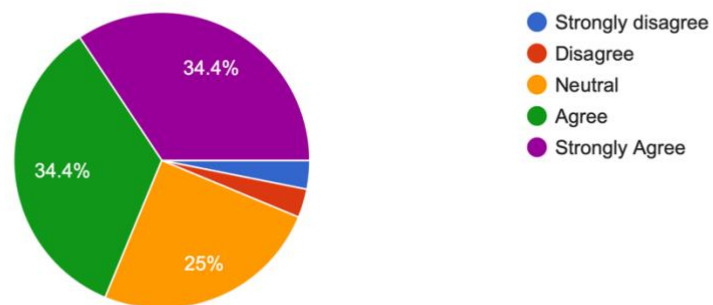
Service was provided efficiently, with minimal wait times.

32 responses

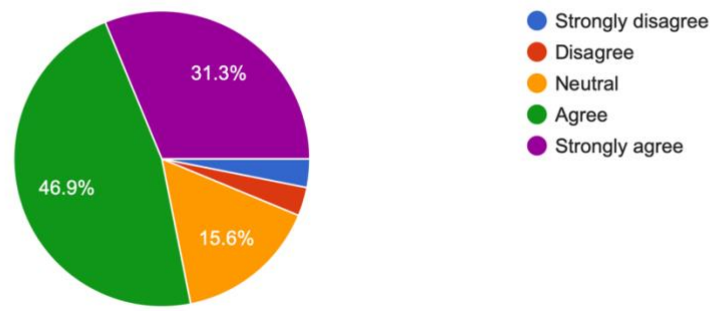


Staff members showed interest in meeting my needs.

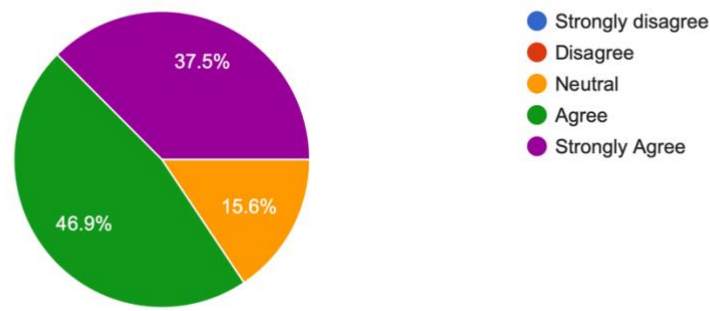
32 responses



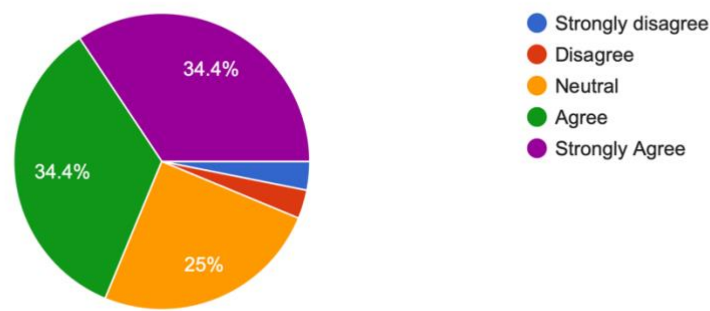
I am satisfied with the overall quality of service.
32 responses



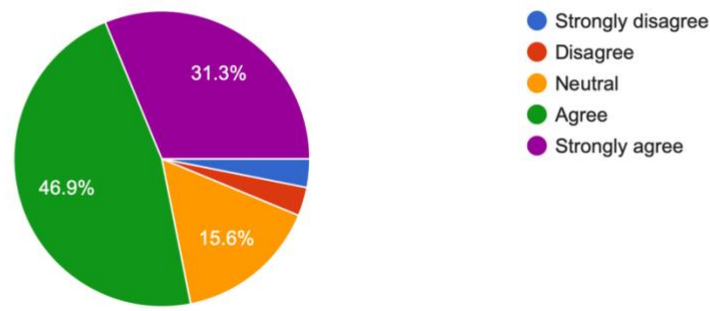
Service quality is consistent each time I visit.
32 responses



