



SERVICE QUALITY OF RESTAURANTS IN ODISHA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Food is more than just a basic necessity, a pleasure that plays a significant role in the understanding of happiness. There are different varieties of food and cuisines preferences built by cultural and ethnical backgrounds, geographical locations and social classes. *Food* can tell us a lot about the history and traditions of various nations and regions. *Eating meat habits, herbs and crops* – everything makes its contribution to the traditional cuisine and culture. There are many places where we can get so many types of foods, it may be Indian, Continental, Chinese, Thai etc. Now-a-days all these varieties of foods are available under one roof i.e. called Restaurant. A restaurant is the most popular name in this present world, it's a public place which open to all for selling food. Now days the restaurant is not just a place to come and eat but now it's becoming a place where people can meet and spend time together to enjoy. The customers having experience of having a food at restaurants were included in the study in order to make a close comparison between their perception towards dimensions of restaurants's sevice quality. The proposed study aimed to answer the following research question: how do the customers assess the quality of services provided by the restaurants. A purposive sampling method will be applied for drawing samples from the restaurant under the study. The data for the proposed study will be collected by the using a structured questionnaire. In order to analyze the data descriptive statistics were employed. The hypotheses were tested adopting test statistics like t-test and ANOVA.

Keywords: Service Quality, Restaurants, demographic factors, t-test, ANOVA

INTRODUCTION

For some people food is just a basic necessity to satisfy basic needs but for others food is a pleasure that plays a significant role in the understanding of happiness. There are so many different cuisines and food preferences built by cultural and ethnical backgrounds, geographical locations and social classes. *Food* can tell us a lot about the history and traditions of various nations and regions. *Meat eating habits, herbs and crops* – everything makes its contribution to the traditional cuisine and culture. India is a land of cultures, spices, Africa is a continent of sauces, Europe discloses esthetical beauty of food and opens up new opportunities and inventions for those who value and enjoy eating. There are many places where we can get different varieties of foods, it may be Indian, Continental, Chinese, Thai etc. Now-a-days all these varieties of foods are available under one roof i.e.s called Restaurant.

In this present world, a restaurant is the most popular name, it's a public place which open to all for selling food. Now days the restaurant is not just a place to come and eat but now it's becoming a place where people can meet and spend time together to enjoy. Restaurant is a place which provide food and beverage on a commercial basis. Its open for all people to take refreshment, provide food and beverage against money, all food and beverage to satisfy guests. (Admin,2012) The word restaurant comes from rest and rent, so guest rest in and pay rent for having refreshment and beverage. Many people think that hotels and restaurants are the same in function and definition, actually its different, hotel has accommodation system to stay night with some facilities like food, but restaurants you can get that facilities without accommodation. (Admin,2012)

The good restaurant always provides a good level of service to its costumers, because it is so important to attract more costumers to visit again. In some cases, the costumers can feel so hungry and maybe some of them are stressful from hard work and they want the restaurant to process orders very accurately, nicely, and quickly furthermore they want the restaurant to prepare delicious fresh food. Finally, employees should be well-dressed, clean, and trained very well in treat costumers nicely and courteously and be willing to serve the customers. (ELS,2009).

In restaurants service quality, brand equity, service marketing mix, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty play a vital role. Customers get attracted by restaurants good service, well-known brand and their need and satisfaction. If a customer gets satisfaction from a restaurants service they provide by their employees which includes the 7 P's of marketing mix i.e.s the food (product), ambience and appropriate area (place), suitable and feasible price (price), awareness (promotion), well behaved and neat employees (people), well maintained (process), and proper elements (physical evidences).

Current enterprises recognize both service quality and customer loyalty are critical factors to maintain the competency for business development. Deming (1981) and Garvin (1987) identified the service quality is the satisfaction for matching the customers' demand. Customer loyalty has been regards as the key indicator for customer retention. Oliver (1997) claimed the customer loyalty will drive customers to buy the same brand products even competitors' have better offers. Jones and Sasser (1995) indicated the customer loyalty is the

behavioral intention to maintain the relationship between customer and service suppliers. The issues of brand equity and marketing mix strategy have been discussed in the academy field and recognized as necessary tools for building corporate competency in business world. Lo (2012) claimed brand equity may strengthen intangible assets and create overall success for companies. Ponnampalani (2011) indicated the most common brand equity model encompasses five dimensions, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand royalty, brand association, and another proprietary asset. This model has been empirically applied in previous researches (Atilgan, Aksoy, and Akinci, 2005; Kim and Kim, 2004; Yoo, Donthu, and Lee, 2000).

