

Service Quality Level of Food Service Establishments in Lipa City, Philippines: Basis for Business Operations Enhancement

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Abstract

Service quality is considerable parts of businesses, which makes it important to correctly, properly measure and research its effectiveness. This study aimed to determine the service quality level offered by leading food service establishments in Lipa City. On the other hand, it tested the significant relationship on people and product between the profile of the food service establishments and level of service quality. Moreover, it also tested the significant differences among the responses regarding service quality level when grouped according to food service establishment which pertain to place, people, product, price and promotion. This study utilized descriptive method of research wherein the research design is valuable in providing facts. This study revealed that food service establishments mostly are family restaurants, offers common services and patronize from generation to generation by Lipeños. The respondents strongly agreed in the service quality level provided by food service establishments in Lipa City are the main attributes in providing service quality level of food service providers. However, they only agreed that price and place secondly followed in determining the service quality level. It also revealed that the service quality is not affected by the profile of the food service establishments in Lipa City. Lastly, the study revealed that absenteeism and tardiness and guest reservation are the common problems encountered by food service establishments. The proposed measures have been formulated to enhance the business operations.

Keywords: Service Quality, Food Service Establishment, Business Operation

1. Introduction

Service quality is a considerable part of business, which makes it important to correctly, properly measure and research its effectiveness. An organization can gain competitive advantage for the purpose of enhancing its service quality by gathering information on marked demand. Conceptual models in service quality enable management to identify quality problems. By preventing the identified problems, there is beyond possibility of improving the profitability, efficiency and overall performance of the business. SERVQUAL serves as a diagnostic tool for identifying an organization's service quality weakness and strengths. The SERVQUAL instrument verifies and validates the different marketing 5P's such place, product, price, people and promotions of the food service establishments in Lipa City, Philippines.

Today, the country struggles to overcome economic crisis. At this critical point, a challenge is thrown to the public and private business enterprises to live up to their role of providing the Filipino people with a better quality life. The tremendous power of business carries with it a commensurate degree of customer satisfaction and social responsibility. The business sector must therefore prove they can meet these challenges through quality service in their productive endeavor and a social orientation in all their affairs (Shaw, 2004). Quality improvement has played a key role in business today. Therefore, quality concept is categorized under organizational culture concept. It means that companies that are interested in obtaining a high level of customer value would be expected to have a culture supported service quality. Service quality

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plays a vital role in the success of organizations (Ueltschy et al., 2009). Service quality is valuable to achieve competitive advantage in the service-oriented world by distinguishing itself from competitors. In fact, service quality as a notable input to customer satisfaction can be considered a driver of customer life time value. Quality is a universal theme in the global economy and is a necessary but not sufficient condition for competitive success. Another way of saying this is that quality used to be a competitive issue out there, but now it's just the basic denominator to being in the market (Hitt, 2003). Quality is part of the environmental profile of a product. Good quality can also be widely defined to include both positive environmental and social attributes (Welford, 2000).

Service cannot be separated from customer in food service industry. The best service means returning and doing the same business. The importance of customer service should be at an all-time high. Many services require personal interactions between customers and the employees, and these interactions strongly influence the customers' perception of quality services being offered. Businesses realize that providing a service alone is not enough in today's competitive economic environment. According to Barber and Scarcelli (2009) that delivering quality in products and services are a significant component of the competitive strategy. Restaurant service quality and customer satisfaction were found the variables that contributed to restaurant customer satisfaction: food quality, human service, physical environment, cleanliness, convenient location, speedy service, and reasonable price.

According to the study of Shi and Su (2007), despite the fact that customer satisfaction is a key factor for the success of any form of businesses, experiences encountered by the customers will always be the most important aspect. There were also literatures on total quality management should be given importance in order to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.

Kumar, Smart, Maddem and Maul (2008) emphasized that service quality is not only involved in the final product and service, but also involved in the production and delivery process, thus employee involvement in process redesign and commitment is important to produce final tourism products or services. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) describe that the nature of service quality requires a distinctive approach to identify and measure service quality. The intangible, multifaceted nature of many services makes it harder to evaluate the quality of a service compared to products.

From the view of operations management, it is obvious that customers play important roles in the organizational process (Ritzman, 2005). Before the placement of strategies and organizational structure, the customers are the first aspect considered by managements. The organization designed the product, segment the markets and create awareness. Gronroos (2007) mentioned that customers normally presume that explicit expectations will be met and unrealistic expectations might be exited. Service providers have to help customers adjust these unrealistic expectations into more realistic ones to ensure that a service delivery will meet customer expectations.

