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MASTER'S THESIS

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Abstract

Satisfying customers needs with good quality services have become the key ingredient in organizational strategy in today's business world. To achieve maximum advantage, an organization must provide high-quality services that satisfy customers. "Service quality has been described as a form of attitude related but not equivalent to satisfaction, which sets for a comparison between customers' expectations with providers' performance". (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988).

The SERVQUAL tool developed by Parasuraman, et.al (1988) with its five dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) was used to find out the gap between customers' expectation and their perceptions regarding service quality. One hundred fourteen questionnaires were distributed, of which 65 were completed and used. This paper determines the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions among three Indian restaurants in Stavanger, Norway. The three restaurants were selected as their target segment, menu prices are similar, and the expectation would be identical. Three of the restaurants chosen for this research are affordable ethnic restaurants. The satisfaction was calculated as E-P (expectation – perception). Spearman correlation coefficient was used to find if there was any correlation between customer satisfaction and five dimensions of service quality. The paper concludes that there is a significant relationship between the five dimensions of service quality and satisfaction. Finally, this paper provides beneficial recommendations that restaurants can use to achieve maximum customer satisfaction by providing quality services.

Keywords: Service quality, customer perception, customer satisfaction, SERVQUAL model

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1 Chapter one

Introduction

Service quality can be defined as "perceptions result(ing) from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985). For the establishment and evolution of the credibility and reputation of an organization, service quality plays a significant role. It plays a vital role in satisfying customers and enhancing organizational performance, success, and profitability. Therefore, service quality and customer satisfaction are the major aspects that an organization must consider to survive in the competitive market.

Organizations need to know how to measure the various aspects of customer perspective to understand better their needs, desires, expectations, and the ways to satisfy them. The unique and complex attributes of services make measuring service quality very difficult and hence, requires a distinctive framework for quality determination and measurement. Among various models, the most used and preferable model for measuring service quality is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, et. al (1985, 1988).

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction concerning the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model(tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). The paper also tries to analyze the influence of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction (the gap between expectation and perception)in the restaurants of Stavanger, Norway. The study also provides recommendations that the restaurants could use to make changes that would enhance the rate of customer satisfaction. Further, this part of the thesis is followed by the background of the title, problem discussion, and the purpose of the study.

1.1 Background

The restaurant sector's role in the hospitality industry cannot be ignored. The restaurant plays an important role in Norwegian social life and culture.

Quality service is vital for organizations' survival, competitiveness, and success. The restaurant industry has become dynamic and is more competitive than ever. "The level of importance of quality differs across customers " (Jain and Gupta, 2004). To achieve success in the restaurant sector, customer satisfaction plays an important role, and identifying what makes customers happy is crucial in improving customer satisfaction. Measuring and determining which service dimensions should be focused on more gives the direction for the management to improve the quality of service. Customers also look at the benefits, speed of service, price, value, and the server´s order accuracy. This will result from customers experiencing the restaurant and reviewing what they felt comfortable with.

Furthermore, "in the current world today, technology has widely impacted the restaurant market as people can communicate online" (Maynard et al., 2019). Many restaurants review, blogs, and social media sites help customers gauge the quality of service a restaurant gives. The reviews are based on customers' expectations which originate from their habits, personal values, cultural attitudes, social culture, and value systems. The psychology or expectations of guests in particular geographical regions might differ from another location.

1.2 Problem Discussion

Every success story is centered on conducting business built on satisfying the customers. The customer needs and desires are not only implemented in the products in the restaurants but how the company deals with the guest in different areas such as reception, entertainment, and other activities. "Any restaurant's profitability results from meeting the

customer's needs and desires. This can be achieved when the employees have good communication skills that will help improve the customer service experience by the customers "(Parsa et al., 2014). Furthermore, the employees are the initial contact for every guest. With harmony and good employee interactions, the business can understand the customers' positive and negative experiences, which will help it grow. "Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining it and measuring it, with no overall consensus emerging on either" (Wiśniewski, 2001).

This research examines the relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in casual dining restaurants. This study will also determine which service quality attributes are important to customer satisfaction.

Customers do not pay for low-quality service, so the focus should be on improving the quality of service. The problem lies in the lack of service assessment in most restaurants, as there are an increasing number of Indian restaurants in Stavanger and the Sandnes area. when "customers are dissatisfied, then they may have the option of exiting (e.g., going to a competitor) or voicing their complaints in an attempt to receive retribution." (Angelova & Zekiri, 2011, p. 243).

As the number of ethnic restaurants in the Stavanger is increasing, the restaurants need to acquire new customers and retain customers. Where this research will be important to know the actual performance regarding the current quality of restaurants and what are the expectations of customers. Similarly, the service areas that need to be focused on for this location will be accessed.

