

A STUDY ON THE FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE QUALITY IN DARSHINI STYLE FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS OF BENGALURU.

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KEYWORDS

Service Quality, Fast Food Restaurant, Darshini Style Restaurant, Entrepreneurship, SME.

ABSTRACT

Fast Food/Quick Service Restaurants are an essential part of people in this fast paced world. Darshini Style Restaurants are quick service restaurants native to the city of Bengaluru. It's critical to comprehend customer perceptions of service quality if these restaurants are to thrive. This study identifies and examines the variables influencing Bengaluru's fast food restaurants' (i.e. the Darshini Style Restaurants of Bengaluru) level of customer service. A descriptive research is conducted using 120 customers from Bengaluru city selected using the convenience sampling. To examine the sample's demographics, percentage analysis is employed. The reliability of the survey questionnaire is tested using Cronbach's alpha which was reliably good. The data distribution pattern is comprehended through the application of descriptive analysis. The ANOVA and Chi Square tests are used to evaluate the hypotheses. To investigate the relationship between preference and income, regression analysis and correlation are employed. The results show that the six factors identified exert a significant effect on the service quality of a Darshini. Responsiveness, and Empathy, Price and Quality of Food have the most impact and is followed by Cleanliness and Tradition. It is also discovered that a customer's preference to eat at these kinds of restaurants is positively correlated with their income.

INTRODUCTION

Restaurants are of various kinds, established for the basic purpose of dining, but have their own nature of functioning. Fast food establishments are an important dining space which offers quick and convenient service to its customers. Fast food restaurants gained prominence in the 20th century and have come a long way over these decades and are constantly adapted to the changing needs and trends. Prominent players in the field are the MNC Brands like McDonald's, Burger King, Domino's, Pizza Hut, KFC to name a few.

Karnataka, particularly Bengaluru has a unique type of fast food restaurants called the Darshini type of hotels also called the Darshini style restaurants which are quick service restaurants that are similar to the MNC fast food chains but retain their authenticity. These Darshinis came into existence in the late 1980's as a response to rapid urbanization and the need for food that is served quick, tasty and affordable. Since then, these restaurants have multiplied in numbers and are found in every nook and corner of Bengaluru. Darshini means "to see" in kannada. Popular south Indian vegetarian dishes like, idly, vada, dosa, bisibele bath, filter coffee etc are served here.

Darshinis are specific to the Bengaluru region and the same style of restaurants cannot be found elsewhere. It caters to the busy lifestyle of the metropolitan and contributes to the culinary culture of the city.

With the increased demand for these restaurants, the city witnesses its growth at a rapid pace and so its fall. Young entrepreneurs take up this business in haste and a very few succeed in making a mark in the field. Considering the fierce competition, It is essential to understand what the customers want and prefer. It is important for the hoteliers to understand what is considered as a quality service in this type of a restaurant as it is significantly different from the other types of restaurants. Understanding the factors that contribute to service quality in these local fast food restaurants will aid in their growth.

SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality is a measure of the superiority of the service that a service provider offers. Quality service is a necessity to meet and exceed the customer expectations, to satisfy the customers and retain them.

Service quality is under study since the 1980's and since then, several of researchers have contributed various models to assess the service quality.

The most famous model among them is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et. al. which initially had 10 dimensions and later was reduced to 5 and came to be called the RATER model. Other such important models include, Perceived Service Quality Model, Gap Model, Three Dimensional Model, SERVPERF Model etc. It is imperative to note that, these models can be used as references to study the service quality but cannot be used blindly. Service quality and its dimensions vary according to the service under study, the environmental setting, the contingency factors, culture etc. Hence, it is always a better option to develop one's own model to study the service quality.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model helps in understanding the factors that affect service quality in the Darshini style restaurants.