Food service establishments continuously prosper in Lipa City. Among the registered food service establishments are most competitive food service establishments in Lipa City that exist despite of the presence of competitors inside the mall. Hapag Filipino Restaurant is the oldest existing food service in Lipa City for more than five decades now, followed by Gotohansa Barangay, Lipa Grill Restaurant and Golden Coco Restaurant, respectively. All of these establishments are locally and family-owned businesses that were transfer from generation to generation. At present, it offers variety of foods to its valued customers particularly their specialties.

It is the interest of the researcher to conduct this study to provide better understanding on how these food service establishments extended generation of business via-a-vis quality services in Lipa City. Furthermore, this study is conducted as an improvisation for a would be entrepreneurs considering to invest.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the service quality level offered by leading food service establishments in Lipa City. More specifically, the study intends to present the profile of the managers and staff of food service establishment in Lipa City; to assess the level of service quality of food service business using the

SERVQUAL dimensions; to identify the problems encountered in the management of the business with the employees and operations; to test the relationship between the level of service quality and the profile of the business; to determine whether the responses of the respondents differ when group according to food service establishments and to propose an enhancement program to satisfy the Lipeño customers and people visiting the city.

Ho: This study tested the following hypothesis: there are no significant relationship on people and product between the profile of the food service establishments and assessment on level of service quality; and there are no significant differences among the responses of the respondents regarding service quality level when grouped according to food service establishment which pertain to place, people, product and price.

2. Method

Research Design

This study utilized descriptive method of research wherein the research design is valuable in providing facts which could form basis of scientific judgments, since it may provide essential knowledge about the quality services of leading food service establishment in Lipa City.

The correlational study also utilized in determining the extent to which different variables are related to one another in the population of interest. Correlational study investigates a range of factors, including the nature of the relationship between two or more variables and the theoretical model that might be developed and tested (Lomax, 2007).

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this research are the managers and employees of locally and family-owned food service establishments in Lipa City. There were a total of 86 respondents or 100 percent representative sample of the respondents in the distribution of the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher used the self-made questionnaire which was utilized in gathering the needed information and data. The questionnaire has four parts. Part I contains the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, years in service and educational attainment. Part II includes the profile of the establishments in terms of type of food service business, trends of customer arrivals, marketing practices, and services offered. Part III concerns on the level of service quality of food service establishments in Lipa City in terms of place, product, people, price and promotion which are renamed from SERVQUAL dimensions for easiest understanding of the respondents. Part IV includes the problems encountered in the management of the business in terms of problems with employees and problems in operations. The obtained Cronbach-alpha is 0.887 indicates the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability analysis. Also, it was observed that all questions are acceptable since all values are greater than 0.75 indicating it met acceptable standard of validity analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

To come up with a reliable questionnaire, the researcher read books and journals, observations and conducted an interview with managers of fast food services of which he was a former administrative and service crew, respectively. He also sought assistance from management professors to come up with the first draft of questionnaire. Each item was carefully examined towards establishing reasonable and credible instruments. This was presented to the research adviser and managers of leading food service establishment for validation.

A letter was done in order to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents of the study. The finalized and validated questionnaire was personally distributed by the researcher whereby retrieval immediately followed.

Data Analysis

The data were interpreted using the statistical tools. Frequency distribution was used to describe the profile of the respondents and the food service establishments; weighted mean was used to identify the different marketing practices and service quality level of food service business; eta was used to determine the significant relationship between the profile of the business and service quality level of food service; and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the significant difference on the service quality level of food service when grouped according to profile of the business. All data were also supported using PASW version 18 to further analyze the results using 0.05 alpha levels.

3. Results and Discussion

Respondent's Profile

The researcher conducted a field study in four major restaurants in Lipa City, Philippines where the respondents assessed their quality service. It can be seen from the result, that most of them falls on the age bracket of 26 to 30 years old with 40 or 46.50 percent and mostly are male. With regards to their years of service, most of the respondents (47.70%) are in the business for 3 to 6 years and attained bachelor degree (51.20%). Male employees are more preferred by food service establishments because of the physical endurance related to their duties and responsibilities (Starr, 2013). Also, men employees are more focused on extrinsic work values like self-development, achievement, wealth and superiority. Thus, in most organization, important positions are given to men rather than to women in terms of the traditional view that women mainly fit the assistant and service position. But women employees have more advantage in collaborative work and are more flexible in nature. They also have clear objectives to manage the workplace with collaboration rather than competition. Notwithstanding, each gender has its unique superiority and the organization will the talents of both genders if it wants to succeed.

As to age and other variables as gender, years in service and education deserve a large amount of consideration because of the effects of mingling with the different customers in various organizational setting.