1.3 Food culture in Stavanger

The food culture in Stavanger has changed over nearly two decades. Many foreign cuisine restaurants have been opened and now have become an integral part of the Norwegian food culture. Among the various cuisines, Indian cuisine has grown in popularity."Eighty percent of Norwegians eat at least one meal away from home every month "(Bugge & Lavik, 2010). The first Indian restaurant in Stavanger dates back to 1988. Since the establishment of the first restaurant, the number of Indian restaurants has surged tremendously. This proves that Norwegian people are more welcoming and open to trying cuisines from around the world. The lack of restaurant data in Stavanger has made it difficult to project the exact market share of Indian restaurants. The number of restaurants has been on an uptrend since 2008, and the total number of restaurants in Norway was 6060 in 2018.
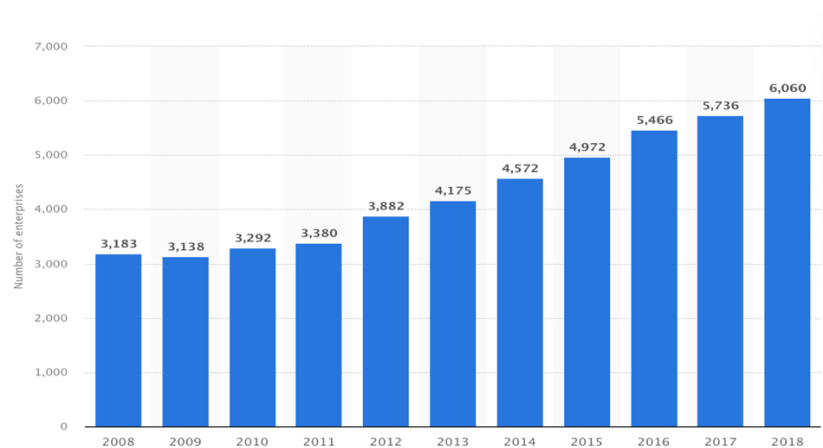

Figure 1 The number of restaurant enterprises in Norway from 2007 to 2018 (Lopez, 2021)

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The research problem being addressed in the study often results in studies that have examined similar issues from different and diverse disciplinary perspectives while assuming

others. The study focuses on the customer as an entity for the organization and how they play a critical role in the development of any business entity. Customer satisfaction is important because it affects the company's or business revenue, traffic, and, most importantly, the restaurant's reputation. There is no or near to nonexistent research about the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty related to restaurants in Stavanger; the notion of service quality and customer satisfaction has been accessed. In the present context, the world is in the phase of globalization, and the new concept of restaurants is emerging; apart from the food and drinks, service quality should be improved to compete globally. This research has focused on service quality assessment of 3 Indian restaurants in the Stavanger area to find out which aspect of service quality customers concentrate more on and if there is any discrepancy in the customer's expectations and reality.

"Customers behavior and how they perceive service across the world is not same, it is heterogeneity and is guided by the culture" (Laroche et al., 2004; Mattila & Patterson, 2004; Oliver, 1965; Zeithaml, 2002) and also by the "economic conditions of the customers" (Gupta, Pansari, & Kumar, 2018). This research has been conducted because the customer's perception of service might be different in different parts of the world

The research questions that this paper tries to address:

1. Which aspect of service do customers value the most and the least?

2. Whether the customers are satisfied with the present quality of service or not?

3. Is there a discrepancy between the expectation and reality of the quality of service, and to what degree?

2   Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter consists of theoretical background and models of relevant studies.

2.1 Service Quality:

The term quality service is often a major concern for many organizations and has different definitions among one of the oldest definitions is by the American Marketing Association "activities, benefits, or satisfactions which are offered for sale, or provided in connection with the sale of goods".

We can define service as the activity that takes place between customers and the providers in which the ownership is not transferable. Identifying and distinguishing the service's nature, such as intangibility, is often difficult. A service is intangible and often difficult to store compared to a product. Another distinctive characteristic of service is inseparability which cannot be separated from the service provider as a different entity. When services are provided, it is different from time to time. Standardization is difficult in service as human aspects play a vital role in the process. Perishability is another feature as services are provided and consumed simultaneously. It can´t be stored or held in the inventory.

The intangibility and heterogeneity make services different from the products and difficult to distinguish due to their nature. Service is often received by engagement with the provider. The quality can be categorized into two categories. Before Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), service quality was often categorized into two or three dimensions (Gerhard, CHRIST0 & DEON, 1997). (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) outlined the five dimensions of service quality: tangible, assurance, responsiveness, service reliability, and empathy.

2.2 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is meeting the guest's expectations and providing better quality services than competitors. This provides a competitive advantage and helps the organization increase its revenue. Many organizations' success depends on the profit earned by making guests happy, so the restaurants should understand the importance of customer experience and find ways to improve the customer experience. Customer loyalty is important; the restaurant can maintain its loyal customers and grow by providing quality service.

Customer satisfaction is important in any organization, especially the restaurant business. The business needs to identify what the customer wants, which is essential for the company's growth. Customer satisfaction is built into the customer service experience that the business wants to present to the customers. Customers are the foundation of any business; without them, most organizations cannot generate enough revenue to sustain them. Thus, an effective strategy with customer experience at its core will help customer satisfaction (Romano, 2006). Malik and Ghaffor (2012) define the concept of customer satisfaction as "meeting customer expectations regarding the special parameters of satisfaction".

