

6th International Research Symposium in Service Management, IRSSM-6 2015, 11-15 August
2015, UiTM Sarawak, Kuching, Malaysia

Service Quality, Customers' Satisfaction and the Moderating Effects of Gender: A Study of Arabic Restaurants

Muhamad Saufiyudin Omar^{a,*}, Hashim Fadzil Ariffin^b, Rozila Ahmad^c

^a Department of Tourism & Hospitality, Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Pauh Putra, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia

^b Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Puncak Alam, 42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

^c School of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management, UUM College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara
Malaysia, 06010 UUM Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

Abstract

In the highly competitive business environment, customers' evaluation of service quality is critical for service firms' survival. While there are numerous studies on service quality, very few have investigated the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between service quality and customers' satisfaction in Arabic restaurants. Therefore, this study aims to provide additional insight into the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction by examining the moderating effect of customers' gender in Arabic restaurants and to identify the extent of each service quality attributes in relation with customer satisfaction as they are perceived by Malaysian customers. A quantitative study was conducted and a set of questionnaire examining the attributes of service quality and customer satisfaction was developed. The data was collected through the survey completed by 411 respondents. Correlation analysis and hierarchical regressions were employed to analyse the data. The correlation analysis shows that all the five service quality attributes – tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy have positive relationship with customer satisfaction. However, hierarchical regressions indicated a slightly different result. The attributes-tangibles, assurance and empathy are found to have significant relationship with customer satisfaction, but the relationship with the other two attributes – reliability and responsiveness is insignificant. Empathy has a strong positive correlation with customers' satisfaction while responsiveness has a weak positive relation with customers' satisfaction. These findings indicate that restaurant operators should improve their service quality, especially in terms of their responsiveness in order to enhance customers' satisfaction. In addition, gender plays a significant effect in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak

Keywords: customer satisfaction, ethnic restaurant, gender, moderator, service quality.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +6-012-266-0944; fax: +6-049-886-300.
E-mail address: saufiyudin@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Customer's assessment of service quality is a critical information for service providers whose aim is to improve business performance, strengthen core competencies and position themselves more strategically in the market place (Cronin & Taylor 1992, Jain & Gupta 2004). Organizations that provide superior service quality do experience higher economic returns and also have a more satisfied customer base (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994; Gilbert et al., 2004; Gilbert & Veloutsou, 2006). Therefore, it has become ubiquitous for service providers to seek out competitive advantages by providing superior service (Lee et al., 2004). According to Zeithaml (1988) service quality is usually defined as the customer's judgement of the overall excellence or superiority of the service. Powers and Barrows (2003) suggested that service is particularly a pivotal or fundamental element in the restaurant sector. In order to measure service quality, Zeithaml and Berry (1998) have developed an instrument called SERVQUAL which consists of five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles. While Nikolich and Sparks (1995) have stated that perceived levels of service in restaurants are based on the relationship between customers and service providers. Customer satisfaction is viewed as influencing repurchase intentions and behavior, which, in turn, leads to an organization's future revenue and profits. As a result of its direct link with profits, the issues of service quality and customer satisfaction have become a focus to all organization including restaurant industries. More and more companies are compelled to assess and improve their service quality in an effort to attract customers (Gilbert & Veloutsou, 2006). Customer satisfaction can be defined as a customer's overall evaluation of his or her purchase and consumption experience of goods or services (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Johnson et al., 1995).

Interests in Arabic restaurants seem to be continuously increasing in Malaysia due to the increasing number of tourists' arrival from the Middle East in the past several years. Arabic tourists visit Malaysia frequently, especially during their summer season after the 11th September 2001 tragedy in America (Salleh, Redzuan, Abu, Mohd & Mohd, 2010). The September 11 tragedy had greatly changed the global tourism scenario especially in Malaysia and tourists especially from the Muslim countries were becoming more careful and selective in choosing their holiday destinations (Salleh et al., 2010). In year 2000 about 249,260 Middle East tourists visited the United States but in 2002 and 2005 the numbers had decreased tremendously to 126,613 and 144,131 respectively (Salleh et al., 2010). Similarly, tourists arrivals in the United Kingdom also declined from 429,000 to 360,000 and 380,000 (Salleh et al., 2010).

According to Salleh et al. (2010), tourists from the Middle East started to find alternative holiday destinations. One of their choices for a holiday is Malaysia because it is an Islamic country. As such, their arrivals to Malaysia have shown an increasing trend. For instance, in 2010, Tourism Malaysia with the cooperation of the Immigration Department stated that tourist from the Middle East visiting Malaysia increase every year and the number of visitors from Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iran totalled 86,771, 25,645 and 116,252 respectively. In 2011, their numbers and percentage increased to 15.6% from these three countries; Saudi Arabia-87,693, UAE- 24,212 and Iran-139,617 (Tourism Malaysia, 2012). The increasing number of tourist arrivals from the Middle East and the increasing number of Arabic restaurants in Malaysia has made Arabic food much popular and well accepted by the Malaysian citizens. Although there are numerous studies about Arab tourists and their behaviour, studies focusing on Arabic restaurants and the role of gender as a moderator is still limited. Hence, this study is very important to identify the factors that satisfy customers and how gender moderates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Arabic restaurants. A few studies have addressed the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in fast-food restaurants (Brady et al., 2001; Gilbert et al., 2004; Kara et al., 1995; Lee & Ulgado, 1997; Qin & Prybutok, 2008). However, none of the studies are related to Arabic restaurants. Thus, the purpose of this study is (1) to examine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Arabic restaurants, (2) to identify which attribute influences customer satisfaction the most in Arabic restaurants and (3) to examine the moderating effect of gender between service quality and customer satisfaction in Arabic restaurants.

2. Literature review

2.1. Customer satisfaction

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) define satisfaction as a judgement that a product or service feature (or the product or service itself) provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment. Choi and Chu (2001) consider satisfaction as an evaluation by customers that the food or service they have received is at least as good as it is

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1107426>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1107426>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)