Profile of Food Service Establishments

Most of the food service establishments in Lipa City are family restaurant (54.70%) with 69.80 percent trends of customer arrival annually and 89.50 percent based on the profile of food service establishments were offering the same services such as delivery, and holds an event or functions like birthday, baptismal and wedding.

In terms of trends of customer arrivals, the managers of Gotohansa Barangay, Hapag Filipino Restaurant and Lipa Grill Restaurant claimed that most of their customers were not only the locals. People who are visiting the famous and miraculous Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and San Sebastian Cathedral helped these food service providers to be known and popular outside Lipa City of its mouthwatering dishes. These food service establishments also welcome functions except for Gotohansa Barangay.

Family restaurants are locally owned and operated in Lipa City, and are thus more likely to reflect the community and its dining preferences. Local restaurants are up against stiff chain competition, but typically offer far better and quality food.

According to Klara in Eliwa (2006), as dining out becomes an important part of customers' life styles, frequent dinner customers have raised their expectations to the restaurant quality, in terms of good service and cooked food, and that's while seeking a better value for their money. Moreover, Miksen (2012) mentioned that customer service at family restaurants tends to be a cut above the service at other restaurants. This is because the service in family restaurants is frequently fueled by family pride. These food service establishments in Lipa City are owned by Raul De La Peña – Gotohansa Barangay, BoyetGaubalejo – Hapag Filipino Restaurant, Andok'sLitson Corporation (formerly owned by partners Lorna Andal&Tita Castillo) – Lipa Grill Restaurant and Nora R. Laygo – Golden Coco Restaurant, they tend to provide a welcoming

atmosphere that compels diners to return again and again. By creating a personal, familial atmosphere, a family restaurant can make customers feel more at home than they would in a chain restaurant.

Table 1: Marketing Practices of Food Service Establishments (N = 86)

Practices	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. Sponsors events and/or special gatherings	2.94	1.022	S	7
2. Write press releases of its new services and packages	2.65	1.344	S	20
3. Creates a homepage or website.	3.21	1.149	S	1
4. Organizes a group that influences public opinion.	2.95	1.167	S	5.5
5. Provides newsletter (in print or e-letters) to the clients.	2.87	1.235	S	11
6. Conducts home visitation in every barangay, town or province.	2.77	1.081	S	16.5
7. Calls every potential client.	2.77	1.224	S	16.5
8. Invites clients for a sales talk.	2.80	1.156	S	15
9. Asks clients to give referrals.	2.91	1.224	S	9
10. Gives free seminar that may get the interest of their prospect clients.	2.76	1.188	S	18
11. Gives print ads to leading newspapers and magazines.	2.87	1.206	S	11
12. Produces TV advertisements.	2.92	1.170	S	8
13. Creates radio jingles / radio commercials.	2.84	1.226	S	14
14. Posts billboards on accessible areas.	3.05	1.328	S	4
15. Print flyers, posters and brochures.	3.10	1.320	S	2
16. Provides packages or discount promos to clients.	3.06	1.277	S	3
17. Gives flyers, promo ads or discount cards to clients of their latest promo.	2.95	1.310	S	5.5
18. Make themselves available for TV and radio interviews.	2.86	1.150	S	13
19. Gives incentive for clients who give referral.	2.87	0.955	S	11
20. Places streamers on accessible areas for special packages offered.	2.72	1.298	S	19
Composite Mean	2.89	0.898	S	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Always(A); 3.50 – 4.49 = Often (O); 2.50 – 3.49 = Sometimes(So); 1.50 – 2.49 = Seldom (Se); 1.00 – 1.49 = Never(N)

Responses noted that creating a homepage, fan page or a website (WM=3.21) ranks first as the most effective marketing tool at present. Lipa Grill Restaurant, Hapag Filipino Restaurant and Golden Coco Restaurant created an account through the use of social media networking sites to promote their products and services while Gotohansa Barangay were listed and part of the wowbatangas.com webpage. Nowadays, people are connected to social media networking sites and getting more literate in using the advanced technology just to acquire products and services.

