Predictors and Outcomes of Customer Satisfaction in Full Service Restaurants.

ONÉSIMO CUAMEA VELÁZQUEZ.

Facultad de Turismo y Mercadotecnia. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. Campus Tijuana.
E-mail: onesimo@uabc.edu.mx
Phone +526646821697
Fax +526646821697

JORGE CARLOS MORGAN MEDINA

Facultad de Turismo y Mercadotecnia. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. Campus Tijuana.
E-mail: jorgemorgan@uabc.edu.mx
Phone +526646821697
Fax +526646821697

Abstract

This research analyzed the relation between hostess attention, waiter's service, cleanliness of facilities and restrooms, set up table upon arrival, cutlery and glassware cleanliness, food and drinks delivery time and price of food and beverages and customer's satisfaction. Hypotheses implied by the model are tested on a sample of 569 customers of Full Service Restaurants, in Tijuana, Mexico. It was used a forced choice format Likert Scale –without neutral option- of 4 point ranging from 1=Not important, 2=Slightly Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important. The findings demonstrate that waiter service is the main predictor for customer satisfaction, followed by price of food and beverages, and food and beverage delivery time.

Key Words: Customer Satisfaction, Quality Services, Waiter Service, Price, Delivery Time.

Introduction

Tourism activities in Mexico and particularly in Tijuana represent an important source of income and employment generation. Hence, the evaluation of the service they offer should be a central element that guides the strategic decision making to establish a continuous improvement program.

The city of Tijuana has 117 restaurants with a wide range of gastronomy, from Argentinean, Italian, Japanese, Brazilian, to "Baja Mediterranean", better known as "Baja Med" (SECTUR, 2014). According to the Baja California Tourism Observatory of the El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Colef, 2012), from the total of 14,251 direct jobs generated by the restaurant sector in Baja California, 5,316 (37.30%) correspond to Tijuana.

As reported by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2011), the restaurant industry is defined as the provision of food and beverage preparation services for immediate consumption, this leads to understand that the restaurant industry consists of offering a mixture of ingredients with different degrees of complexity in a very short time between preparation and consumption of food.

Within the range of restaurant options, there are those that are classified as Full Service Restaurants (FSR), and are characterized by preparing food and beverages for immediate consumption by diners, also includes a full customer service: from their arrival until the moment of its departure (INEGI, 2013).

The Tourism and Conventions Committee of Tijuana (COTUCO, 2010) presented the executive project for the designation of a Gastronomic District (GD) in Tijuana. This was the first initiative for the designation of a GD in Mexico, thus the relevance of the study, particularly, for the institutional effort to designate a zone of the city under this concept, as well as for trying to improve not only the surrounding urban space, but the quality of the services offered by the restaurants located there.

In 2013, COTUCO (2013) conducted the FSR census of the GD of Tijuana, registering 202 establishments, without considering those with a capacity below than 50 diners. However, by updating the census in 2015, it was found that only 69 restaurants met that characteristic.

Literature Review

The purchase decision of a consumer is a process in which a map is used to guide a mixture of products and services with communication and sales strategies (Blackwell, Engel and Miniard, 2002). This model can capture in a way the activities that occur within that process, in which the consumer takes decisions and interacts with the different samples both internal and external.

In consonance with Blackwell et al. (2002), during the consumption phase, the individual can qualify his / her degree of satisfaction and as a consequence, high satisfaction can trigger another subsequent purchase or, conversely, low levels of satisfaction will cause a change of supplier, company or product.

Vera and Trujillo (2009) showed that clients tend to form their general opinion about the quality of the service, mainly due to the quality of the food and the quality of the facilities. It is also important to always receive the same from the restaurant, and that their complaints are adequately addressed.

The image of the restaurant is a determining factor in the value perceived by the client and, in fact, the perceived value is a determining factor for customer satisfaction, and this in turn, is a significant predictor of future behavior (Gagić, Tešanović and Jovičić, 2013). However, Saglik, Gulluce, Kaya and Ozhan (2014) found that cleanliness is directly related to customer satisfaction, while the restaurant environment does not influence the satisfaction level. While Ali and Rehman (2014) conclude that to achieve greater customer satisfaction, the responsiveness of restaurant staff is more important than the tangible elements. In the same sense, the orientation of customer service by employees positively affects the level of satisfaction (Kim, 2009).