Customer satisfaction has been an important topic since early 1970; numerous theories, customer ratings, and experiments have emerged.Olshavsky and Miller(1972) and Anderson (1973) examined disconfirmed expectancies and their influence on product performance ratings. These two theories acted as a foundation for theory testing and experimental testing. (Churchill, G., & Surprenant, C. (1982), among various approaches, the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm process theory (Mohr, 1982) provides the foundation for the majority of studies, and research on satisfaction has been conducted and consists of four constructs, expectation, performance, disconfirmation and satisfaction expectation arise when the customer expects a service or product to be of certain parameters for quality customers might form opinions regarding the anticipation of the product or service.

The importance of performance is the standard for comparison, which is used to access disconfirmation. Disconfirmation arises from the discrepancy between the actual version and expectation; the degree of disconfirmation affects satisfaction or dissatisfaction and is the core of the satisfaction theory. Satisfaction is the result of comparing the use or purchase of a product or service with cost, reward, and expected consequences.

"In chronological order, first service quality occurs, leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Customer satisfaction is regarded as an antecedent of service quality". (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994). Customer satisfaction is considered a mediator between service quality and loyalty. The study of "expectation reflects anticipated performance" (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982, p.492) focuses on the level of customer transactions, roles, effects, service quality, products, and words of mouth.

2.3 Service Quality, Customer satisfaction, and its Role Assessment

Firms pursuing a customer satisfaction strategy are associated with higher profits and have a higher chance of increasing customer value. This results in customer loyalty which is important in any organization's development process. There is increased competition in the current business world, especially in the restaurant business, and retaining customers is a competitive advantage. Companies that seek to create value for customers tend to have higher profits as customers become loyal and eventually increase the business revenue stream. Firms that follow cost-efficiency strategies are associated with lower profits.

The primary goal of any business organization is to reduce the cost that a company uses. However, cost efficiency is challenging as it will minimize the use of quality products or services, undermining the business's success. When a company focuses on cost efficiency, it loses the customers who are paying for quality services, resulting in increased losses as the

business does not generate enough revenue to sustain the organizational cost. Firms such as this tend to go into debt because they have reduced the

Several resources are required to improve business efficiency. (Parsuraman 1998) is considered the pioneer in the academic field for measuring service quality.

  According to Caruana (2002), the three concepts of customer satisfaction, service quality, and service loyalty are connected and provide the importance of customer loyalty, which stipulates the repurchase, which is considered an important part of most companies. According to (Caruana, 2002), the relationship between customer loyalty and other variables such as service quality and customer satisfaction is considered less important. "Customers prior to their use or purchase makes an assumption and later compares with the level of performance that they have received " (Bearden & Teel, 1989). Numerous researchers have researched service quality and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry and have focused on many factors such as service, price, food, and location. According to Sureshchandar, Rajendran & Anantharaman (2002) "service delivery organizations can gain a successful competitive edge over competitors through good service quality". Many restaurants focus solely on food quality, and service is often neglected as the customer enters through the door. The customer interacts with the employees and feels the ambiance, and creates a perception of the restaurant. Hence, service quality is crucial for hospitality firms as one cannot ignore the satisfaction or dissatisfaction it can lead to.
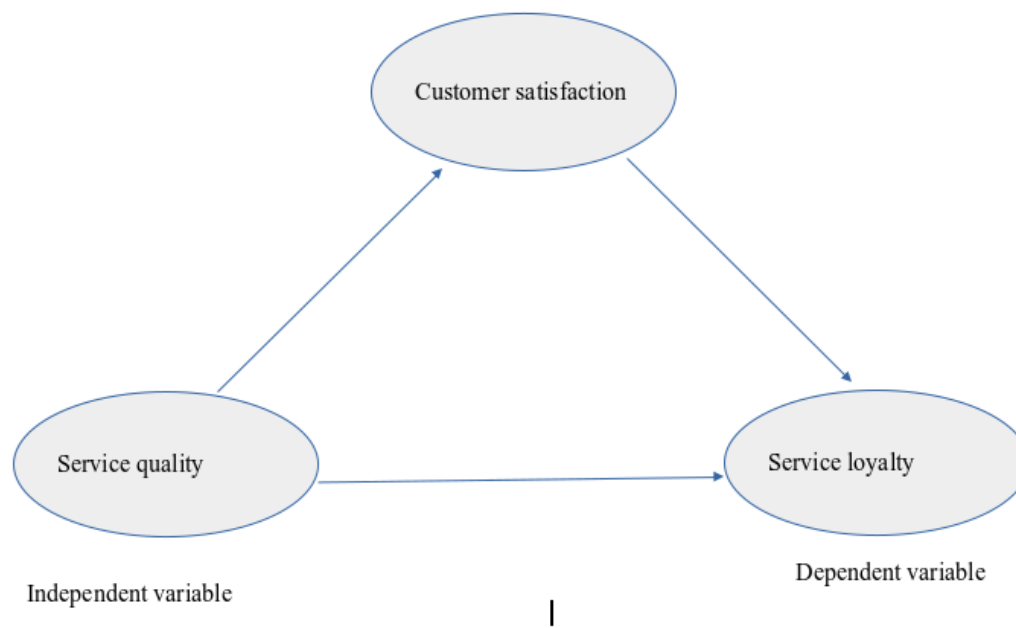
Figure 2 The Theoretical Model of Service Quality (adapted from Caruana, 2002, p.818)