Print flyers, posters and brochures (WM=3.21) was ranked second. They believed that hand-on-hand marketing activities can create a more positive results in encouraging people to try their delectable dishes. Provides packages or discount promos to clients (WM=3.06) ranked third among the top 3. The respondents are optimistic that with this kind of marketing activity, valued customers will keep on repeating the same business while creating new prospect customers. In the case of food service establishment in Lipa City, each of them has their respective dishes. Hapag Filipino Restaurant is known for their home-cooked Filipino dishes namely kare-kare (oxtail stew), kalderetangkambing (stewed goats meat), pancitlang-lang (noodles), bulalo and its ultimate best seller sinigangna maliputo (maliputo fish cooked by slow boiling) paired with bagoongbalayan (anchovy) sauce and grilled squid. Gotohansa Barangay serves assorted Filipino dishes like kalderetangbaka (stewed cows meat) and crispy pata (pig knuckle), chicharongbituka (crackling innards) and its specialty dish, goto (tripe cows innards). Lipa Grill Reastaurant is offering specialties like crispy pata (pig knuckle), crispy tadyang, patatim special, grilled tuna and spare ribs, litsongkawaliroyale, deep fried chicken, crispy chicken, crispy posit (squid), seafoodskare-kare (seafoods stew), bulalo and dinuguan with

special puto. Lastly, Golden Coco Restaurant offers grilled tilapia, grilled liempo, grilled pusit (squid), ginataangsugpo, kilawingtanique and green mango salad for desert.

Places streamers on accessible areas for special packages offered (WM=2.72), gives free seminar that may get the interest of their prospect clients (WM=2.76) and write press releases of its new services and packages (WM=2.65) are the least marketing activities that are sometimes done by the food service providers compared to other practices that they have. Based on interview conducted with the managers, they disclosed that these activities will add more cost in the food service business operations, thus, they focused was e-marketing as these will also help their food service establishment be known in the community. Technology is more convenient than any marketing media.

Marketing should begin with potential customer needs and not with the production process. Marketing should try to anticipate needs. And then marketing, rather than production, should determine what goods and services are to be developed including decisions about product design and packaging; prices or fees; credit and collection policies; use of middlemen; transporting and storing policies; advertising and sales policies; and, after the sale, installation, customer service, warranty, and perhaps even disposal policies. After all, the purpose of a business is to satisfy customers’ needs (Perreault and McCarthy, 2002).

Table 2 discusses the service quality level of food service establishment with a composite mean of 3.49 or an over-all rating of “agree”.

Table 2: Service Quality Level of Food Service Business in Terms of Place (N = 86)

Place	WM	SD	VI	Rank
The business believes that customers are attracted to the facilities because of its location.	3.48	.568	A	6
The business makes it sure that the place of the establishment is not difficult to find.	3.63	.510	SA	1
The business place is strategically located.	3.42	.563	A	8.5
The establishment place known for its beautiful set-up and ambiance.	3.55	.524	SA	2
The location of the business has never been identified with scandals like kidnapping, shoot out, or any untoward or scandalous incidents.	3.42	.583	A	8.5
The business sees to it that the business is featured in magazines or newspaper for its goods and services.	3.38	.557	A	10
The place of the establishment is known for a particular cuisine, delicacy, products, etc.	3.51	.609	SA	4
The location is accessible to different types of transportation.	3.48	.568	A	6
The business assures customers security while under the business care.	3.58	.496	SA	3
There are certain products or features that can be found in the place.	3.48	.568	A	6
Composite Mean	3.49	.257	A	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

In terms of place, the respondents “strongly agree” that the food service providers make sure that the place of the establishment is not difficult to find (WM=3.63) in rank 1. Food service establishment are located in main streets of Lipa City. Hapag Filipino Restaurant is located at General Luna St., Sabang, Lipa City; Lipa Grill Restaurant can be found near the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church while Gotohansa Barangay is two kilometers away thereafter, and Golden Coco Restaurant is along the national highway in Balintawak, Lipa City. They are strategically located and accessible to the customers since they are placed in the busiest streets of Lipa City. According to Silver (2000), location is the first factor being considered in food service setup. Concept, food quality, service and economic shifts all factor into a restaurant’s success or failure. But if the customers assessed that accessibility is poor or there simply aren’t enough people, a restaurant, no matter how good the food or trendy the ambience won’t make it.

Location is a critical consideration because it affects your ability to draw customers. It is important that your location is visible, accessible, convenient and attractive to your market. It is critical that a site be chosen based on market factors, not because of a low price. Different types of restaurants will have different location requirements.

The food service providers assures customers security while under the business care (WM=3.58) in rank 2. Based on the observation done by the researcher, he found out that Lipa Grill Restaurant, Hapag Filipino Restaurant and Golden Coco Restaurant have security guard during day and night business operation, while Gotohansa Barangay don't have any safety and security measures for their valued clients.

Lastly, the food service place is known for a very warm ambiance (WM=3.55) is in rank number 3. Lipa Grill and Golden Coco Restaurant are in a more garden type setup. They both have pavilion nipa hut to stay into while dine-in or during the customers' stay in the establishment. Basically, they are concerned on the privacy of their customers but they still consider the relaxing mood. On the other hand, Gotohansa Barangay is a more house type establishment with second floor. Customers can look over to the veranda after eating for a quick smoke or just to watch the people and vehicles that are passing by. Moreover, Hapag Filipino Restaurant is just the same old building setup of its infrastructures and the atmosphere is neutral.