In this sense, in restaurant industry the waiter has a crucial role in sales. Many organizations derive almost all their sales from the efforts of the waiter sale services. Waiters generally perform the duties of escorting guest to tables, serving customers seated at tables, serving customer seated at counters, clearing and setting up tables (Anderson, 1995).

For their part, Sabir, Irfan, Akhtar, Pervez and Rehman (2014) indicate that restaurant owners should focus on four factors that influence customer satisfaction: quality of service, physical design of the establishment, product quality and the price. But if you consider customer satisfaction as part of your marketing strategy, then you should focus on quality of service as the most important tool of customer satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkok, Dimitrovski y Bjelic (2014), by noting that the atmosphere of the place and the quality of service positively impact the customer satisfaction. Al-Tit (2015) found that the quality of the service and the quality of food affects directly the level of satisfaction.

In the FSR customers expect more than just good food, although good food is an essential component for a good experience, the service provided by the staff is a key factor that is associated with the customer satisfaction (Mhlanga, Hattingh and Moolman, 2014). Similarly, Petzer and Mackay (2014) found that the restaurant environment, quality of food and service are significant predictors of customer satisfaction, but at different levels. The most important predictor is the quality of food (taste, freshness, innovation, temperature, consistency, variety and healthy character of food). Secondly, they place the quality of the service (the will, the courtesy, the competence, the concern, the pleasant appearance and the attention of the staff), and thirdly, they locate the physical environment of the restaurant (style, design, colors, lighting and furniture). In analyzing the tangible aspects, Pecotić, Bazdan and Samardźija (2014) point out that furniture and table setting are predictors of increased satisfaction. Ma, Qu and Ali Eliwa (2014), state that the quality of the food and the service contribute to both: the customer satisfaction and the perceived image of the place.

In another sense, Guzmán and Cárcamo (2014) conclude that the key to service evaluation may be related to both product quality (tangible aspect) and quality of service (intangible aspect), without the dominating effect of one above another. In contrast, Siti, Massyittah, Hayati, Hairunnisa, Zuratulraha and Muhammad (2015) state that quality of service influences food quality rather than satisfaction levels. In this regard, Zhang, Zhang and Law (2014) found that, in order of importance, the taste of food, the quality of service and the physical environment of the place, directly contribute to the customer satisfaction. Additionally, they affirm that the quality in the service can compensate for flaws in attributes less human like the quality of the facilities.

As can be seen, there are different opinions about the factors and the importance of each of them in customer satisfaction. Hence the importance of conducting local studies to understand the idiosyncrasy, patterns of consumption and evaluation of factors involved in satisfaction, so that the owners and managers of restaurants have accurate information of their client and context, which enables them to make decisions aimed at continuous improvement.

Significance of the Study

This research analyzes the relationship between a small number of attributes (eight) and their effect on the level of consumer satisfaction in restaurants. Furthermore, based on the results of the pre-test incorporates a four-point Likert scale, eliminating the neutral value in which tended to concentrate most of the survey responses.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out the predictors or determinant attributes of customers satisfaction in Full Service Restaurants.

Hypothesis

H01. There is a positive significant relationship between customer satisfaction and Hostess attention, table setting, cleanliness of cutlery and glassware, waiter service, food and beverages, food and beverage delivery time, cleanliness of facilities and restrooms, price of food and beverages.

H02. Waiter service is the main attribute that positively influences consumer satisfaction.

Due to the prolific generation of studies about consumer satisfaction in restaurants, it was decided to investigate the most recent ones. With the purpose of extract and analyze the relevant factors according to

the review of the literature, allowed to identify the most representative attributes, which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Attributes

Hostess's attention
Table setting
Cleanliness of Cutlery and glassware
Waiter service
Food and beverage (Taste, presentation freshness, temperature, consistency and variety)
Food and beverage delivery time
Cleanliness of facilities and restrooms
Price of food and beverages ordered

Research Methodology

Method and Sample Size

It was decided to use the quantitative method using the survey technique. To determine the sample size, a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of ± 4% were established, which allowed to define the sample in 569 individuals (Rea and Parker, 1991). In this study the sample comprises of the customers of 34 restaurants in Tijuana, Mexico. In order to evaluate their most recent experience random sampling was used to apply 569 personal interviews surveys.

With the purpose of design the final version of the questionnaire used to gather the information required for the study, four pre-tests were carried out. Each pilot study was conducted in a sample of 30 respondents in the restaurants.