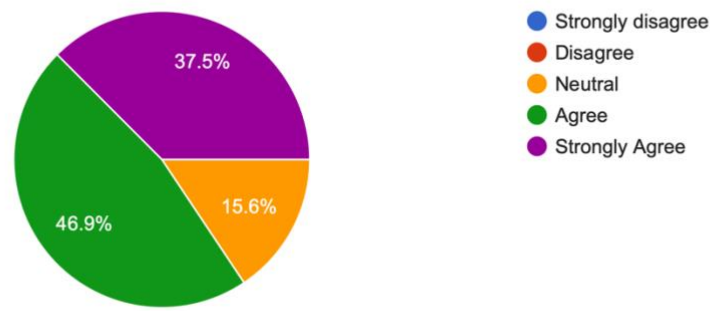
Staff members showed interest in meeting my needs.
32 responses



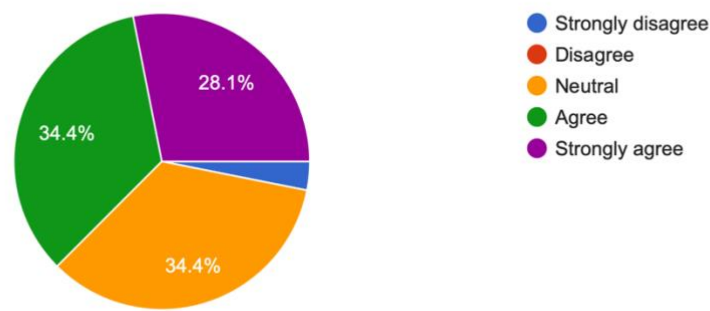
I am satisfied with the overall quality of service.
32 responses



Service quality is consistent each time I visit.
32 responses

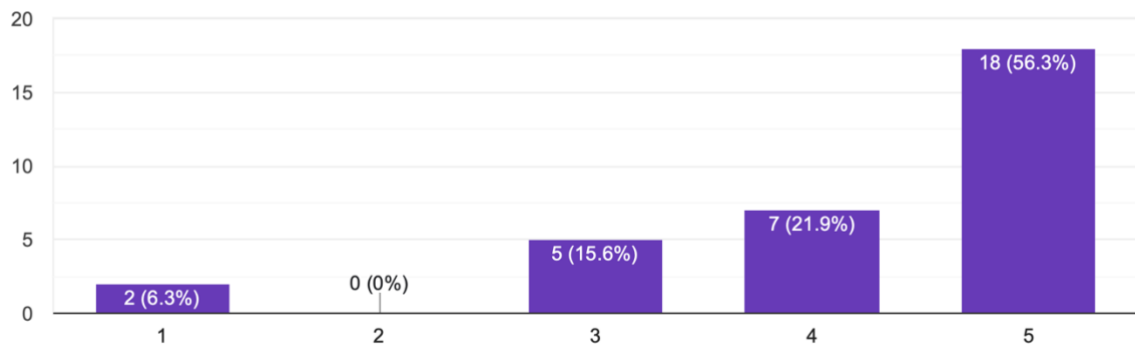


Employees are motivated and enjoy their work.
32 responses



I recommend this coffee shop to others.

32 responses



Open-ended:

What could be improved to enhance your customer experience?

17 responses

The staff are rude and unprofessional. They clearly do not want their jobs. In a hospital, people are going through various issues, and a warm welcome could make all the difference. The staff in this Costa should be ashamed of their behaviour. I alerted a member of staff to flies on tea cakes on one occasion; the staff member lifted the lid, flicked the flies away, and left the tea cakes there for sale. The staff here do not align with their company values. The odd member of staff is ok, but they are let down by rude, ignorant colleagues who can't even be bothered to speak to customers.

Everything is ok

Faster service during peak hours, such as hiring more people

Being able to scan the Costa card to collect beans.

If we can scan the Costa app in there, it would be brilliant

To be more promotional

Improved mobile app for ordering and rewards

To implement Costa rewards (at the moment, they don't use it)

The manager needs be present more of the time in the store

Need more staff, bustling place

To have more deals

More comfortable seating and better space layout

Quick service,

Always long cues

How often do you visit this coffee shop?

32 responses