The least three (3) items under this category, the respondents agreed that the business is featured in magazines or newspaper for its goods and services (WM=3.38), the place of the business has never been identified with scandals like kidnapping, shoot out, or any untoward or scandalous incidents and the business place is strategically located (both WM=3.42). Based on the conducted interview, food service managers stressed out that their business has no room for such cases. The establishment is an open area exclusively for diners. They also mentioned that the business location is not strategic as it is, but being pioneered food service providers in Lipa City make them known to public.

Table 3: Service Quality Level of Food Service Business in Terms of Product (N = 86)

Product	WM	SD	VI	Rank
The business gives attention to the quality of the goods and services.	3.59	.561	SA	1
The establishment offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different taste of customers.	3.43	.521	A	7
Service is considered as a business.	3.58	.496	SA	2
Goods and services that the place is known for are available in the business.	3.55	.545	SA	4
The business is known for quality services.	3.52	.502	SA	5
The services and goods can speak well of the business.	3.57	.564	SA	3
The quality service is the main attraction of the business.	3.51	.548	SA	6
The services of the business are known throughout the region for the quality and price.	3.40	.600	A	8
Composite Mean	3.52	.276	SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

Table 3 illustrates the service quality level of food service establishment in terms of product. The composite mean of 3.52 shows a strong agreement that the business gives attention to the quality of the goods and services (WM=3.59). Barber and Scarcelli (2010) stated that company must provide products and services of consistently good quality to them. However, services have unique characteristics compared to products so managing service quality is considered more complex than product quality management. Factors affecting customer satisfaction in the restaurant experience, and several of them suggested restaurant cleanliness affects customer expectation or perception of restaurant service quality. In addition, service is considered business (WM=3.58), and the services and goods can speak well of the business (WM=3.57), respectively.

All food service establishments are very conscious on service quality delivery but all managers and staff are strongly agreed that it is the main attraction of the business (WM=3.51), and they are agreeable that the establishment offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different taste of customers (WM=3.43) and the services of the business are known throughout the region for the quality (WM=3.40). Every product is designed to ultimately be patronized by the customers. From the staff point of view, they believed that Batangneños’ warmth and friendly customer service are the main reasons of coming back and repeating the same business.

Table 4: Service Quality Level of Food Service Business in Terms of People (N = 86)

People	WM	SD	VI	Rank
The personnel are known for its courteousness and polite reception.	3.60	.515	SA	2
The customers would come back after their first visit.	3.51	.526	SA	3
Personnel are polite and helpful to their customers.	3.62	.557	SA	1
Top management officials don’t usually go out of their way to welcome the customers.	3.48	.547	A	4
The management features in the newsletters the people who come to the place like showbiz personalities, politicians, athletes, and other dignitaries.	3.35	.647	A	5
Composite Mean	3.51	.309	SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

Table 4 presents the level of service quality of food service establishment in terms of people in the organization. The composite mean of 3.51 with a verbal interpretation of strongly agree indicates that personnel who are the primary key in the business success should have the qualities which are highly required as far as delivery of quality service is concerned. Personnel are polite and helpful in terms of providing the needs of the customers (WM=3.62) that was ranked 1 in the assessment. The business believes that customer relation must be delivered with high sense of commitment because it is most critical activity of any organization wishing to stay in business. Food service establishments considered customers at the center of all activities who plays the integral part of quality, pricing and product differentiation. On the other hand, being a customer-focused organization ensures that the business activities are incorporated with its vision and shared to employees with its deepest understanding.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) described a customer-contact employee as a link between the external customer and the internal operations of the organization. Therefore, the customer-contact employee plays a critical function in understanding, filtering, and interpreting information and resources to and from the organization and its external constituencies.

The food services strongly agree (WM=3.60) that all employees are known for their courteousness and polite reception. Gronroos (2007) concluded that one of the most effective and least expensive ways to market a business is through quality customer service. Customers and service are obvious requirements for doing business. The importance of customer service should be at an all-time high. Many services require personal interactions between customers and the employees, and these interactions strongly influence the customers’ perception of quality services being offered. Businesses realize that providing a service alone is not enough in today’s competitive economic environment.

Rank 3 shown with a weighted mean of 3.51 verbally interpreted as strongly agree that customers would come back after the first visit. It is affirmed that once customer satisfied with the products and services being offered and delivered beyond their expectations and perspectives, they keep on buying and repeat the same business.

