



A LITERATURE REVIEW ON FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE QUALITY IN RESTAURANTS

Prof. Kalgi Shah, Assistant Professor

National Institute of Cooperative Management, NICM-SJPI, Gandhinagar,

Nr. Indroda Circle, Gandhinagar-382007 Gujarat

&

Dr. A N Sanghvi, Director (Development)

Faculty of Management Studies, C.U.Shah University, Surendranagar - Ahmedabad Highway,

Nr. Kothariya Village, Wadhwan, Gujarat 363030

&

Dr. Mamta Brahmhatt, Associate Professor

B.K. School of Business Management , Gujarat University, Navrangpura,

Ahmedabad-380009,Gujarat

ABSTRACT

The major objective of any service is to meet need of the customers. Due to unique characteristics of services, measurement of service quality becomes very subjective. But researchers have explored the area and have developed various instruments to measure the quality of the services. This paper attempts to study all research instruments, scale and techniques. The major focus of this paper is on “Restaurant Services”. The paper tries to summaries different dimensions and attributes pertaining service quality of Restaurants. Published research papers on service quality were collected from online data base and journals from libraries.

Key Words: Service Quality, Scales and Instruments, SERVQUAL, DINSERVE

1. Introduction

Food, Shelter and Water, these three things are essential for mankind to survive. When it comes to food, we can note the change in the eating patterns of people starting from the era of hunting and gathering for food. By the time the consumption of fast-food is increased. Therefore the

scope of business is also increased in fast-food outlets. In the competitive environment it is necessary for service provider to be unique. A Fast Food Restaurant, also known as a Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) within the industry, is a specific type of restaurant characterized both by its fast food cuisine and by minimal table service. Food and beverage industry plays major role in economic growth. The Indian food industry is of considerable size, with a latent demand of around US \$ 12 billion as of 2009.

Service Quality has always been attractive area for the researchers. The major reason behind that is service quality directly affects customer satisfaction. According to Kumar, Kee and Manshor(2009) High level of service quality leads to high customer satisfaction and thereby increases customer loyalty. For any marketing activity, customer satisfaction is major output.(Oliver, 1980; Naeem & Safi, 2009). In restaurant, especially where there is a mix of product and service, restaurants are likely to have impact on service quality more than on product quality. Hence, service quality is defined as customer perceptions and how well a service meets those expectations.

2. Objective

The objective of this paper is to review the literature of service quality in restaurant services. This helps to understand the importance of service quality in restaurant services. The previous studies regarding service quality in restaurants have covered major service quality concerns but many of them have ignored hybrid nature of restaurant services. Very few studies have covered product part (Food, Utensil etc) for quality measurement. This research will seek to close the gap in this field of study.

3. Definition and Dimension of Service Quality

Gronross (1984), Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and Johnston (1995) defined the service quality as customer satisfaction, i.e. the degree of fit between customers' expectations and perceptions of service. "Quality is a measurement of various attributes of a product or services as against meeting a specific need at certain place and time." Juran (1989) stated quality as fitness for use. It means that the product meets the customer's needs and having no defects. Goetsch (1994 a, b) and Spencer (1994) defined quality as satisfying or delighting the customer.

Sasser, Olsen, & Wyckoff (1978), listed seven service attributes which they believe adequately embrace the concept of service quality. These include: *Security, Consistency, Attitude, Completeness, Condition, Availability, and Training*.

Gronroos (1991) identified three dimensions of service quality: the “*technical quality of the outcome*”, the “*functional quality of the encounter*”, and the “*company corporate image*”.

Lehtinen (1982) also described service quality in three dimensions: the “*physical quality*” (of products and/or services), the “*corporate quality*” (the company image) and “*interactive quality*” (interaction between the consumer and the service organization).

Parasuraman Zeithaml and Berry (1985) list ten determinants of service quality that can be generalized to any type of service. It includes: *Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Competence, Access, Courtesy, Communication, Credibility, Security, and Understanding*.

These ten dimensions were regrouped in the well known five dimensions in the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1990) which include *tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy*.

4. Instruments to measure Service Quality

SERVQUAL, a model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), is widely used to measure service quality Cao (2011). The SERVQUAL model is based on the gap between customers’ expectations and performance perceptions.