Now-a-days people have become choosier towards everything, including the type of food they will consume. For their choice, there are different types of food varieties in the market like Indian, Thai, Chinese, Continental, etc. these cuisines are easily available in restaurants as they are mushrooming rapidly. Where we go, we will get a restaurant with variety of cuisines. Restaurants provides different types of services for customers. But not only eating most of restaurants now provides meeting area in for those customers who wants to arrange special events in the restaurant such as marriage or engagement, birthday party, and graduations, company special meetings, or others that's why restaurants are becoming more important place in now days. People are more aware in today's scenario, they know where to go and what to have. Restaurants fall into several industries classification based on menu style, preparation methods and pricing. And also, how the food is served to the customer helps to determine the classification. Not only they see quality includes taste, flavor, hygiene but also, they see quantity as how many pieces, different categories of restaurants like ethnic, casual dining, fine, dining, barbecue, buffet etc., goodwill of the restaurants (brand), the ambience, the service, the satisfaction they get after visiting, all these matters a lot rather than price. Taking all these into consideration the research is all about service quality, brand equity, customer satisfaction and loyalty which plays a vital role to attract customer and to develop business.

Various researches were done on service quality, brand equity, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty separately, but all these approaches have not been done together interlinking each other. The sector of the study will be restaurant, in which research is very limited taking. The proposed study aimed to answer the following research question: how do the customers assess the quality of services provided by the restaurants. The researcher compares the mean response of customers' perception towards various dimensions of restaurant service quality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Service Quality

Service quality has been recognized as the effective tool to improve the customer loyalty. Hu (2011) indicated service quality, brand equity, and marketing mix strategy have significant and positive relationship to customer loyalty. However, very few studies have examined the mediator role for brand equity on the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Hsieh and Lee (2007) indicated the relationship between publication relationship and customer loyalty is moderated by brand image. The service quality

naturally been regarded as an approach for managing public relationship. This study followed these theory concepts and extended previous research.

Dimensions of service quality affect the brand equity in the fast food industry. The results show that the entire dimensions of service quality of model SERVQUAL (tangible factors of services, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) have a positive and significant impact on the brand equity. It also became clear that among the five dimensions of quality of services, the tangible factors of services have the most impact on the brand equity in the fast food industry (Esmailpour Majid, Mohamadi Zahra, RajabiAzade, 2016). A holistic model that investigates the direct influence of service quality on building consumer based brand equity, along with the mediating role of corporate credibility and perceived value. The results suggest that perceived value and corporate credibility fully mediate the relationship between perceived service quality and consumer based brand equity. A self-administrated questionnaire was used to collect data from the customers of local and foreign banks in the Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions of Pakistan. The hypothesized relationships were tested using structural equation modeling procedure (Sadia Jahanzeb, Tasneem Fatima, Muhammad Mohsin Butt, 2013).

Service Quality in the Restaurant Industry

According to (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Grönroos., 1990) the concept of service quality is described as the overall distinction among customers' perceptions of the service experience and expectations. Zeithaml & Bitner (2003) stated that expectations are an attitude about service procedure and actual service performance will be judge against the set standards. In reality expectations is all about what customers feel a restaurant should offer. Dulen (1999) investigated factors that influenced service quality in restaurants such as food quality, physical environment and service (Susskind & Chan, 2000). Sulek & Hensley (2004) stated that there are some others factors that also influenced service quality but food quality is an important determinant of the customers' experience. In addition (Kivela et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2009) all these authors agreed that high level of service quality is the most significant dimension of customer satisfaction and return patronage of customers in restaurant industry.

Siguaw and Enz (1999) explained that the critical attribute of successful hotel food and beverage outlets is their ability to appropriately respond to the changing needs of the market while maintaining a profitable operation. According to their study, few hotel food and beverage outlets excel at this fundamental strategy. Instead, hotel food service is frequently characterized by generic restaurants that provide undistinguished menu items and offer guests a poor value-for-money proposition. Their study claimed that such hotel restaurants fail to provide the menu choices, ambience, or service desired by the dining-out market (let alone their guests), and therefore, they frequently operate at a loss. Some analysts have declared that hotel restaurants by their nature will lose money, as part of a large, comprehensive study on best practice in the United States lodging industry conducted by Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration.

