



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Services Marketing

A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION IN REFERENCE TO THE FLOWER OF SERVICE CONCEPT AMONG RESTAURANT CONSUMERS OF SOUTH GUJARAT

KEY WORDS: Consumer, Flower of Services, Quality

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ABSTRACT

Service and service quality is becoming the hottest topics within the institutions and organizations that present services to their customers regardless of their orientation and field of interest. (Hashem, 2017). Generally speaking, services appear as core services which are the basic benefit that a customer gets from purchasing a certain item/service and supplementary services which are the non-routine services that follow the process of acquiring the item/service. This study aims at applying the 'flower of Services' concept authored by Lovelock to the Restaurant Services. The primary research has been carried on 100 respondents of South Gujarat. The study reveals the data on what consumers think on various variables of flower of service concept. There are many parameters where consumers gave neutral view like prompt response to customers' requests through proper communication channel, personalised and attentive services, high level of courtesy and professionalism. There are various parameters on which consumers gave disagree view like convenient parking space.

INTRODUCTION:

Over 45 million Indians satiated their food cravings by dining out at their favourite restaurants in 2021, according to tech platform Dineout. (Jatia, 2022). According to a report, the market for food services in India is predicted to increase from US\$ 41.1 billion in 2022 to US\$ 79.65 billion by 2028, with a CAGR of 11.19%. (IBEF, 2022). According to the Food Service and Restaurant Business Report 2022-23 by Francorp and Restaurantindia.in, the industry is predicted to employ 1 crore people by 2025, despite losing over 20 lakh jobs at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In today's world, customers who are looking for more than a one-time or occasional indulgent meal are on the rise. With the cultural practice of home cooking gradually fading from the modern realm, today's generation is more dependent on eating regularly from outside and the demand for daily food options with variety has sharply increased. (Setu, 2018)

Quality is essential feature required everywhere to fulfil customer wants. Particularly it is essential for service sector because of inherent features of services like intangibility, inseparability from the provider, heterogeneous etc. Service quality means the ability of a service provider to *satisfy* customer in an efficient manner through which he can better the performance of business. (Ramya, Mrs. N.;A Kowsalya2;K. Dharanipriya3, 2019)

Improvement of food quality and varieties in menu is essential for making satisfied customer. (Anu B ; Dr. A. Manorselvi*, 2021)

A service product comprises of all the elements of the service performance, both physical and intangible, that creates value for customers.

The value proposition must address and integrate three components: (1) core product, (2) supplementary services, and (3) delivery processes.

Core Product:

The core product is "what" the customer is fundamentally buying. The core product is the main component that supplies the desired experience

Supplementary Services:

Delivery of the core product is usually accompanied by a variety of other service-related activities we refer to collectively as supplementary services, which augment the core product, both **facilitating** its use and **enhancing** its value. (Lovelock, 2016)

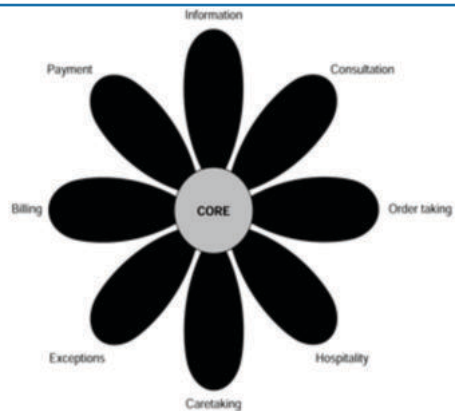


Figure 1

This paper represents flower of service concept for restaurant consumers. The emphasis is to identify facilitating and enhancing services and its impact on consumer satisfaction.

Literature Review:

1. Influence Of Service Quality In Restaurant And Its Impact On Customer Satisfaction(b & manorselvi*, 2021)

The rapid growth of the hospitality industry in the first decade of the 21st century forced the managers to evaluate the importance of service improvement in order to gain competitive advantage (Easvaralingam, 2011). Service quality is essential for the success of every hotel industry. Service quality determines an organizations success or failure. (Yadav, 2011).

2. Facilitating Services: Information (NazishZulfiqar, 2022)

According to a survey people dine out for lunch and dinner and have different diet. The thing which helped them to select from the menu is the *picturing, showing about the dish* which also helped them to select it with confidence and easiness and adding narrations to it, explaining about the content of the dish would be a best idea. If we would add pictures in our menu it would also help the people watching it online on social media to get a correct idea about it and in selecting it.