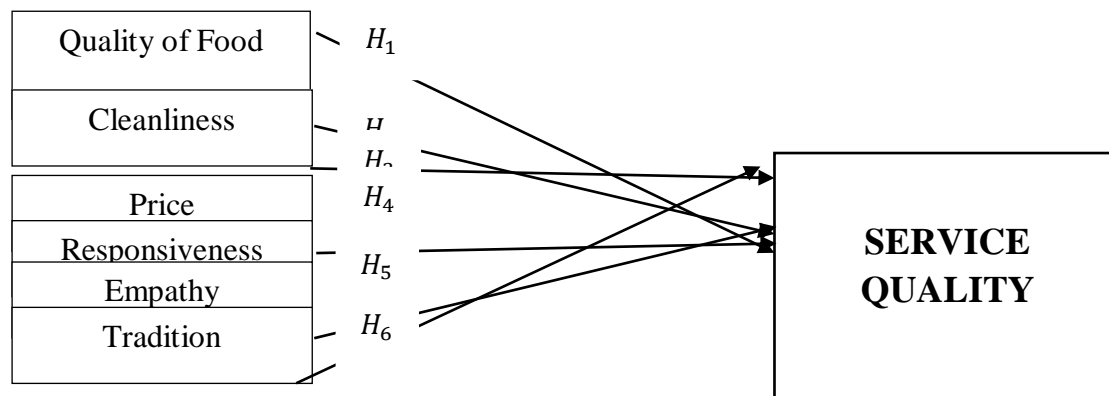


Fig 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

SERVICE QUALITY FACTORS

The factors identified in the study are as follows:

1. **Quality of Food:** It includes the nutritional content and the taste of the food offered.
2. **Cleanliness:** It includes the sanitation in the restaurant and the personnel hygiene of the employees.
3. **Price:** This factor talks about the affordability of the food and its value for money.
4. **Responsiveness:** Timely response of the staff in providing the coupons and the food.
5. **Empathy:** Politeness and courteousness of the staff in dealing with the customers.
6. **Tradition:** Authenticity and originality of the food and pure vegetarian food.

LITERATURE REVIEW

AniebietEtuk et. al. (2022), studied the service quality's influence provided on the customer's choice of fast food store. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and it was analysed using simple regression through the SPSS software. It was found that SERVQUAL had a notable influence on the customer's choice of fast-food restaurant.

Dr Harsha Vardhan G (2021), researched to identify the customer's expectations about the service quality provided by the quick service restaurants in Mysore. Multistage random sampling was used to select five quick service restaurants in the city. Questionnaires were distributed to 300 customers of these restaurants to study the factors of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, and empathy. It was discovered that the most crucial elements influencing the customers' perception of the quality of the services were reliability/dependability and empathy.

André Luís Policani Freitas et. al. (2020), examined the factors that influences service quality in fast food restaurants of Brazil. 8 fast food restaurants located in malls were chosen for the study using questionnaire based on the DINESERV scale. Cronbach's α , Factor analysis, correlations, linear regression and Quartiles analysis were done to identify that reliability, physical facility and empathy were the key factors that affected service quality.

Dr.R.Gopinath et.al. (2019), conducted a study to analyse the way that customers view fast food outlets in Perambalur district. In order to investigate the characteristics of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, 216 respondents were chosen by convenience sampling. The result proved that service quality has an impact on the customer satisfaction.

Kiran et. al. (2016), reviewed a number of literatures to study the different service quality models developed by researchers over the years. Models that were studied include Lehtinen 3-dimensional model, Gronroos Model, Gap Model, RSQS Model, three components Model and Brady's Hierarchical model. The researcher has stated the existence of further scope for improvement in the area of study.

RESEARCH GAP

The above literatures give us detailed study about the service quality concept and the models developed by researchers. The factors that contribute to service quality is different in different settings based on varied conditions. No study is done to understand the factors that contribute to the service quality in a Darshini style restaurant. This study covers this gap.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Darshini type restaurants are a unique style of fast food restaurants native to the state of Karnataka, particularly to Bengaluru. The city is flooded with these restaurants and caters to people from all walks of life. Many such restaurants are started every day but not all of them are successful. In order to survive in the industry, it is necessary to understand what customers perceive as quality service in a Darshini style restaurant.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Darshini style restaurants are fast-food establishments that offer tasty, quick service at an affordable price. The city is filled with such restaurants. As they are semi organized, its success is not a guaranteed aspect. Young entrepreneurs need to understand what their customers expect from them. Fulfilling such needs in terms of providing quality service will help them survive and sustain in the industry. Hence the need for the study.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study includes the following:

- To study fast food restaurants' perceptions of service quality.
- To analyze the factors affecting service quality in the Darshini style restaurants.
- To assess the relationship between customer income and preference to dine at Darshini style restaurant.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the factors that are perceived are quality service by the customers of a Darshini style restaurant. The research is limited to the city of Bengaluru where these restaurants are found. Customers from all walks of life, above the age of 18 are targeted for the survey.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design is used for the study. Quantitative methodology is employed for the analysis. Customers of Fast food restaurants (Darshinis) of Bengaluru are the sample frame with a sample size of 120. Convenience sampling is used to select the respondents in the sample. A structured questionnaire is prepared and distributed to collect the primary data. Percentage analysis is used to understand the demography of the respondents. Descriptive analysis is done to assess the distribution of the gathered data. Reliability test is done to check the level of reliability of questionnaire. Chi Square test is used to test impact of the factors on service quality. Regression, correlation and ANOVA is used to determine the relationship between income of a customer and their preference to eat at a darshini style fast food restaurant.

HYPOTHESIS

The study aims to test the following hypothesis:

H_0 : The identified factor does not exert an effect on Service Quality.

H_1 : Quality of Food exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_2 : Cleanliness exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_3 : Price exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_4 : Location exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_5 : Empathy exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_6 : Tradition exerts an effect on Service Quality.

H_0 : Income does not have a significant impact on Preference of Darshini style restaurant.

H_7 : Income does have a significant impact on Preference of Darshini style restaurant.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the customers of various darshini style fast food restaurants are analyzed and interpreted using a number of statistical tools as follows:

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Table1: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Demography of Customers

Particulars	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	64	53
	Female	56	47
	Others	0	0
Age	Below 30	76	63
	30-40	24	20
	40-50	12	10
	Above 50	8	7
Marital Status	Married	44	37
	Single	76	63
Qualification	Nil	0	0
	Secondary	8	7
	UG	20	17
	PG	88	73
	Others	4	3
Occupation	Student	16	13
	Unemployed	12	10
	Employee	56	47
	Self Employed	12	10
	Professionals	24	20
Income	Nil	28	23
	Less than 20,000	0	0
	20,000 to 50,000	48	40
	50,000 to 1,00,000	20	17
	1,00,000 to 5,00,000	12	10
	Greater than 5,00,000	12	10

Majority of the customers are male in the age group of Below 30 years who are Single, postgraduates and are employees drawing a salary between 20,000 to 50,000 per month. It shows that working population and families are the regular customers here.

As Bengaluru is an IT hub and many employees live alone, young employees are the major contributors. Customers from all age groups and economic backgrounds prefer to eat in these restaurants.

Table2: Frequency and Percentage Analysis of Customer Preference & Frequency of Visit to restaurants

Particulars	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage
Prefer eating at the Darshini	Yes	112	93
	No	8	7
Frequency of eating at a Darshini	Daily	4	3
	Once a Week	68	57
	Once a Month	28	23
	Rarely	20	17
	Never	0	0

The results show that, 93% of the sample prefer to eat at the Darshini and majority of the customers eat at these restaurants once a week.

This shows that, Darshinis are a preferred food outlet for the regular food needs of the people of Bengaluru.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Analysis on Factors Impacting Service Quality

Factors	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Quality of Food										
Taste	50	41.7	54	45	16	13.3	0	0	0	0
Nutrition	38	31.7	64	53.3	16	13.3	2	1.7	0	0
Cleanliness										
Sanitation	44	36.7	50	41.7	24	20	2	1.7	0	0
Personnel Hygiene	49	40.8	52	43.3	19	15.8	0	0	0	0
Price										
Low Price	42	35	58	48.3	20	16.7	0	0	0	0
More Quantity	48	40	52	43.3	20	16.7	0	0	0	0
Responsiveness										
Quick Service of Food	42	35	68	56.7	10	8.3	0	0	0	0
Quick Response to Queries	54	45	50	41.7	16	13.3	0	0	0	0
Empathy										
Understanding Customer Needs	60	50	40	33.3	20	16.7	0	0	0	0
Polite and Respect to Customers	42	35	58	48.3	20	16.7	0	0	0	0
Tradition										
Food Authenticity	44	36.7	52	43.3	22	18.3	2	1.7	0	0
Style of Cooking	34	28.3	52	43.3	32	26.7	2	1.7	0	0