The table also shows the two (2) lowest items verbally interpreted as agree with the weighted mean of 3.48 and 3.35 respectively were top management officials don’t usually go out of their way to welcome the customers and business features in the newsletters the people who come to the place like showbiz

personalities, politicians, athletes, and other dignitaries. The researcher took time to visit and to observe the place, from the counter and dining area, business office and kitchen facilities, and even comfort room. He found out in the business office that there are pictures of prominent people either showbiz or non-showbiz who visited the food service establishments specifically Golden Coco and Lipa Grill Restaurant. On the other hand, managers and staff stressed out that most of those personalities opted not to take some photos for some circumstances.

Table 5: Service Quality Level of Food Service Business in terms of Price (N = 86)

Price	WM	SD	VI	Rank
The price of services is based on industry index.	3.45	.5008	A	4
The business offers discounts to the customers.	3.56	.523	SA	2
Prices vary according to season.	3.21	.653	A	5
The business issues official receipts to services rendered in goods bought, inclusive of tax.	3.57	.521	SA	1
5 Prices of the products are comparable with other food service in the industry.	3.49	.628	A	3
Composite Mean	3.46	.298	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

Table 5 reveals the service quality level of food service establishments in terms of price has a composite mean of 3.46. Primarily, food service establishment strongly agree that the business issues official receipts to services rendered in goods bought, inclusive of tax (WM=3.57) and the business offers discounts to the customers (WM=3.56). And agreed that the prices of services and commodities are comparable with other firms in the industry (WM=3.49), the price of products and services is based on industry index (WM=3.45), and prices vary according to season (WM=3.21), respectively.

Price and value for money may be important considerations for customers in choosing a particular restaurant. Choice and variety may be another concern. Restaurant customers seek variety, and often visit a number of restaurants to meet different needs for different occasions and purposes (Sivas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000).

Lipa Grill Restaurant offers specialties like crispy pata (pig knuckle), crispy tadyang, patatim special, grilled tuna and spare ribs, litsongkawaliroyale, deep fried chicken, crispy chicken, crispy pusit (squid), seafoodskare-kare (seafoods stew), bulalo and dinuguan with special puto. The prices of the aforementioned products are ranging from P135-P400. On the other hand, Golden Coco Restaurant product prices range from P120-P750 on grilled tilapia, grilled liempo, grilled pusit (squid), ginataangsugpo and kilawingtanique, but its price varies based on a per kilo and not per serving of the main dishes. Likewise, it offers bundled foods or packages for group of people.

Discounts in all food service respondents can only be availed once the customers met the required volume of ordered products during the entire stay in the establishments. That is why even if they are offering discounts, customers are always cost sensitive and concentrate basically to buy products on cheap rates. Knowing about the customer's price sensitivity customers will reduce the cost or cut the related frills as it may not be affordable or is out of budget for them to purchase. Sacrificing on cost doesn't necessarily mean that the food service would also sacrifice and suffer the service quality level. Nonetheless, the prices of the food service establishments are competitive enough within the same industry. Even if there are so many food service providers inside the mall, the food service respondents ensure that the prices of their products are aligned or cheaper by a certain amount.

Table 6: Service Quality Level of Food Service Business in Terms of Promotion (N = 86)

Promotion	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. The business makes use of promotional tools like brochures, flyers, announcements, etc.	3.67	.519	SA	1
2. The business has linkages with other industry that include promotion of products and services.	3.36	.612	A	4
3. The business requests popular guest to pose for pictures taking as part of the promotion campaign.	3.52	.589	SA	3
4. The business best promotion is quality service.	3.60	.515	SA	2
Composite Mean	3.54	.391	SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

Table 6 illustrates the service quality level of food service establishments in terms of promotion. Promotion plays an important function of informing the target customer about the nature and type of the firm's product and services. This explains that food service industry makes use of promotional tools like brochures, flyers, announcements, etc. (WM=3.67) ranks first in terms of promotion. It is noticeable that the food service providers like Hapag Filipino Restaurant and Lipa Grill Restaurant practices the distribution of marketing paraphernalia which makes more competitive in the market. And they also believe that hand-on-hand marketing activities can create a more positive results in encouraging people to try their delectable dishes.

The business best promotion is service quality (WM=3.60) ranks after the food service industry makes use of promotional tools. The business request popular guests as part of the promotional campaign (WM=3.52) ranks third followed by the business linkages with intermediaries that include promotion of products and services (WM=3.36).

Service quality is not only involved in the final product and service, but also involved in the production and delivery process, thus employee involvement in process redesign and commitment is important to produce final tourism products or services (Kumra, Smart, Maddem and Maul, 2008).