- **Reliability:** to deliver the promised service to the customer in an accurate manner.
- **Responsiveness:** the willingness to respond to and resolve customer problems.
- **Assurance:** the ability to instil confidence and trust in the customer.
- **Empathy:** the ability to empathise with and understand the customer.
- **Tangibles:** the appearance of staff, equipment and the physical facilities

Widely used SERVQUAL has several criticism like measuring customer expectations in service quality is not necessary at all Joung (2009). So, Cronin and Taylor (1992) have created a performance-based service quality measure, the **SERVPREF** model.

Unlike SERVQUAL, SERVPREF measures actual performance on the basis of satisfaction of customers Al Khattab & Aldehayyat (2011) with the help of SERVQUAL performance items Carrillat, Jaramillo & Mulki (2007), SERVPREF suggests respondents to provide their score by the mean of comparison between performance expectations and performance perceptions Culiberg & Rojsek (2010). Some researchers have agreed that SERVPREF is better than SERVQUAL when it comes to measuring service quality (Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011; Carrillat et al., 2007; Vanniarajan & Meenakshinathan, 2007; Jain & Gupta, 2004). In fact Jain and Gupta (2004) has found SERVPREF as a more discriminate valid than SERVQUAL in measuring service quality of fast-food outlets.

5. Service Quality in Restaurants

Avelini-Holjevac gave an interesting definition of service quality in hotel industry: "Quality means achievement of estimated standards and their constant maintenance, i.e. an ongoing process. High-class hotels render the highest standards and highest quality products and service, with the most extensive scope of expensive hotel service. Economy class hotels offer products and service of lower quality, with a limited scope of less expensive service" Avelini-Holjevac (2002).

Because of change in social environment, better education, well developed culinary culture, healthy food awareness and cultural influences, the expectation of dining has evolved. There will be more sophistication in dining due to customers' willingness to enlarge dining horizons and try new things Wishna (2000). Thus it is important to know, understand and meet customers' expectations from the restaurants.

Mohsin et al. (2005) studied that variety and quality of food, staff related skills, presentation and manners of time, timely services and value for money are major expectations of customers in New Zealand restaurants and cafes.

The assessment of restaurant quality is influenced by many factors. Previous work suggested that food quality, physical environment and services are the important factors of overall service quality (Dulen 1999; Susskind & Chan 2000). The service quality of a restaurant is mostly associated with food quality (Sulek & Hensley 2004). It is an important requirement to satisfy need and expectation of customers Peri (2006). Food quality is not only single component hence presentation of food, healthy options, freshness and temperature of food taste should be focused (Namkung & Jang 2008).

It is difficult to measure service quality in restaurants because the measurements are done not only on service outcome but also on the procedure of service delivery. Wu and Liang (2009) said that there are three main components that encounter service quality: Environmental Elements (e.g. design, music, lighting), employees (e.g. professional skills, reliability) and customers (e.g. interaction with other customers).

There are several studies conducted for service quality and customer satisfaction relationship in restaurants. Andaleeb and Conway's (2006) study showed that customer satisfaction is significantly affected by the responsiveness of the employees, price and food quality. Kim et al. (2009) researched that five extracted restaurant dimension (food quality, service quality, price and value, atmosphere and convenience) had a significant effect on overall customer satisfaction. According to Wu and Liang (2009) employees of restaurants affect customer satisfaction. The research of Liu and Jang (2009) indicated that food quality (taste, food safety, menu variety, food presentation), service reliability, environmental cleanliness, interior design, and neat and well dressed employees significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

As restaurants are part of hospitality industry, literature review says that cleanliness (Atkinson 1988; Knutson 1988; Gundersen, Heide and Olsson 1996), employees' empathy and competence (Atkinson 1988; Knutson 1988; Barsky and Labagh 1992; Gundersen, Heide and Olsson 1996; Choi and Chu 2001; Markovi ć 2004), security and safety (Atkinson, 1988; Knutson, 1988; Gundersen et al. 1996), location convenience (Knutson 1988; Barsky and Labagh 1992), value for money (Atkinson 1988; Gundersen, Heide and Olsson 1996; Choi and Chu 2001) and physical facilities (Choi and Chu 2001; Markovi ć 2004) are attributes that guests perceive as being important. Shaikh and Khan (2011) concluded that the tangibles and responsiveness, which are the two important dimensions of service quality, have a significant impact on the satisfaction of restaurant customers of Pakistan.