The literature on this topic can be traced back to the early fifties (Fisk, Brown, and Bitner 1993).

2.4 The Gap Model

The gap model was proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. The model helps to identify the gaps between the expectations or perceived service quality that is received and what they were expecting.
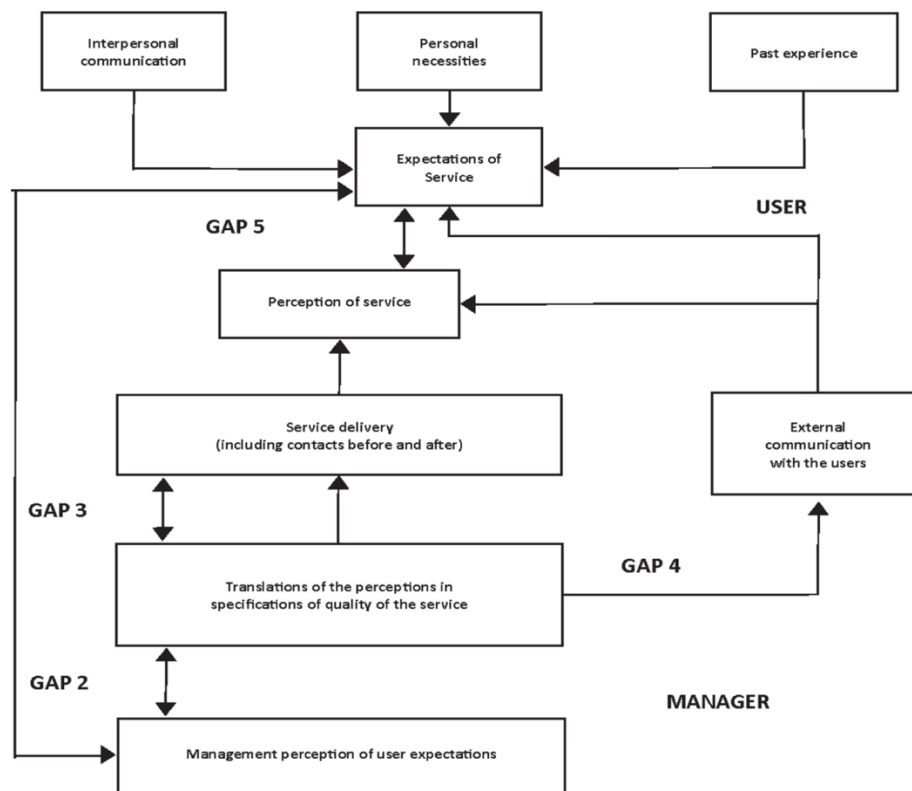
Figure 3 The Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1986, p. 44)

The Gap model mainly identifies 5 gaps (Parasuraman 1985)

Gap 1 this gap is the discrepancy between the customer's expectation and how the management perceives that

Gap 2 is the gap between service quality and expectation

Gap 3 is the discrepancy between service delivery and specification

Gap 4 is the discrepancy between external communication and external delivery

Gap 5 is the gap between expected and received service

The gap model was later improvised by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988, 1994) and introduced as the SERVQUAL scale, which measures expectation and perception of service quality.

2.5 The DINESERV Model

The DINESERV Model is similar to the SERVQUAL model and was developed by Stevens et al. (1995). It was designed to fit the restaurant industry. It has 29 questions to measure the service quality.DINESERV is of great use in measuring the performance of restaurants because it can compare the overall quality scores of service units with the average version of a set of similar service units under consideration to identify those that are underperforming, those that are performing to an intermediate standard, and those that are performing to the highest standards". (Adeinat, 2019). The original scale was designed for the western countries, so it needs to be modified for other countries.