The above table shows the frequency and percentage analysis of the agreement to the identified factors contributing towards the service quality of the Darshini style fast food restaurants of Bengaluru. Customers either agree or strongly agree to the factors contribution to service quality. Very few customers disagree to them and a part of them are neutral about it.

RELIABILITY TEST

Table 4: Reliability Test using Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.86	12

The reliability of the questionnaire is tested using Cronbach's Alpha which is 0.86. Since the value is above 0.70, the questionnaire is at a good level of reliability.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis for the Response on Factors Impacting Service Quality in Darshini Style Fast Food Restaurants.

Factors	N	Mean	Std Dev	Variance	Kurtosis	Skewness	Wt. Avg
Quality of Food							
Taste	120	4.28	0.69	0.47	-0.83	-0.44	42.83
Nutrition	120	4.15	0.71	0.50	0.15	-0.51	35.57
Cleanliness							
Sanitation	120	4.13	0.79	0.62	-0.65	-0.45	35.43
Personnel Hygiene	120	4.25	0.71	0.51	-0.95	-0.41	42.5
Price							
Low Price	120	4.18	0.70	0.49	-0.92	-0.27	41.83
More Quantity	120	4.23	0.72	0.52	-0.99	-0.38	42.33
Responsiveness							
Quick Service of Food	120	4.27	0.60	0.37	-0.54	-0.20	42.67
Quick Response to Queries	120	4.32	0.70	0.49	-0.83	-0.52	43.17
Empathy							
Understanding Customer Needs	120	4.33	0.75	0.56	-0.95	-0.63	43.33
Polite and Respect to Customers	120	4.18	0.70	0.49	-0.92	-0.27	41.83
Tradition							
Food Authenticity	120	4.15	0.77	0.60	-0.51	-0.49	35.57
Style of Cooking	120	3.98	0.79	0.62	-0.85	-0.18	34.14

Descriptive analysis is conducted to understand the distribution and patterns in the data. A total of 120 responses is analyzed with most of the factors having their mean around 4 and standard deviation around 0.7. Kurtosis of all the factors lie between -2 & +2. Skewness of all the factors fall between -1 & +1. Hence the data has normal univariate distribution. Since all the skewness values are negative, the data of the 12 parameters are left skewed. According to the weighted average, the order in which the factors influence service quality (Highest 1st) is assessed. Understanding customer needs, quick response to queries, taste and quick service of food highly influence service quality. Personnel hygiene, more quantity, polite & respect to customers and low price moderately influence service quality. Nutrition, food authenticity, sanitation and style of cooking have a low influence on service quality compared to the other factors.

CHI SQUARE TEST

Table 6: Chi-Square Test on Factors Impacting Service Quality in Darshini Style Fast Food Restaurants.

Factors	χ^2_{cal}	$\chi^2_{0.05}$	df	Sig.	Result
Quality of Food					
Taste	21.80	5.99	2	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Nutrition	73.33	7.81	3	< 0.001	
Cleanliness					
Sanitation	47.20	5.99	2	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Personnel Hygiene	16.65	5.99	2	< 0.001	
Price					
Low Price	18.20	5.99	2	< 0.001	Reject H_0
More Quantity	15.20	5.99	2	0.001	
Responsiveness					
Quick Service of Food	42.20	5.99	2	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Quick Response to Queries	21.80	5.99	2	< 0.001	
Empathy					
Understanding Customer Needs	20.00	5.99	2	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Polite and Respect to Customers	18.20	5.99	2	< 0.001	
Tradition					
Food Authenticity	50.93	7.81	3	< 0.001	Reject H_0
Style of Cooking	42.93	7.81	3	< 0.001	

At a confidence level of 95%, the calculated value of all the 12 parameters are greater than their corresponding table values. Also, the significance level or p value is < 0.001. Since this is lesser than 0.05, the Null hypothesis is rejected for all the factors and hence we can say that the 6 factors do have a significant impact on the service quality.

