Gap study towards service quality in QSR Restaurants using SERVQUAL model

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Abstract - The increased demand for comparatively cheap, ready-to-eat food has resulted in an increase in the number of quick service restaurants. As a result of this situation, the competition among the quick service restaurants (QSR) are increasing. The aim of this study is to use the SERVQUAL approach to assess service quality. The SERVQUAL approach has five factors: a factor of tangibility, factor of reliability, factor of responsiveness, factor of empathy factor, and a factor of assurance. The QSR's Service level will be assessed in this study by measuring the gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions. The customer gap can be used to determine which SERVQUAL dimension consumers are delighted when they receive service from QSR Restaurants. The data for this study is collected through questionnaire distribution and it is found that gaps do exist but it is within a tolerable range.

Keywords: Customer, empathy Quick services, Reliability, Satisfaction, Tolerance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many working people have a constant need to eat outside the home as a result of migration from rural to urban areas. In these times, people need everything fast and even for cooking also they do not want to spent long hours to cook a meal, so demand for more cheap, ready-to-eat food has risen. Many countries, like India, have seen an increase in the number of quick service restaurants as a result of this situation. The industry is becoming more competitive as the number of quick service restaurants grows. Due to the high degree of rivalry, restaurants must pay close attention to a variety of considerations, one of which is service quality. Customers nowadays, are not concerned only with food quality and taste, but also with serving, environment, decoration, anything tangible, and location. Income, market share, and cost savings are all observable advantages of high service quality results (Anderson, Fornell, &Lehmam,1994). Service quality is another important element in company growth (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1993).

Therefore, this paper focuses on the satisfaction of the customers while availing services at the Quick Service Restaurants in India.

The format of the paper includes, Introduction, Literature study, Research Methodology, Data Analysis, conclusion and recommendations, future scope of the study, and limitations of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Largely, Service can be identified an activity performed by a person or more to benefit another, and is intangible in nature. Similarly, SERVQUAL [3] is the discrepancy in the customer's expectation and interpretation of the services by the provider. It is critical for businesses because it boosts profits, lower prices, and gain market share

SERVQUAL is used by the customers as benchmarks to assess the service provider's level of service provided to him/her that shapes the perceptions [5]. This arises as a result of gaps between consumer experience and consumer understanding. For example, imagine a scenario, when a customer visits a Costly Hotel, he expects a high quality of service which if not delivered results in dissatisfaction. Therefore, the emphasis of this study will be on the consumer void.

The **SERVQUAL** model is one of the most useful tools for assessing service efficiency. It [4,5] was the first model developed that studied service efficiency. Following were included in the SERVQUAL model:

1: Tangibility: the company's or organization's infrastructure, and employees' presence.

2: Responsiveness: readiness to assist consumers and offer timely service

3: Reliability: capacity to deliver the promised service consistently and reliably

4: Assurance: workers' knowledge and courtesy, as well as their willingness to encourage loyalty   and belief.

5: Empathy: the firm's loving, individualised commitment to its clients.

III.   METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of classifying the problem, the author must first describe the research item, which is QSR Restaurants. The author then attempts to identify issues that arise to carry the gap study towards service quality in QSR Restaurants using SERVQUAL model as the research subject.

This study relies on primary data collected through distributing questionnaire from 100 respondents. The questionnaire is based on scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1 is Strongly Disagree, 2 is Disagree, 3 is Neutral, 4 is Agree, 5 is Strongly Agree) and the respondents are the Post Graduate Diploma students at XIME-Bangalore.

IV.   ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The following is the gap formula that will be used to measure and analyse the data: Service Gap = Customers' Perception – Customers' Expectation
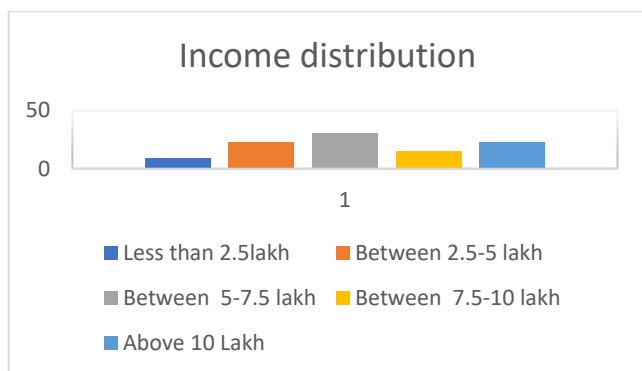
Fig 1. Respondents' profile:
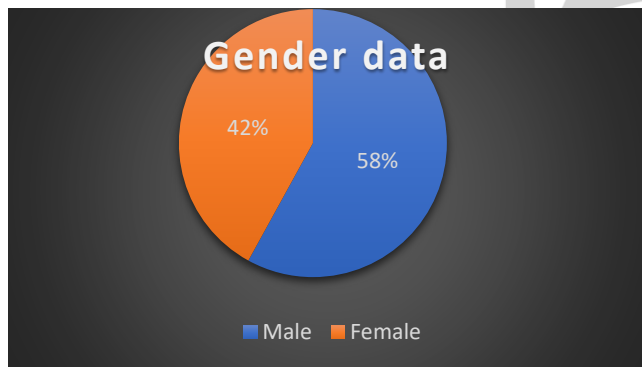
Source: Authors' own