2.6 The SERVQUAL Model

SERVQUAL stands for service quality gap between a customer's expectation before and after service consumption which affects the level of a customer's satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Clow, & Vorhies, 1993). SERVQUAL was developed originally consisting of 10 factors of service quality by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985) and is based on the 5th gap of the Gap model:

1. Tangibles

2. Reliability

3. Responsiveness

4. Communication

5. Credibility

6. Security

7. Competence

8. Courtesy

9. Understanding

10. Access

Its simplified version is called the Rater model, which has five dimensions. These dimensions have item scales for measuring service quality as perceived by customers. SERVQUAL model has 22 questions that measure the five dimensions by analyzing expectations and reality before and after with 7 points Likert scale. Service quality is calculated by calculating the difference between expectation and perception(P-E=service quality).SERVQUAL is appropriate for different service contexts; however, it might be required to reword and enhance some of the items (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991)

2.6.1 Dimensions of Service quality

2.6.1.1 Reliability

It measures if the organization is reliable or not. "Reliability has an impact on trust and the overall impression left in the mind of a customer after service consumption" (Abd-El-Salam, et al., 2013). It measures if the organizations keep their promises or not as advertised or marketed.

2.6.1.2 Assurance

This dimension depends on the employees of the organization. It shows the process of showcasing the knowledge and skills while executing the service for the customers. It can positively or negatively impact the overall impression of the organization.

2.6.1.3 Empathy

This refers to the care, attention, and priority given to the customer by the firm. It includes customers' demands and problems and how those problems are solved. "This service quality dimension is perceived through the people aspect of service quality"(Kaura, et al., 2012).

2.6.1.4   Tangibles

This includes the physical facilities, appearance, and equipment of the organizations. Tangibles include physical facilities which can be touched or visible. "Tangibles are especially important to service delivery firms as they are crucial variables to developing strong, positive, and inspiring customer association and experience through its proprietary assets" (Naidoo, 2014).

2.6.1.5   Responsiveness

This dimension includes the process in which employees react quickly in a standard time and try to respond to the customer's problems or requests. "In the age of IT, information technology advancement like emails, webpage and customer service interface improves the responsiveness of service delivery firm" (Kaura, et al. 2012).

2.6.2   Validity and Reliability of SERVQUAL

Validity and reliability of service quality are crucial in quality management. Reliability means that the result is valid regardless of the quantity. A good measure implies that the result is true of what the measurement is being carried off. Some studies (Babakus and Mangold, 1992; Bowers et al., 1994) have demonstrated that SERVQUAL is reliable in healthcare. There have been many tests of SERVQUAL instruments, among them the examination in public sector companies by Orwig et al. (1997), which concluded that pretesting of the instrument was necessary before using it for the nature of companies. The results of various tests conclude that the instrument needs to be modified to fit the purpose in which it is being used.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The model has been developed in this research to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and how the customer evaluates the service quality dimensions, which eventually leads to customer satisfaction. Based on other literature on service quality characteristics, the five most evident ones are used based on the SERVQUAL instrument developed by Parasuraman, et al. (1988). Suppose customers' expectations are met with the service. In that case, they are more likely to feel satisfied with the service, and a positive "perception of service quality is an indication of the customers' satisfaction" (Lenka et al, 2009). Customer satisfaction can be calculated by the equation "Customer Satisfaction = Perception of Performance – Expectations " Parasuraman et al, (1988). Reimann et al, (2008) also conclude that perception of Performance – Expectations = perceived service -customer satisfaction, where customer satisfaction is the sense of perceived service quality.

Inputs	Transformation	Outputs
Expectation Tangibility Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy	**Perception** Tangibility Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy	**Perception minus Expectation (P-E) =** **Percieved quality** Tangibility Reliability Responsiveness Assurance Empathy

(Gap-Disconfirmation) Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory service
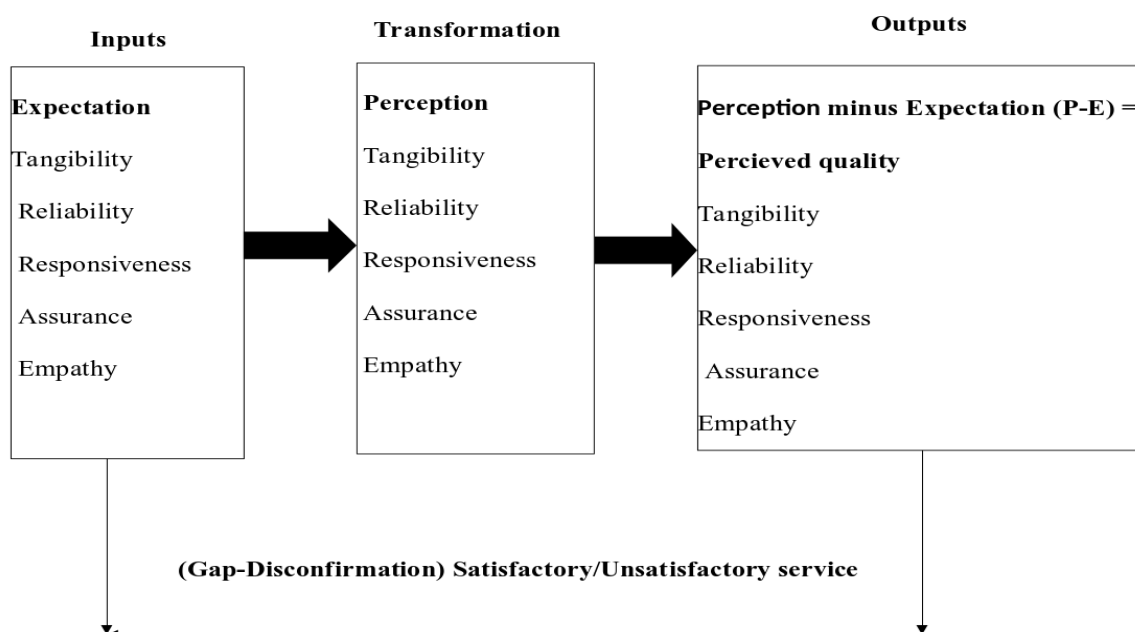
Figure 4 The representation of the equation and the conceptual model.