REGRESSION

Regression analysis is conducted to find the relationship between Income and Preference to eat at a Darshini style fast food restaurant.

Table 7: Model Summary (Preference to eat at a Darshini)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.31	0.10	0.09	0.24

Correlation coefficient R is 0.31 and hence there is a low level of positive correlation between income and preference.

Table 8: Coefficients (Preference to eat at a Darshini)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.10	0.05	0.00	41.60	< 0.001
Income	-0.05	0.01	-0.31	-3.58	< 0.001

Since the significance level is <0.001 for a confidence level of 95%, there is a significant relationship between income and preference.

ANOVA

Table 9: ANOVA between Preference to eat at a Darshini and Customer Income.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Preference to eat at a Darshini	Between Groups	1.60	4	0.40	7.84	< 0.001
	Within Groups	5.87	115	0.05		
	Total	7.47	119			

Analysis of variance is conducted to test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between customer income and their preference to eat at a darshini style fast food restaurant. From the above table, it is evident that preference does depend on income as the significance value is less < 0.001 which is less than 0.05 for a confidence level of 95%.

FINDINGS

1. It is found that men and women both visit these restaurants in almost equal numbers.
2. Majority of the customers belong to the working age group and people from all walks of life visit these restaurants.
3. Over 93% of the population prefer to eat at a Darshini and most of them visit them at least once a week.
4. The data follows a normal univariate distribution.
5. From the Chi square test, we know that, as the calculated value is greater than the table value for all the factors, we reject the null hypothesis. Hence all the factors contribute to service quality.
6. Understanding customer needs, quick response to queries, taste and quick service of food highly influence service quality.
7. Personnel hygiene, more quantity, polite & respect to customers and low price moderately influence service quality.
8. Nutrition, food authenticity, sanitation and style of cooking have a low influence on service quality compared to the other factors.
9. Responsiveness, empathy and price are the primary determinants of service quality. Quality of food, cleanliness and tradition are equally important despite their ranking lesser than the other three factors.
10. There is positive correlation between a customer’s income and their preference to eat at a darshini style restaurant.
11. Most importantly, Darshini is no more dedicated to a particular category of customers, rather people from all cultures and all walks of life prefer eating at a Darshini.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it is evident that Darshini style restaurants are very abundant and popular among the local residents of Bengaluru. People from all walks of life depend on it due to the busy nature of the city. Young entrepreneurs who wish to start these restaurants have to take customers into consideration while providing the service. Because of the tough competition, customers have a lot of choices to shift to and in order to gain and retain customers, one should give their customers the best quality service and satisfy them. As such, the results of the study points out at the importance of Hygiene, Food Quality, Responsiveness, and Empathy in providing quality service.

As these restaurants mostly have open kitchens, the cleanliness of handling the food, the utensils and the staff is very important to the customers and is given utmost importance.

Darshini style restaurants provide similar food varieties and are visited by customers on almost a daily basis. In order to survive in the industry, one has to provide the best taste and nutritional content to its customers.

As darshinis are self service restaurants, customers have to wait in the que to receive the coupon and also to receive the food at the counter. Responding to customers in a timely and appropriate manner is very important.

Even though initially these restaurants were targeted by the pure vegetarians, with change in lifestyle and need of the hour, people from all cultures and eating habits visit these restaurants on a regular basis.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

This study aims at identifying the parameters that are considered as quality service by the customers of the restaurant. Researchers do study about service quality and the restaurants but studies particular to this type of restaurants is negligible. This study will help the restaurants understand the critical areas to focus in order to retain their customers and the industry to understand what factors will help them sustain and grow amidst the tough competition. This is just the beginning of the research on these Darshini style restaurants. The paper only covers the marketing part of service quality and there is a huge scope for research in the operations aspect of service quality.

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