3. Facilitating Services: Order taking, billing & Payment: An Efficient Digital Ordering System for Restaurant (Paul, 2020)

Customer **scans the QR Code** on the table and an attractive interface of the different platters in different sections (i.e. Appetizers, Breads, Main-Course, Dessert, Beverages, etc.) will be available for them in the menu. Customers can search a

particular food item according to name, category, etc. There are images of every food item which will make the view of the customer more clearly about how the food will look along with the respective price.

4. Enhancing Services: Consultation: (Hashemi, Consultancy, 2017)

Consultation is an enhancing supplementary service. It enhances service delivery by adding value and making it more appealing to clients. These services may include personal counselling and customized advice. They purchase the company's expertise and knowledge. As noted by Naipaul, and Parsa (2000), consultation and advice that are tailored to the needs of the situation and needs of customers can add value to the company's services and goods. Examples of elements include management or *technical consulting, personal counselling and customized advice, and training/tutoring* on the use of the product.

5. Enhancing Services: Service and Hospitality (Sondra J. Dahmer; Kurt W. Kahl, 2009)

While a close relationship exists between service and hospitality, there is a distinct difference between the two. Service is the act of filling the needs, wants, and desires of the guests. Service is what servers provide to meet the expectations of the guests when they come to dine. Guests expect a clean table, clean dishes and utensils, safe food, hot foods served hot, and cold foods served cold. Hospitality goes beyond the service guests expect of servers.

6. Enhancing Services: Safekeeping : (Lovelock, Services Marketing, 2016)

Responsible businesses pay close attention to safety and security issues for customers who are visiting the firm's premises. Safekeeping includes caring for *Child care, Pet care, parking for vehicles, Valet parking, Coat rooms, Baggage handling, Storage space, Safe deposit boxes, Security personnel.*

7. Enhancing Services: Exceptions: (Lovelock, 2016)

Exceptions involve supplementary services that fall outside the routine of normal service delivery. Astute businesses anticipate such exceptions and develop contingency plans and guidelines in advance. That way, employees will not appear helpless and unprepared when customers ask for special assistance.

There are several types of exceptions: *Special requests, Problem-solving, Handling of complaints/suggestions/compliments, Restitution.*

Problem Statement:

Quality is a vital concern for all the organizations in the consistent stiff competition prevailing everywhere and quality leads to satisfaction.

The paper aims to relate the concept of Flower of Services, presented by Lovelock to the restaurant business. According to Lovelock, for any service organizations, both the facilitating and enhancing services are important. The core of the flower (Basic Service) is incomplete without petals (enhancing and facilitating services).

Research Methodology:

- This study applied descriptive research design using a qualitative approach.
- There are two type of data utilized in this study. They are secondary data and primary data.

Objectives:

1. To know the customer satisfaction of restaurant consumers in south Gujarat.
2. To study the readiness of consumers to adopt digital interaction for order, billing, and payment at restaurants.

3. To identify the factors affecting customer satisfaction of restaurant consumers in south Gujarat.
4. To study the effect of different demographic factors on consumer satisfaction of restaurants in south Gujarat.

Model of The Study: Flower of Service Dimensions

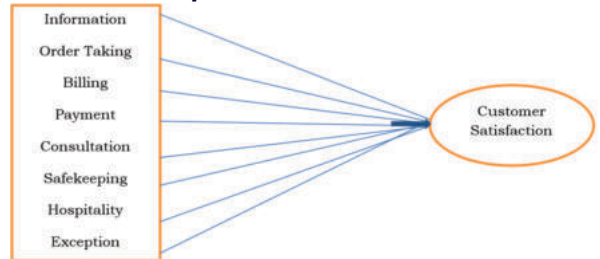


Figure 2

Finding and analysis:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics: Information					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Information about the restaurant can be obtained through menus, websites, and the front desk.	100	1	3	1.37	.544
2. The restaurant's menu is satisfactory and contains all the necessary information, including the menu, prices, specials, and contact details.	100	1	4	1.98	.376
3. Restaurant staff always provides information to customers regarding menu items, ingredients, preparation methods, and any special dietary considerations.	100	1	4	2.05	.479
4. There are informative boards or displays within the restaurant that provide additional information about the cuisine, history, or sourcing of ingredients.	100	1	4	2.15	.520
5. Restaurant employees are always willing to provide information and answer any questions customers may have about the menu, ingredients, or dining experience.	100	1	4	1.48	.689
6. The restaurant operators provide information over the phone, including details about reservations, wait times, and any special arrangements.	100	1	5	2.08	.464
7. There is a representative in the restaurant who greets and guides customers to their tables, providing assistance and information about the different areas or sections of the restaurant.	100	1	5	2.06	.528
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Descriptive Statistics: Order Taking					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation

1. Restaurant representatives are always ready to assist and provide help whenever needed.	100	1	3	2.01	.333
2. The restaurant's reception desk promptly collects customers' information as soon as they arrive or check in at the restaurant.	100	1	4	2.06	.528
3. Errors are rare when it comes to Order taking in the restaurant, ensuring accuracy and reliability	100	1	4	2.06	.445
4. The restaurant's serving staffs is always ready to assist and help customers with their dining needs and preferences.	100	1	3	1.41	.570
5. The restaurant has efficient mechanisms in place to ensure that staff promptly responds to customer requests or inquiries through dedicated communication channels.	100	1	3	2.61	.567
6. The room service at the restaurant is always ready to take orders and promptly cater to customers' requests for in-room dining or service.	100	1	4	2.57	.624
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 3

	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The restaurant presents the bill promptly after the customers have finished their meal.	99	1	3	1.94	.345
2. The restaurant proactively communicates with the relevant parties, such as the payment processor or credit card company, in case there is an error or discrepancy in the billing.	99	1	4	2.63	.632
3. The restaurant offers discounts for the relatives and families of its staff members as a gesture of appreciation and support.	99	1	5	2.71	.643
4. The restaurant liaises with a designated individual, typically the manager or a designated contact person, to address any financial matters or concerns related to the customer's dining experience.	99	1	5	2.07	.558
Valid N (listwise)	99				

Table 4

	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mea n	Std. Deviation
1. The restaurant accepts credit card payments, providing customers with a convenient and widely accepted method of payment.	99	1	4	1.95	.361

2. The restaurant accepts multiple forms of payment, including electronic transactions, mobile payment apps, and other digital payment methods, in addition to traditional currency.	99	1	4	1.30	.543
3. The restaurant accepts cheques as a form of payment, allowing customers to settle their bills using this method if preferred.	99	1	5	4.15	1.190
Valid N (listwise)	99				

Table 5

	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The restaurant is open as per the promised time, ensuring availability and service to customers on time.	98	1	3	1.38	.547
2. There is a dedicated team of staff members at a restaurant during odd hours to ensure continuous service and assistance.	99	1	5	2.07	.457
3. The restaurant maintains a record of contacts as well as the preference of regular customers.	99	1	4	2.13	.528
4. All restaurant staff members are well-informed about customers' preferences, and any specific requests to provide personalized and attentive service.	99	1	4	2.73	.603
5. There is always a knowledgeable chef or restaurant manager available for guidance regarding the menu, ingredients, or any other dining-related inquiries, regardless of the time of day.	99	1	4	2.03	.504
Valid N (list wise)	98				

Table 6

	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The restaurant staff is welcoming, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere for customers.	99	1	3	2.01	.335
2. The staffs at the restaurant maintain a high level of courtesy and professionalism, ensuring a pleasant dining experience for all customers.	99	1	4	2.62	.601
3. Restaurant employees are dedicated to providing their best assistance and service to customers, going above and beyond to meet their needs and preferences.	99	1	3	2.03	.390

4. The restaurant management places a strong emphasis on delivering the best possible experience to customers, constantly striving for excellence in food quality, service, and overall satisfaction.	99	1	4	2.07	.385
5. There is a good level of understanding and collaboration among restaurant employees, fostering a positive work environment and ensuring smooth coordination in delivering exceptional service to customers.	99	1	3	2.01	.391
Valid N (listwise)	99				

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics: Safekeeping					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Customer reservations are kept within the restaurant's management system.	100	1	4	2.07	.383
2. Access to customer information, including reservation details, is restricted to authorize restaurant staff only and cannot be checked outside of the restaurant premises.	100	1	4	2.62	.582
3. Information about customers and their preferences are shared only with the relevant restaurant staff members who are directly involved in serving and attending to their needs.	100	1	4	2.61	.650
4. Information about customers and their preferences are shared only with the relevant restaurant staff members who are directly involved in serving and attending to their needs.	100	1	5	2.10	.541
5. Restaurant staff strictly adhere to customer privacy and confidentiality protocols, ensuring that customer information is not shared with unauthorized individuals or outside parties	100	1	4	2.66	.639
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics: Exceptions					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The restaurant meets the standards expected of an upscale dining establishment.	100	1	3	2.07	.383
2. The restaurant maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene, ensuring a pristine dining environment for customers.	100	1	4	2.61	.650

3. All restaurant staff members are consistently seen wearing the restaurant's designated uniform, reflecting professionalism and a cohesive brand image.	100	1	3	2.56	.625
4. All restaurant staff members are consistently seen wearing the restaurant's designated uniform, reflecting professionalism and a cohesive brand image.	100	1	4	2.57	.671
5. The restaurant provides ample parking space for customers, ensuring that there is always available parking for their convenience	100	1	5	3.86	1.311
6. The restaurant prioritizes cleanliness and maintains high standards of hygiene, exceeding expectations for a dining establishment.	100	1.00	5.00	2.6100	.64971
Valid N (listwise)	100				

RESULTS:

The above table indicates general attitude towards various parameters like information, order taking, billing, payment, consultation, hospitality, safekeeping, exception. The data reveals neutral view of consumers in most cases.