3 Chapter Three

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section includes the methodology of collecting data, and procedure, description of participants. The data collection method and quality procedure will also be discussed.

3.2 Case selection

The present research attempted to determine the service quality of restaurants in Stavanger among various types of restaurants with different customer segments. The study had to be narrowed down to minimize the error in the outcome. As a result, three Indian restaurants in Stavanger were chosen to conduct the research whose target customers were similar, and the prices of these restaurants were identical so that the result could be more accurate. The restaurants were mid-level dining restaurants, so the expectations of all three restaurant customers wouldn't vary by a high degree.

3.3 Instrumentation

The questionnaire was prepared using the validated SERVQUAL instrument by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) by making minor changes. The original instrument had 22 scales. To prepare the questionnaire for two parts, expectation and perception, there would have been 44 questions in total that would have been monotonous and lengthy, as people get disinterested in the long surveys and questionnaires. To minimize the disinterest of the respondent's questionnaire was narrowed down by incorporating two similar

dimension scales into one. The wordings in the questionnaire have been modified for the restaurant industry use.

3.4   Sample selection

One hundred fourteen questionnaires were distributed in 3 different restaurants Mughal India, Jai hind and India Tandoori were handed out to customers based on convenience sampling. The customers were selected by chance. The questionnaires were handed out to people after the meal and before the checks were presented as customers would have some time after receiving the service. Out of 114 questions, 65 were complete and could be used. As Gorsuch (1983) and Kline (1994) suggest, 100 is a minimum sample size. The response rate was 57.01% which was relatively low compared to other research in similar fields at different geographical locations.

3.5   Procedure

The restaurant managers of all three restaurants were notified about the purpose of the research; the questionnaires were provided to the servers. The 114 questionnaires were distributed to guests by the servers, out of which the guests filled 65 questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS version 26.0 to conclude the research. The time of handing out the questionnaires was on weekdays as servers were less busy handing out the questionnaires than on weekends.

3.6 Research design

This research aims to illustrate the relationship between service quality dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and customer satisfaction in Indian restaurants in the Stavanger. An empirical study was carried out to find the correlation between

variables. The topic is focused on the service sector particularly. The issue is concerned for both the parties, customers and management. The research focuses more on the perspective of the customers. This research is explanatory research whose objective is to create and test various hypotheses between variables. The data was collected over a 30 days period. This study follows a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The five hypotheses were created to accomplish the objective of this research.

H1- "There is no significant relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05"

H2- "There is no significant relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05"

H3- "There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05"

H 4 - "There is no significant relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05"

H 5 - "There is no significant relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05"

3.7 Analysis of data

SPSS version 26.0 and various statistical tools were used for the research. Spearman Correlation Coefficient is used to measure the dependence between two variables. The values are between -1 and 1. The relation between variables becomes strong if the value is closer to -1 or 1. The relation is positive if it is close to 1 or negative if it is close to -1. P-value is less than 5%, then it is considered important if the value is positive, the relation is considered positive, and if the value is negative, the relation is considered negative.

3.7.1 Indicators

We have five different independent variables, which are dimensions of SERVQUAL tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and one dependent variable, which is customer satisfaction.

The calculations of independent variables have been conducted as follows

- The sub-indicators expectation of each independent variable is calculated by the average of questions that measures variables

- Similarly, for perception, the same process has been followed as expectations.

- The final indicator is calculated as the difference in perception and expectation for each independent variable.

4   Chapter Four

Result and discussion

4.1   Results

The responses were first entered in an excel sheet which was later imported on SPSS the responses were each calculated separately and added later to find out the mean of each five variables.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
tangibility	65	2.00	5.00	3.7231	.87514
tangibility	65	2.00	5.00	3.8615	.74743
Total				3.7923	
reliability	65	3.00	6.00	4.3692	.67475
reliability	65	3.00	5.00	4.0308	.72821
Total				4.2	
responsiv	65	3.00	5.00	3.9692	.70643
responsiv	65	3.00	5.00	4.1231	.69614
Total				4.04615	
assurance	65	3.00	5.00	4.0923	.72291
Assurance	65	2.00	5.00	3.7231	.76050
Total				3.9077	
empathy	65	3.00	5.00	4.1538	.68990