Nield et al. (2000) in their research investigated the role and importance of food service in customers' satisfaction and to note any differences in satisfaction levels between regional groups. Their findings revealed that significant differences existed between three tourist groups' satisfaction perceptions of value for money, quality of food, number of dishes, standard of food service, variety of dishes, presentation of food and speed of service in general. Overall results further indicated that quality of food, value for money, variety of dishes, attractiveness of surroundings and presentation of food were the attributes that most affected the overall food service experience in Romania. The authors concluded that food service is an important contributor to customer satisfaction and that there are significant differences in levels of satisfaction with food service quality at hotel restaurants between eastern and western European and Romanian customers.

Wu and Liang (2009) studied service encounters and restaurant consumer behaviour using a comprehensive framework the study indicated that restaurant environmental factors and interactions with service employees and other consumers positively influence the consumer experiential value. His research found that only interactive relationships with service employees directly and positively affect consumer satisfaction. Restaurant environment factors and interactions with other consumers indirectly and positively influence consumer satisfaction through experiential value.

Babajide (2011) conducted a study to assess the quality of the breakfast service in a restaurant at Gui Hilton Helsinki airport hotel. His study applied service quality, which translates to the kind of service delivered to hotel customers, and applied 81 questionnaires during breakfast as early as 5.30 am until 10 am. His research findings show that most of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of service but two major gaps were noted.

The first gap was between customer expectations and management perceptions, which needs more attention from management. The second was the difference between service quality specification and what is actually delivered. Tangibles and reliability in the dimension of service quality were also average. Ali et al. (2014) conducted a study and examined international business 40 travelers' experience with luxury hotel restaurants and proposes food service experience as a key driver of satisfaction, dining frequency and dining expenditure in the formation of causal relationships. A total of 278 questionnaires were collected to conduct statistical analysis of their study. Empirical findings support the positive relationship between food service experience, customer satisfaction, dining frequency and dining expenditure.

RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY

In this study we used quantitative survey methods to validate the hypothesis based on literature review. This study is conducted in to evaluate the difference between the service quality level between customers across demographic profiles like gender, age, income and education. The customers having experience of having a food at restaurants were included in the study in order to make a close comparison between their perception towards dimensions of restaurants's sevice quality. A purposive sampling method will be applied for drawing samples from the restaurant under the study. The data for the proposed study will be collected by the using a

structured questionnaire. In order to analyze the data descriptive statistics were employed. The hypotheses were tested adopting test statistics like t-test and ANOVA. Given the set of research questions four hypotheses were developed for every scenario:

H1. There is a significant difference between customers' perception of service quality across gender.

H2. There is a significant difference between customers' perception of service quality across age.

H3. There is a significant difference between customers' perception of service quality across income levels.

H4. There is a significant difference between customers' perception of service quality across educational qualifications of the customers.

DATA ANALYSIS

The information collected to respondents about gender, age, occupation, annual house hold income, education level, preferred restaurant type, and reasons for visiting preferred restaurants. Individual customer characteristics can be used as marketing segments which allow companies to adjust and maintain specific strategies based on customer needs (Zhong and Moon, 2020).

Table 1: Sample demographic statistics

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	265	53
	Female	237	47
Age Group	Below 20 Years	106	21.1
	21-40 Years	183	36.5
	41-60 Years	132	26.3
	Above 61	81	16.1
Educational Qualification	High School	40	8
	Under Graduate	110	21.9
	Graduate	137	27.3
	Post Graduate and Above	215	42.8
Occupation	Student	171	41.8
	Businessman	49	12
	Employed	113	27.6
	Retired Employee	54	13.2
	House wife	22	5.4
Monthly Income in INR	Below INR. 24,999	267	53.2
	INR. 25,000-49,999	91	18.1
	INR. 50000-74,999	61	12.2
	INR. 75000-99999	38	7.6
	INR. 100000-149,999	28	5.6
Restaurants Types	Family Style	200	39.8
	Fine Dinning	109	21.7
	Cafe or Bistro	102	20.3
	Food Truck	52	10.4
	Restaurant Buffet	30	6
	Pop Up Restaurants	9	1.8
Reasons for coming Restaurants	Dining	287	57.2
	Take Away	47	9.4