A number of studies (e.g. Stevens et al., 1995; John and Tyas, 1996; Qin and Prybutok, 2008; Qin, Prybutok and Zhao, 2010) have been carried out in measuring service quality in the fast food industry. Kara, Kaynak, and Kucukemiroglu (1995) examined customer perception of fast food restaurants service quality in the United States and Canada using eleven traits : price, friendliness of personnel, variety of menu, service speed, cleanliness, calorie content, convenience, business hours, novelties for children, service delivery and seating facilities. DINESERV is developed from the service quality measurement, 22 items' SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1988). Reliability of service customers is vital dimension in meeting expectations of customers specially in restaurant business. "The quality of the food which includes aesthetic appearance, aroma, temperature and taste of food is the reason why people visit restaurants" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2009). DINESERV developed by Stevens, Knutson, and Patton (1995), Was a result when "SERVQUAL" was not appropriate model for the unique environment of restaurant services. (Dube, Renaghan, & Miller, 1994). DINESERV was tested in three restaurant divisions, namely fine dining, casual and quick service, and had founded with high level of reliability. Stevens et al. (1995) has added seven extra restaurant specific item along with SERVQUAL's five dimensions.

Final version of DINESERV Stevens et al. (1995) contains 29 items in total. Out of which ten statements represent tangibles; five present reliability; three represent responsiveness; six statements representing assurance and five for empathy.

SERVQUAL, SERVPREF, DINESERV have been used in food industry yet they have limitation in that they have not broadly covered food quality which is related to product itself and which proved to be an important dimension in the fast-food Cao (2011). As a result this study is focused in the Institutional DINESERV was proposed by Ng (2005) which has base of DINESERV model Stevents et al. (1995) and has included food quality dimension.

The Institutional DINESERV Model examines *Food Quality, Atmosphere, Service Quality, Convenience as well as Price and Value*. Ng (2005) proposed that these dimensions influence customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry.

Table 1 Summary of factors affecting service quality in restaurants

Authors	Factors								
	Food Quality(Including Taste and Temperature)	Price	Physical Environment	Cleanliness	Speed and Accuracy	Location	Staff Behaviour/ Friendliness	Convenient Hours	Restaurant Image
Tan et al. (2014)	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y		Y
Hwang et al. (2013)					Y				
Yunus et al.(2013)	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y		
Harrington et al. (2013)	Y			Y	Y		Y		
Zhang et al. (2013)	Y								
Ryu et al. (2012)	Y		Y						Y
Haghighi et al. (2012)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Wen et al.(2012)		Y	Y		Y		Y		Y
Harrington et al. (2011)					Y				
Jo and Oh (2011)	Y								
Barber and Scarcelli (2010)				Y					
Qin et al. (2010)		Y	Y		Y		Y		Y
Pantelidis (2010)	Y	Y	Y		Y				
Ha and Jang (2010)	Y		Y		Y				
Qin and Prybutok (2009)	Y								
Namkung and Jang (2008)	Y		Y		Y				
Meng et al. (2008)	Y	Y	Y				Y		

	Food Quality (Including Taste and Temperature)	Price	Physical Environment	Cleanliness	Speed and Accuracy	Location	Staff Behaviour/ Friendliness	Convenient Hours	Restaurant Image
Roseman and Niblock (2007)	Y								
Gupta et al. (2007)	Y								
Andaleeb et al. (2007)	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Kim, Lee, and Yoo (2006)	Y	Y	Y				Y		
Reich et al. (2005)	Y								
Park (2004)	Y								
Soriano (2002)	Y	Y			Y	Y			
Bernhardt et al. (2000)				Y	Y				
Walz and Niehoff (2000)	Y				Y				
Clark and Wood (1999)					Y		Y		
Stevens et al. (1995)			Y						
Auty (1992)					Y				
Campos and Nobreda (n.d.)	Y	Y			Y		Y	Y	

6. Conclusion

The ultimate goal of business is not to earn the profit but simultaneously to provide customer satisfaction. The service providers thereby need to focus more on service quality. The Models, DINESERV and Institutional DINESERV are the most suitable measures to map service quality in restaurants. These models also help to measure customer satisfaction in restaurants. To sum up, few major factors like, Food, Price, Atmosphere, Convenience and Employee Level Services are important aspects of service quality. Any assessment regarding service quality of restaurant must contain the said factors.

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