empathyE	65	2.00	5.00	3.7077	.67830
Total				3.93075	
tangibility	65	2.00	5.00	3.3538	.69441
tangibility	65	2.00	5.00	3.5077	.66434
Total				3.43075	
reliability	65	2.00	5.00	3.1077	.79300
reliability	65	2.00	5.00	3.0462	.71656
Total				3.07695	
responsiv	65	2.00	5.00	3.5692	.66071
responsiv	65	2.00	4.00	3.1385	.65852
Total				3.35385	
assurance	65	2.00	4.00	3.1692	.62673
Assurance	65	2.00	4.00	3.2154	.59928
Total				3.1923	
empathy	65	2.00	4.00	2.9538	.67154
empathyP	65	2.00	4.00	2.9692	.66071
Total				2.9615	

Table 1Descriptive analysis of each variable

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tangibilitygap	65	-2.00	4.00	-0.36155	1.37509
Reliabilitygap	65	-1.00	5.00	-1.123	1.52101
sgap	65	-2.00	4.00	-0,6923	1.30734
Assurancegap	65	-2.00	4.00	-073845	1.35749
Empathygap	65	-2.00	5.00	-0.96925	1.49872

Table 2 the gap score of each variable

Table (2) illustrates that the gap score of tangibility is -0.36155, which is less than expected. We can conclude that customers are not happy with the restaurants' physical facilities, including visual appearance equipment. Similarly, guests do not have higher expectations regarding employees' appearance, which has not been met with the anticipation that it has the least gap score among all other dimensions.

The gap in reliability is -1.123, which is the highest among all the dimensions. The guests expected better, timely service and expected employees to respond quickly to their requests that seemed unmet or their complaints or requests were not handled properly.

With regards to responsiveness, the gap score was the service quality gap was -0,6923, which is the 4th highest gap among all other service quality gaps. Thus the customers did not find the restaurants to be as responsive as they expected, and employees didn´t provide adequate information related to services to the guests. The employees failed to provide prompt quality services to the guests.

In the case of assurance, the gap score was -073845, the third-highest among the five dimensions. This illustrates that guests did not find employees friendly and trustworthy and did not feel safe in the transaction.

A negative gap score of -0.96925 was recorded for empathy, which is the second-highest gap, meaning guests expected employees to provide the individual attention that was not met as expected. Similarly, the guests are not satisfied with the opening hours of the restaurants.

4.2 Testing the hypothesis

H1- "There is no significant relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05."

H2- "There is no significant relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.0.5"

H3- "There is no significant relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05."

H 4 - "There is no significant relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05."

H 5 - "There is no significant relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction at significance level α= 0.05."

Spearman correlation coefficient has been used to test the five hypotheses and analyze the correlation between the variables. The results from the test have been presented in the table (3,4,5,6) below.

			satisfaction	Tangibility
Spearman's rho	satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.532
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Tangibility	Correlation Coefficient	.532	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

Table 3 Correlations satisfaction – tangibility

Table 3 indicates a positive and moderate relationship between satisfaction and tangibility p-value is less than 0.05, $\alpha = 0.05$. An increase in tangibility will increase satisfaction.

	satisfaction	Assurance		
Spearman's rho	satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.538
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Assurance	Correlation Coefficient	.538	1.000

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

Table 4 Correlations Satisfaction- Assurance

The table (4) indicates a positive and moderate relationship between satisfaction and assurance p-value is less than 0.05, α= 0.05. An increase in assurance will increase satisfaction.

	satisfaction	**Empathy**		
Spearman's rho	satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.521
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	empathy	Correlation Coefficient	.521	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

Table 5 Correlations Empathy – Satisfaction

The table 5 indicates a positive and moderate relationship between satisfaction and empathy p-value is less than 0.05, α= 0.05. An increase in empathy will lead to an increment in satisfaction too.

			satisfaction	Reliability
Spearman's rho	satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.541
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	reliability	Correlation Coefficient	.541	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

Table 6 Correlations Satisfaction – Reliability

The table (6) indicates a positive and moderate relationship between satisfaction and reliability p-value is less than 0.05, $\alpha= 0.05$. Reliability is the highest correlated variable with satisfaction, where R=0.541. An increase in reliability will increase happiness.

			satisfaction	Responsiveness
Spearman's rho	satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.498
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	65	65
	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.498	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	65	65

Table 7 Correlations Satisfaction -responsiveness

The table (7) indicates a positive and moderate relationship between satisfaction and responsiveness p-value is less than 0.05, α= 0.05. An increase in responsiveness will increase satisfaction.

We can conclude that at significance level α =0.05, all five hypotheses are rejected. There is a significant relationship between the five dimensions of service quality and satisfaction.

An increase in any of the five variables increases customer satisfaction and vice versa.