Promotion features not only nature and type of the food service products and services but as well as the price and place at which these products can be purchased. The nature of marketing communication is persuasive because it main objective is to influence the consumer behavior. In the context of marketing promotion, it refers to the applied communication used by marketers to exchange persuasive messages and information between the firm and its various prospective customers and general public. Likewise, promotion is used to keep the products or services in the minds of the customer, creating and stimulating a demand.

Generally, the food service providers have linkages with other industry that include promotion of products and services were only agreeable, the over-all composite mean is 3.54 with verbal interpretation of “strongly agree”. The managers revealed that these activities will add more cost in the food service business operations, thus, they focused was e-marketing as these will also help their food service establishment be known in the community. Technology is more convenient than any marketing media.

All food service establishments are very conscious on service quality delivery but all managers and staff are strongly agreed that it is the main attraction of the business. They are agreeable that the establishment offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different taste of customers and the services of the business are known throughout the region for the quality. Every product is designed to ultimately be patronized by the customers. From the staff point of view, they believed that Batangneños' warmth and friendly customer service are the main reasons of coming back and repeating the same business.

Table 7: Summary on the Service Quality Level of Food Service Establishments

Marketing P's	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
1. Place	3.49	A	4
2. Product	3.52	SA	2
3. People	3.51	SA	3
4. Price	3.46	A	5
5. Promotion	3.54	SA	1
Over-all Composite Mean	3.50	SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree(A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree(SD)

Table 7 represents the summary of service quality of food service establishments which pertains to the 5P's of marketing utilized in the study. Service quality level found the variables that contributed in food service establishment are ranked accordingly such as promotion, product, people, place and price. Above all, it was strongly agreed that promotion and marketing activities of the food service establishments contributed a lot in continuous business operations. Despite of the price increases, the product, people and place where considerable factors for the food service providers to be existed for so many years in the industry. Nevertheless, it has resulted with an over-all composite mean of 3.50 with a strongly agree verbal interpretation.

Table 8: Problems Encountered in the Management of the Business with the Employees (N = 86)

Problems	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. Clumsiness of food servers	2.83	.785	Sometimes	3
2. Tardiness and absenteeism	2.92	.857	Sometimes	1
3. Absence without leave	2.84	.931	Sometimes	2
4. Poor comprehension	2.80	.905	Sometimes	5
5. Lack of cooperation	2.72	.916	Sometimes	6
6. Lack of initiative	2.81	.775	Sometimes	4
7. Duplication of duties	2.55	.777	Sometimes	8
8. Lack of skilled manpower	2.52	.864	Sometimes	9
9. Lack of resourcefulness	2.50	.808	Sometimes	10
10. High turn over	2.58	.874	Sometimes	7
Composite Mean	2.71	.558	Sometimes	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; 3.50 – 4.49 = Often; 2.50 – 3.49 = Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 = Seldom; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

Table 8 shows the problems encountered in the management of the business with the employees. It obtained composite mean of 2.71 with a verbal interpretation of “Sometimes”. The management has a hard time in coping up with the tardiness and absenteeism (WM=2.92), absence without leave (WM=2.84) and clumsiness of food servers (WM=2.83).

Punctuality communicates a plethora of positives to your employer and your peers. It shows that an employee is dedicated to the job, interested in the work and capable of handling responsibility. When an employee arrives on time for work or work-related activities, it shows that he is capable of honoring what the policies of the business are all about. Being punctual projected a sense of professionalism and commitment.

Performances of the employees are affected, and the management deals with the three least items with are duplication of duties (WM=2.55), lack of skilled manpower (WM=2.52) and lack of resourcefulness (WM=2.50). These three items are connected to the first three ranked items. Though these are all about performances, engagement with employees to the business must be given a high importance. It is somewhat the most critical metric for organizations in the twenty-first century but it can be a key measure that reflect and drive organizational performance which includes providing customer satisfaction, innovative ideas, profitability and productivity, loyalty in the organization and the delivery of service quality which might end up with engaged and committed to serve employees.

Different problems were encountered by the food service providers in the business operations with regards to employees because of lack of manpower which affects the punctuality and performances. Employees who are duty on the first day are mostly absent and/or late the following day especially during weekends, holidays and after the catered functions. In the case of Hapag Filipino Restaurant, Golden Coco Restaurant and Lipa Grill Restaurant who welcome functions like birthdays, baptismal and wedding are sometimes covered two-three functions during weekends, which tends for the employees not to show up the following day. While Gotohansa Barangay has a stayed-in employees to prevent such problems. It was mentioned in the study of Chiang (2011) that when employees attitudes end up this way, it may lead to inefficient service outcomes. However, if these attitudes would be improved, desirable service results would be more expected as completing the employee attitudes like organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Commitment, pride, willingness to advocate the benefits and advantages, and satisfaction to job and organization are an engagement to the degree of employee-organization alignment (Gonrig, 2008). Organizations must work to understand the dynamics of employee engagement in their companies, how those dynamics compare to informative benchmarks for improving engagement, then identify the specific and actionable levers that will improve engagement levels.