Based on the proportion of the respondents' profile, there are more male (58%) participants than female (42%).

Fig 2. Participants' Family Income:

Source: Authors' own

Majority of the respondents' family income is consisting of 5-7.5 lakhs which is followed by more than 2.5-5 lakhs with

a similar proportion of income exceeding above 10 lakhs and the remaining proportion is falling under other categories of less than 2.5 and between 7.5-10 lakhs (Fig. 2).

Table 1. Customer Gap table

Dimension	Expectation	Perception	Service gap = Perception - Expectation
Reliability	3.64	3.53	- 0.11
Assurance	3.46	3.37	- 0.09
Tangibility	3.60	3.43	- 0.17
Empathy	3.51	3.47	- 0.04
Responsiveness	3.55	3.43	- 0.12

Source: Authors' own

The widest gap in QSRs of India is the tangible dimension, from the aspect of having futuristic looking appliances, physical amenities that are aesthetically attractive, staff who are tidy, and objects associated in service delivery are visually appealing to the customer (Table 1). It is found that the Indian customers expect QSR to have modern facilities similar to that is provided in other countries and are not satisfied with the facilities provided in the country.

The second widest gap in QSRs of India is in the responsiveness dimension resulted from the inability to give timely services from the time of order and available services on need based. Furthermore, the gaps in the responsiveness dimension indicated that employees at QSRs are not always able to assist consumers and are seldom apprehensive to answer to their inquiries.

The next gap in QSRs in this study was from the reliability dimension in terms of the ability to provide accurate service as mentioned to the customer.

From the assurance dimension, it can imply that the customers are not feeling assured of the transactions and services they receive at QSRs in this study.

Furthermore, it is found that there is a narrowest gap in empathy. For QSRs in India are found to be comparably meeting customer's individual expectation and personal attention.

The overall perception value is higher than the middle point of 3.52 out of 5. The zone of tolerance theory can be used to describe this phenomenon. The tolerance zone (ZOT) is the span of consumer perceptions between preferred and minimum acceptable level of service. This explains why, despite the fact that the service offered by QSR did not exceed their expectations, they are still happy to get the services within their Zone of Tolerance.

V.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To determine the difference in service quality at QSRs in India, the authors are able to conclude that the consumers' perceptions are weaker than their expectations yet they were happy for the services provided to them which is tolerable and acknowledges that it can be improved.

The recommendations for all the dimension of service quality to reduce the SERVQUAL gaps existing in QSR are:

TANGIBLE DIMENSION:

- Provide a new or enticing decoration to the restaurant
- Ensuring that the staff are always tidy;
- Having new technologies.

RELIABILITY DIMENSION:

- Making certain that food being served matches the Restaurant's promotional image.
- Often reiterate the customer's order to ensure that the staff has recorded the correct menu.
- Increase the pace of food preparation and ensure that workers are familiar with their workstations.

RESPONSIVENESS:

- Inform consumers as to when they can have service.
- Increase the pace at which service is provided by reducing the time spent processing food and the time spent waiting on customers.
- Train employees to still be able to assist customers.

ASSURANCE DIMENSION:

- To maximise consumer loyalty, employees should behave nicely and kindly.
- The employees (servers) should advise the customer and double-check the bill payment to ensure the employee handling the transactions has given them the appropriate bill for what the customer has ordered.
- Educating their employees on the variety of food ranges and services at their location.

EMPATHY DIMENSION:

- Pay greater care to the voice of consumers.
- Comprehending the consumer's request.
- Teaching staffs to assist consumers.

VI.   FUTURE RESEARCHES

- Attempt to calculate the service quality deficit of QSRs with various population profiles for future analysis.
- Using a different approach to assess SERVQUAL.
- To consider effects of pandemic in customer's expectation and perception.

VII.   LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS:

Due to time constraints:

- Only 100 responses were received from the respondents for this study.
- The responses were obtained only from Bangalore region.

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