A relevant fact worth mentioning is that during the pre-test it was identified that most of the respondents showed a tendency to select the "neutral" response, which generated a bias in the information collected, so it was decided to eliminate it from the options. The exclusion of the neutral option does not necessarily change the proportion of responses that incline toward certain sides of a Likert response scale (positive or negative. In order to reduce such bias and considering the statement by Lavrakas (2008), the forced choice format –without neutral option- increases the number of survey responses that are usable for analysis and encourage participants to provide an actual response. Additionally, it was considered that the interviewees were familiar with the subject to be evaluated, since the survey was applied to the exit of the restaurants.

The questionnaire inquired the respondents to evaluate their dining experiences by using the four point Likert Scale. All items were assessed on 4 point scale ranging from 1=Not important, 2=Slightly Important, 3=Important, 4=Very Important.

Questionnaire also consisted of demographic questions in order to obtain the demographic profile of the respondents. Once the information was obtained in the field, it was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), ver. 19.

Measures

The reliability of the information was validated using the results obtained on the Cronbach's Alpha. Besides, for the purpose of testing hypotheses H01 and H02, multiple regression analysis was performed to evaluate the relationship between the eight attributes considered and the customer's satisfaction.

Analysis and Interpretation

Before reporting the results of this analysis, the study presents information about respondent profiles. As can be seen in Table 2, 46.20% of the respondents fall into 16 to 32 age category. The 38.30% of the sample is in 33 to 49 age group and the 15.5% of the respondents are 50 years old and above. Also, 57.10% of the respondents are male and 42.9% female. Besides, 66.72% reported having a bachelor degree or postgraduate studies, 24.25% indicated high school and 3.2% a below level of education.

Additionally, in regard to the weekly personal income, 36% reported income up to $300 dollars, 19.7% declared income between $301 and $600 dollars, and 18.8% reported that they earn more than $600 dollars. Finally, it was found that 88.40% are local residents and the 11.6% are visitor to the city.

Table 2 Demographic profile of the Respondents

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18 a 32	263	46.20%
	33 a 49	218	38.30%
	50 a 66	75	13.20%
	67 a 83	11	1.90%
	84 and above	2	0.40%
Gender	Male	325	57.10%
	Female	244	42.90%
Education level	Elementary	3	0.53%
	Junior High School	15	2.67%
	High School	137	24.25%
	Technician career	1	0.17%
	Bachelor degree	377	66.72%
	Postgraduate	29	5.13%
	Specialty career	3	0.53%
Weekly income (US Dollars)	No income	38	6.70%
	$300 and Below	205	36.0%
	$301 to $600	112	19.70%
	$601 to $900	41	7.20%
	$901 a $1,200	24	4.20%
	$1,201 and Above	42	7.40%
	No answered	107	18.80%
Place of residence	Tijuana	503	88.40%
	California, USA	45	7.90%
	Other states of México	21	3.70%

Most important attributes in customer satisfaction in full service restaurants

In order to test the reliability of the instrument Cronbach's Alpha analysis was performed; table 3 shows the results of the analysis, and it confirms that the instrument and items used were reliable with a coefficient Alpha value of 0.807.

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.807	8

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between the eight attributes and the level of consumer satisfaction in full service restaurants. Results from the Anova and model summary in tables 4 and 5 shows that the eight attributes have a positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction

(Sig.=0.00). This study shows that the eight attributes (R squared=.318) explain the 31.82% of customer satisfaction.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.564[a]	.318	.309	.444

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hostess's attention, table setting, cleanliness of cutlery and glassware, waiter's service, food and beverages, food and beverage delivery time, cleanliness of facilities and restrooms, price of food and beverages.

Table 5 Anova[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.621	8	6.453	32.708	.000[a]
	Residual	110.477	560	.197		
	Total	162.098	568			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hostess attention, table setting, cleanliness of cutlery and glassware, waiter service, food and beverages, food and beverage delivery time, cleanliness of facilities and restrooms, price of food and beverages.

b. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction.

The results of simple linear multiple regression from table 6, shows the Beta coefficients indicate that five out of eight attributes have a positive significant relation with customer satisfaction. And the most important influencing overall customer satisfaction in FSR are: first, waiter service (B=.184) (p= 0.000), followed by the price of food and beverages (B=.163) (p= 0.000), food and beverage delivery time was ranked third (B=.143) (p= 0.001), food and beverages ordered (taste, presentation freshness, temperature, consistency) is in fourth place (B=.129) (p= 0.006), finally the cleanliness of facilities and restrooms is located in the fifth place (B=.113) (p= 0.0006).