Table 9

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.213a	1	.022		
Continuity Correction ^b	3.792	1	.051		
Likelihood Ratio	6.096	1	.014		
Fisher's Exact Test				.040	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.161	1	.023		
N of Valid Cases ^b	100				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.40.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

H0- There is no significance difference between Gender and Adoption of Digital Interaction for Order Taking, Billing and Payment at Restaurants.

H1- There is a significance difference between Gender and Adoption of Digital Interaction for Order Taking, Billing and Payment at Restaurants.

Analysis: Here we are fail to accept Null Hypothesis because the p value is less than significant value 0.05.

Thereby we can conclude that Gender impacts Adoption of Digital Interaction.

Not all informants, however, agreed that gender negatively influences IT adoption. One suggested that women are more likely to adopt IT than men, especially with respect to social media and networking technologies. Two described ways in which being female is advantageous; however, the majority of informants reported gender-related barriers to IT adoption. Gender differences were most often attributed to personal attributes such as education, lack of exposure and knowledge about IT solutions. (Orser, 2018)

Findings:

1. The test has been carried on the 100 restaurant consumers of South Gujarat.
2. 33% of respondents are of the age 35-40, 29% respondents are of the age 25-30.
3. 56% respondents are female, 44% respondents are male.
4. 52% respondents visit restaurant sometimes.
5. 67% respondents visit restaurants with family and friends.
6. 89.9% respondents are ready to adopt digital interaction for order taking, billing and payment at restaurants.
7. 66% respondents are strongly agree on information about the restaurant can be obtained through menus, websites and front desk.
8. 62% respondents are strongly agree on restaurant employees are always willing to provide information and answer any question customers may have about the menu, ingredients or dining experience.
9. 64% respondents are strongly agreeing that the restaurants are open as per the promised time, ensuring availability and service to customers on time.
10. 89% respondents are agreeing that restaurant representatives are always ready to assist and provide help whenever needed.
11. 10.88% respondents are agreeing that the restaurant accepts credit card payments providing customers with a convenient and widely accepted method of payment.
12. 64% respondents are strongly agreeing that the restaurants are open as per the promised time, ensuring availability and service to customers on time.
13. 87% respondents are agreeing that customer reservations are kept within the restaurant's management system.

Suggestions:

Table 10

Variable	Findings	Suggestions	Scope for further research
Order taking	65% respondents are of the neutral view that the restaurant has efficient mechanism to ensure the staffs promptly responds to customer requests through dedicated communication channel.	Restaurants should adopt digitalization in order taking to promptly respond to customer's needs.	Primary Research could be conducted to get detail insights on how digitalisation could be adopted particularly for order taking.
Order Taking	65% respondents are neutral that the room service at the restaurant is always ready to take orders and promptly cater to customers' requests for in-room dining or service.	Customers want quick service. Restaurants should focus on quick order taking.	Detailed analysis on parameters on Order taking can be carried on. Order taking includes applications (subscription services and prerequisite activities), order entry components (website, telephone, and order fulfilment), and reservations (seats, equipment rental, admission facilities, and professional appointment).

Exceptions	49% respondents are disagreeing that the restaurant provides ample parking space for customers.	Restaurants should focus on providing convenient parking space.	Detailed analysis on parameters on Exceptions like special requests (dietary, disability and needs of children), handling of exceptional communication (suggestions, complaints, compliments, and opinions), problem solving, and restitution (refunds, free services, monetary or other forms of compensation, and discounts) (Lovell & Wirtz 2011).
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CONCLUSION:

The research has been done to emphasis on "Flower of Service Concept", thereby focusing on Enhancing and Facilitating Services. For any Service organization, supplementary services are equally important as core services. It has been observed that service organizations are focusing more on core and facilitating services but not on enhancing services.

This paper aims to find details on restaurant services in the context of "Flower of Service Concept". The study reveals many facts and suggestions to imply for restaurant service. The outcome focuses on petals of flower of service concept initiated by Lovell.

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