	Hangout	163	32.5
	Office Meeting	5	1
	Total	502	100

Out of the total 502 respondents, it was found that 53% of them were male respondents and rest 47% respondents were female. An analysis of the age of the respondents show that the age group of the respondents ranges from less than 20 years to more than 61 years. Age group < 20 years comprised of 21.1 percent of the sample whereas people above 60 years of age comprised of only 16.1 percent of the sample. The major concentration was between 21 to 40 years of age which comprised of about 36.5 % in aggregate of the sample size and numbers of customers visiting restaurants were of the age between 41 to 60 years (26.3%). Similarly, majority 42.8% of the respondents educational qualification are post graduates and above, 27.3% of the respondents Educational Qualification are graduates, 21.9% of the respondents Educational Qualification are under graduates, and rest 8.0% of the respondents Educational Qualification are HSC. Related to the occupation of the respondents, majority 41.8% of the respondents are students, 27.6 % of the respondents are employed, 13.2% of the respondents are retired employees, 12.0% of the respondents are businessmen and only 5.4% of the respondents are house wives. Information related to monthly income of 502 respondents revealed that monthly income below INR. 24,999 is 53.2 per cent, income between INR. 25,000- 49,999 are 18.1 per cent, monthly income between INR. 50000- 74,999 is 12.2%, between INR. 75000- 99999 is 7.6%, between 1,00,000 to 1,49,999 is 5.6 per cent and the monthly income between INR. 1,50,000 and above is 3.4%. It can be evident from the above table, regarding preference towards type of restaurants (39.8 %) had usually prefer family style restaurant, (21.7 %) for fine dine, (20.3 %) for café or Bistro, (10.4 %) prefer food truck, (6%) prefer restaurant buffet and only (1.8 %) for pop up restaurants. Regarding reasons for visiting restaurants, (57.2 %) had usually preferred to visit restaurant for dining, (32.5.2 %) for hangout, (9.4 %) for take away and only (1.0 %) for the purpose of official meeting.

Hypotheses testing

The customer's perception towards each service quality dimension can vary according to their age, income, gender and occupation. T-test and ANOVA test are being used to study the difference in perceptions of customers towards seven service quality dimensions across age, gender, income and education.

Independent T-test for Service Quality Dimensions across gender

An Independent sample T-test was applied to analyze the difference between perception of customers towards each dimensions of service quality across their gender. The Independent sample T-test is used to test the null hypothesis (H1), "There is no significant difference between customers' perception for service quality dimensions between male and female". The various dimensions of service quality were included in the questionnaire and respondents were asked to rate these statements in the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree.

Table 2: T-test for customer's perception towards dimensions of perceived service quality

Constructs	Gender	Mean	t-test for Equality of Means			Null Hypothesis
			t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Price Value	Male	3.65	5.95	500.00	.000	Rejected
	Female	3.19	5.86			
Tangibles	Male	3.95	-2.30	500.00	.022	Rejected
	Female	4.09	-2.33			
Assurance	Male	3.88	0.83	500.00	.409	Accepted
	Female	3.83	0.82			
Empathy	Male	3.71	0.36	500.00	.719	Accepted
	Female	3.69	0.36			
Reliability	Male	4.29	9.78	500.00	.000	Rejected
	Female	3.62	9.28			
Responsiveness	Male	3.83	0.90	500.00	.368	Accepted
	Female	3.75	0.90			
Food Quality	Male	3.38	1.52	500.00	.130	Accepted
	Female	3.25	1.51			

From the above table, it is evident that there is a significant difference in the perception towards dimensions like price value, tangibles and reliability of service quality between the male and female customers.

ANOVA Test for difference in perception towards each dimensions of service quality across Age group

The sub-hypotheses under hypothesis (H2) "There is no mean difference in customers' perception towards each dimension of service quality across their age group" are test through ANOVA are given in the table 3.

Table 3: ANOVA test for Service Quality Dimensions across age group

Dimensions	Variations	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Null Hypothesis
Tangibles	Between Groups	1.950	3	.650	8.41	.000	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	229.540	498	.461			
	Total	231.490	501				
Price Value	Between Groups	4.509	3	1.503	1.96	.125	Accepted
	Within Groups	388.844	498	.781			
	Total	393.354	501				
Assurance	Between Groups	2.487	3	.829	2.13	.095	Accepted
	Within Groups	193.635	498	.389			
	Total	196.122	501				
Empathy	Between Groups	12.683	3	4.228	7.75	.000	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	271.616	498	.545			
	Total	284.300	501				
Reliability	Between Groups	8.985	3	2.995	4.37	.049	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	341.504	498	.686			
	Total	350.488	501				
Responsiveness	Between Groups	3.706	3	1.235	1.35	.259	Accepted
	Within Groups	456.905	498	.917			
	Total	460.611	501				
Food Quality	Between Groups	9.207	3	3.069	3.38	.018	Not Accepted

	Within Groups	452.363	498	.908			
	Total	461.570	501				

It can be depicted from the table 3 that the p-value corresponding to the F-test for dimensions like tangibles, empathy, reliability and food quality was less than 0.05, which implied that there is a significant difference in perception towards those dimensions of service quality across age groups of customers. Hence, the null hypotheses were not accepted.