On the other hand, attributes that do not significantly affect customer satisfaction are hostess attention (Sig.=0.491), table setting (Sig.=0.157) and cleanliness of cutlery and glassware (Sig.=0.412).

Table 6 Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.622	.179		3.470	.001
	Hostess attention	.026	.038	.033	.689	.491
	Table setting	.065	.046	.072	1.419	.157
	Cleanliness of cutlery and glassware	.042	.052	.033	.821	.412
	Waiter service	.155	.043	.184	3.600	.000
	Food and Beverages *	.107	.039	.129	2.756	.006
	Food and beverage delivery time	.170	.050	.143	3.420	.001
	Cleanliness of facilities and restrooms	.103	.038	.113	2.745	.006
	Price of food and beverages	.210	.047	.163	4.419	.000

* Includes: Taste, presentation freshness, temperature, consistency.

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction.

The findings support the partial acceptance of H01, due to five out of eight attributes had a positive significant relation with customer satisfaction. The main predictors, in order of importance are: waiter service, the price of food and beverages, food and beverage delivery time, food and beverages ordered (taste, presentation, freshness, temperature, consistency) and cleanliness of facilities and restrooms. While three attributes are not significant: hostess attention, table setting and cleanliness of cutlery and glassware.

Accordingly to the results of table 6, the waiter service has the highest statistical significance and Beta coefficients influencing overall customer satisfaction, above the rest of the attributes, thus H02 is accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion

As reported by Anderson (1995), the waiter activities includes escorting guest to tables, serving customers seated at tables, serving customer seated at counters, clearing and setting up tables. And considering the results of this study, the waiter duties have a positive significant relation with customer satisfaction, which it can be grouped as quality service dimension including: waiter service, food and beverage delivery time and table setting upon arrival.

Base on the results presented above, it was concluded that the waiter service is the main factor that affects positively the customer satisfaction expressed by the respondents, and explain the 18.4 % of their satisfaction level, slightly higher than the price of food and beverages consumed with 16.3%. This result is in agreement with Vera and Trujillo (2009), Kim (2009), Sabir et al. (2014), Al-Tit (2015) and Mhlanga et al. (2014).

On the contrary, the results of this study contradict the findings of Petzer et al. (2014), who found that the quality of food (taste, freshness, innovation, temperature, consistency, variety and healthy character of food) is the most important predictor in customer satisfaction. Similarly, the outcomes of this study rejects the findings of Zhang et al. (2014) who assert that the first factor influencing consumer satisfaction is the taste of food.

Regarding cleanliness of facilities and bathrooms, the results are similar to those established by Saglik et al. (2014), who concluded that this attribute is directly related to the customer satisfaction. The findings in relation to the table setting differ from the results of Pečotić (2014), whom affirmed that table setting is a predictor of customer satisfaction.

Finally, it can be concluded that almost any fault in the facilities and products can be compensated or minimized by a good quality of service, as established by Zhang et al. (2014). Thus, the importance of the quality service should be emphasized by restaurant owners and managers. Based on these findings, the restaurant entrepreneurs should develop a program to raise the satisfaction levels of their clients, taking into account the following actions, in order of priority:

First, establish a training program for waiters aimed to improve the quality of customer service, which would bring additional benefits such as reduced delivery time for food and beverages. Second, develop a perceived value strategy maintaining a relationship between price and quality of the product. Third, implement a program of continuous improvement in order to ensure and increase the standards of taste, presentation, freshness, temperature and consistency of food and beverages.

Limitations and Further Research

This research was conducted exclusively in Full Service Restaurants in Tijuana, Mexico, with the participation of 34 out of 69 restaurants (49.27%), thus may not be generalizable to other places, countries or Mexican cities.

In this study 92% of the respondents were local residents, only 8% were visitors from the state of California, USA. Future research should consider a longitudinal approach and develop a comparative study between local residents and foreign visitors due to the international border condition of Tijuana.

References

Alí S., y Rehman K. (2014). Impact of service quality on customer satisfaction: evidence from the restaurant industry in Pakistan. *Management & Marketing*, volume IX, issue 2/2011, pp. 333 – 355.