4.3 Frequency table

			Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Neutral	34	52.3	52.3	56.9
	Agree	25	38.5	38.5	95.4
	Strongly agree	3	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 frequency table of revisit

			Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Neutral	40	61.5	61.5	66.2
	Agree	21	32.3	32.3	98.5
	Strongly agree	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 frequency table of overall satisfaction

			Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	14	21.5	21.5	21.5
	Neutral	37	56.9	56.9	78.5
	Agree	14	21.5	21.5	100.0
	Strongly agree	65	100.0	100.0	
	Total	14	21.5	21.5	21.5

Table 10 frequency table of recommendation

From table no 8,9,10, we can conclude that the highest number of people either agree or are neutral in the last three questions, which contradicts the previous results of the ap score. Customers seem satisfied overall, which sheds light that other things in play affect these restaurants' satisfaction, which needs further investigation.

5 Chapter Five

Conclusion and recommendation

The final part of the study presents the rendition of the problems and the overview of the study. This part also offers implications and suggestions for further research.

This research attempted to measure the satisfaction level of 3 Indian restaurants in the Stavanger area. This research focuses on investigating whether service quality affects customer satisfaction or not. The study supports the previous findings from other research that service quality affects customer satisfaction. There were mainly three research questions that arose which were;

1. Which aspect of service do customers value the most and the least?

2. Whether the customers are satisfied with the present quality of service or not?

3. Is there a discrepancy between the expectation and reality of the quality of service, and to what degree?

To answer these questions, the SERVQUAL instrument was used to prepare the questionnaires, 114 questionnaires, out of which 65 were completed and used in this research. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Tangibility was given less importance by the customers and had less gap score, meaning tangibility plays la less important role in customer satisfaction. Whereas the highest dimensions of service quality that customers are not satisfied with currently in these three restaurants were responsiveness. The correlation test showed that the service quality dimensions affected customer satisfaction.

The response rate was low. Another limitation is the number of restaurants selected for the research. It wasn´t feasible to include a large number of restaurants. Other factors also play

an important role in customer satisfaction that needs further study. The result of the last three questions contradicts the different results.

Further research is needed on which other things might play an important role in customer satisfaction, such as food location and others need to be done to get the full overview of the satisfaction level. A better understanding of customers' expectations and satisfaction can lead to success for many restaurants. Knowing about the overall satisfaction level is important for managerial levels in restaurants. The measurement of service quality should be periodic. It should be conducted by each restaurant to know about the current situation of service aspect, which could help bridge the gap. Responsiveness has the highest gap score. To reduce the gap, management can train employees to become more responsive toward the customers, which can help increase customer satisfaction.

6 Questionnaire

As a part of my Master's thesis at the University of Stavanger, I am conducting a survey. This questionnaire aims to study the relationship between the service quality of restaurants and customer satisfaction. All responses will be kept anonymous, and no one will be identifiable in the research.

Part I: Customer Expectation:

Directions: As a restaurant customer and based on prior experiences, think about the restaurants that provide excellent services, choose the responses, and to what extent you believe good restaurants should have these features.

Kindly mark the most appropriate answer in front of each statement

S.N.	Statement	Response				
1.	Restaurants should have well-maintained equipment and visually appealing physical facilities.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.	Employees should be professional and have a neat appearance in restaurants.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.	Restaurants should respond and provide services within a time frame as they promised.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.	Employees should show sincere interest in solving customer problems.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

5.	Restaurants should provide information about services to the customers.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6.	Employees should always provide prompt services, help and respond to customer requests.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.	Employees should be trustworthy, polite, courteous and friendly with customers .	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8.	Customers should feel safe, comfortable and secure in restaurants.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.	Employees should have excellent knowledge to answer the queries of guests eg: food and beverage knowledge	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.	Employees should show interest and give individual attention to each customer.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11.	Restaurants should operate at hours convenient to all customers.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Part II: Customer Perception:

Directions: The following statements are related to your feelings about this restaurant. Please show the extent to which you believe this restaurant has the feature described by each word. Your choices will truly reflect your perceptions about the restaurant:

S.N	Statements	Response				
12.	This restaurant has up to date, well maintained equipment and visually appealing physical facilities.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
13.	This restaurant's employees are professional and have neat appearances.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14.	This restaurant responses and provides services with-in a time frame as they promised. (eg: employees responses to your call for takeaway, brings your order in time.)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15.	Employees show sincere interest in solving customer problems. (eg: problems related to menu or food)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16.	This restaurant provides information about services to the customers. (eg, about services, special discounts, change in prices)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.	Employees always provide prompt services, help and respond to your requests.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18.	Employees are trustworthy, polite, courteous and friendly.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

19.	You feel safe, comfortable and secure in this restaurants. (eg: environment is safe for all age groups, hygienic food etc)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20.	Employees have good knowledge of food and wine	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21.	Employees of this restaurant show interest and give individual attention.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22.	This restaurant operates at hours convenient to all customers.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23.	Generally, you are satisfied with the services offered by this restaurant.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24.	You plan to revisit this restaurant	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25.	You will recommend this restaurant to your friends and relatives.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Thank you for your participation.

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