ANOVA Test for difference in perception towards each dimensions of service quality across income group

The sub-hypotheses under hypothesis (H3) “There is no mean difference in customers’ perception towards each dimension of service quality across their Income groups” are test through ANOVA are given in the table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA test for Service Quality Dimensions across income group

Dimensions	Variations	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Null Hypothesis
Tangibles	Between Groups	2.52	5	.504	1.09	.365	Accepted
	Within Groups	228.97	496	.462			
	Total	231.49	501				
Price Value	Between Groups	46.89	5	9.380	13.43	.000	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	346.46	496	.699			
	Total	393.35	501				
Assurance	Between Groups	1.06	5	.212	.54	.747	Accepted
	Within Groups	195.06	496	.393			
	Total	196.12	501				
Empathy	Between Groups	6.53	5	1.306	2.33	.041	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	277.77	496	.560			
	Total	284.30	501				
Reliability	Between Groups	5.68	5	1.137	1.64	.149	Accepted
	Within Groups	344.80	496	.695			
	Total	350.49	501				
Responsiveness	Between Groups	4.53	5	.906	.98	.426	Accepted
	Within Groups	456.08	496	.920			
	Total	460.61	501				
Food Quality	Between Groups	5.63	5	1.126	1.23	.296	Accepted
	Within Groups	455.94	496	.919			
	Total	461.57	501				

It can be observed from the table 4 that the p-value (0.000) corresponding to the F-test for two dimensions of service quality i.e. price value and empathy were less than 0.05, which implied that there is a significant difference in perception price value and empathy dimensions of service quality across the age group of respondents.

ANOVA Test for difference in perception towards each dimensions of service quality across educational qualification

Similarly, the sub-hypotheses under hypothesis (H4) “There is no mean difference in customers’ perception towards each dimension of service quality across their education qualification” are also tested through ANOVA is given in the table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA test for Service Quality Dimensions across income group

Dimensions	Variations	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Null Hypothesis
Tangibles	Between Groups	1.57	3	.52	1.13	.336	Accepted
	Within Groups	229.92	498	.46			
	Total	231.49	501				
Price Value	Between Groups	9.96	3	3.32	4.31	.005	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	383.39	498	.77			
	Total	393.35	501				
Assurance	Between Groups	.54	3	.18	.46	.713	Accepted
	Within Groups	195.58	498	.39			
	Total	196.12	501				
Empathy	Between Groups	1.63	3	.54	.96	.412	Accepted
	Within Groups	282.67	498	.57			
	Total	284.30	501				
Reliability	Between Groups	10.35	3	3.45	5.05	.002	Not Accepted
	Within Groups	340.13	498	.68			
	Total	350.49	501				
Responsiveness	Between Groups	2.73	3	.91	.99	.396	Accepted
	Within Groups	457.87	498	.92			
	Total	460.61	501				
Food Quality	Between Groups	1.28	3	.43	.46	.708	Accepted
	Within Groups	460.28	498	.92			
	Total	461.57	501				

It can be observed from the table 5 that the p-value (0.000) corresponding to the F-test for two dimensions of service quality i.e. price value and reliability were less than 0.05, which implied that there is a significant difference in perception price value and reliability dimensions of service quality across the age group of respondents.

CONCLUSION

In Odisha restaurants are mushrooming and the demand for food is increasing. A restaurant or an eatery, is a business which prepares and serves food and drinks to customers in exchange for money. Meals are generally served and eaten on the premises, but many restaurants also offer take-out and food delivery services, and some offer only take-out and delivery. Restaurants vary greatly in appearance and offerings, including a wide variety of cuisines and service models ranging from inexpensive fast food restaurants and cafeterias to mid-priced family restaurants, to high-priced luxury establishments. Restaurant owners and operators in Odisha must focus more on offering friendly services that make customers feel cherished and cared for. Improved visual appeal, food taste, freshness, and accurate and reliable service may aid restaurant

operators in meeting or exceeding customer expectations, increasing repeat business and willingness to refer. Improving service quality will increase client loyalty while also improving the restaurant's reputation, resulting in increased sales and money in the long run.

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