Al-Tit, A. (2015). The Effect of Service and Food Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Hence Customer Retention. *Asian Social Science.* Vol. 11, Num. 23. pp. 129-139.

Anderson, E.W., (1995). An economic approach to understanding how customer satisfaction affects buyer perceptions of value. In: Proceedings of the AMA Winter Conference, pp. 102-106.

Blackwell R., Engel J., Miniard P. (2002) *Comportamiento del consumidor.* Novena edición. México: Editorial International Thomson.

Colef (2012). Número total de empleados de restaurantes por municipio. Observatorio Turístico de Baja California.

Cotuco (2010). Proyecto de Designación del Distrito gastronómico de Tijuana. B.C., México.

Cotuco (2013). *Censo Gastronómico Distrito Gastronómico de Tijuana*. Tijuana, B.C., México.

Gagić S., Tešanović D., y Jovičić A. (2013). The Vital Components of Restaurant Quality that Affect Guest Satisfaction. *TURIZAM.* Volume 17, Issue 4. pp. 166-176.

Guzmán, A. y Cárcamo, M.L. (2014). La evaluación de la calidad en el servicio: caso de estudio "Restaurant Familiar Los Fresnos". Acta Universitaria, 24(3), 35-49. DOI: 10.15174.au.2014.503

Inegi (2011). *La industria restaurantera en México.* México: INEGI.

Inegi (2013) *Sistema de Clasificación Industrial de América del Norte, México: SCIAN 2013.* México:

Kim, W. (2009). Customers' Responses to Customer Orientation of Service Employees in Full-Service. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, Vol. 10, pp.153–174.

Lavrakas, P. J. (2008). Encyclopedia of survey research methods: SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781412963947

Ma, E., Qu, H. y Ali Eliwa, R. (2014). Customer Loyalty with Fine Dining: The Moderating Role of Gender. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*. Vol. 23, Issue 5, pp. 513-535.

Marinkovic, V., Senic, V., Ivkov, D., Dimitrovski, D., y Bjelic, M. (2014). The antecedents of satisfaction and revisit intentions for full-service restaurants. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning. Vol.* 32 Num. 3, pp. 311-327

Mhlanga O., Hattingh Z. y Moolman H.J. (2014). The effect of restaurant attributes on customers' expectations and experiences in formal full service restaurants in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*. Vol. 3, Num. 1 2pp. 1- 12.

Pecotić, M., Bazdan, V., y Samardźija (2014). Interior design in restaurants as a factor influencing customer satisfaction. *RIThink Journal.* Vol. 4, pp. 10-14.

Petzer D. y Mackay N. (2014). Dining atmospherics, food and service quality as predictors of customer satisfaction at sit-down restaurants. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure.* Vol. 3 (2) - (2014), pp. 1 – 14.

Rea L. M., Parker R. A. (1991). Methods of analysis in public and urban affairs. Survey research: a practical guide. Collegiate publication service. San Diego, USA.

Sabir R.I., Irfan M., Akhtar N., Pervez M.A. y Rehman A.V. (2014). Customer Satisfaction in the Restaurant Industry: Examining the Model in Local Industry Perspective. Journal of Asian Business Strategy, 4(1)2014: 18-31.

Saglik, E., Gulluce, A., Kaya U. y Ozhan, C. (2014). Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Relationship: A Research in Erzurum Ataturk University Refectory. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research.* Vol. 4 No. 1; January. pp. 100-117.

Sectur (2014). Agendas de competitividad de los destinos turísticos de México. Tijuana, Baja California. México. SECTUR.

Siti, N., Massyittah, B., Hayati, A., Hairunnisa, B., Zuratulraha, B., Muhammad, S. (2015). The Influence of Service Quality and food quality towards customer fulfillment and revisit intention. *Canadian Social Science.* Vol. 11, No. 8, 2015, pp. 110-116

Vera M., Trujillo L. (2009). El Papel de la Calidad del Servicio del Restaurante como Antecedente de la Lealtad del Cliente. *Panorama Socioeconómico*, vol. 27, núm. 38, julio, 2009, pp. 16-30 Universidad de Talca. Talca, Chile.

Zhang, Z., Zhang, Z., y Law, R. (2014). Relative importance and combined effects of attributes on customer satisfaction. *The Service Industries Journal*. Vol. 34, Iss. 6, pp. 550-566.