Consistent attendance is a requirement and essential function of all employees. They are expected to be punctual and dependable in order to meet the needs of the business. When employees are absent or tardy, work and service are interrupted and an additional burden is placed on co-employees. Attendance is an important factor in evaluating individual performance and continued employment. To keep up 100% of service quality, to reduce turnover rate, and to increase revenue through returning business, hospitality industry should train their employees effectively and continually.

Table 9: Problems Encountered in the Management of the Business with the Operations (N = 86)

Problems	WM	SA	VI	Rank
Late arrivals of guests with respect to their reservation	3.13	.823	Sometimes	1
Guests who made reservation but do not show up	2.84	.893	Sometimes	8
Exceeding number of guests	2.98	.881	Sometimes	2
Substandard preparation of food	2.53	.890	Sometimes	14
Delayed delivery of services	2.63	.783	Sometimes	13
Malfunctioning of equipment/facilities	2.86	.897	Sometimes	6.5
Shortage of food stocks	2.78	.803	Sometimes	9
High cost of commodities	2.92	.871	Sometimes	3
Breakages and losses	2.88	.913	Sometimes	4.5
Shortage of water supply	2.88	.913	Sometimes	4.5
Lack of replacements during brownouts and blackouts	2.71	1.004	Sometimes	12
Spoilages	2.86	.960	Sometimes	6.5
Pilferages	2.72	.966	Sometimes	11
Security problems	2.73	.803	Sometimes	10
Cleanliness and sanitation	2.51	.837	Sometimes	15.5
Inadequate parking space	2.33	.926	Seldom	19
Inadequate promotions	2.41	.925	Seldom	18
Improper handling of customer complaints	2.44	.941	Seldom	17
Lack of ingredients according to required standards	2.51	.942	Sometimes	15.5
Composite Mean	2.72	.476	Sometimes	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Always; 3.50 – 4.49 = Often; 2.50 – 3.49 = Sometimes; 1.50 – 2.49 = Seldom; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

The data in the table 9 presents the problems encountered in the management of the business with regards to operations with assessment was noted sometimes with a composite mean of 2.72. In everyday operations of the business, employees and the food service itself, are experiencing problems relative to the late arrivals of guest with respect to their reservation (WM=3.13), exceeding number of guest (WM=2.98) and high cost of commodities (WM=2.92). These results are three major problems in the business operations which sometimes affect the entire service quality level of the food service. The event usually run for 2-4 hours, in most cases Hapag Filipino, Golden Coco and Lipa Grill Restaurant encountered such problems. They had a hard time in shifting the event from birthdays and/or baptismal to wedding in one day activity. And most of the events are overlapping despite of the allotted time interval on different schedules. It is somehow a very good sign because it entails for additional sales, but not for the quality of the services.

The least three items with verbal interpretation of seldom are concentrated on improper handling of customer complaints (WM=2.44), inadequate promotions (WM=2.41) and inadequate parking space (WM=2.33). The respondents believe that it is very rare that the food service providers encountered such problems because the managers ensure that complaints are handled and respond immediately so that customers' needs and wants are resolved from the time it has happened. Marketing activities are done in a regular basis, but the respondents should consider the promotional variations. Parking space is the least among the problems encountered because the food service providers have an adequate area for the customers, not to consider the functions and events that are being catered.

Relationship between the Profile of the Business and the Service Quality Level

It was found out that only marketing practices have significant relationship on place (0.041), price (0.022) and promotion (0.040) since the obtained p-values were less than 0.05 level of significance; also, trends of customer arrivals have significant relationship on promotion (0.011). This means that there is a significant relationship exists and implies that the level of service quality in terms of place, price and promotion is affected by the trends of customer arrivals as well as the marketing practices.

However, it shows that the type of food service business do not show significant relationship on the level of service quality. This mainly because customers are not after the type of food service they are going to. Customers considered the quality of the products and service offerings which were noted play a key role to meet their wants and needs.

Significant Difference of Responses on the Level of Service Quality When Grouped According to Food Service Establishments

Only trends of customer arrivals shows significant difference on promotion since the obtained p-value of 0.01 is less than 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a significant difference exists and implies that the promotion they imposed differ based on the number of their customer arrivals.

It must be noted that quality improvement has played a key role in business today. Therefore, quality concept is categorized under organizational culture concept. It means that companies that are interested in obtaining a high level of customer value would be expected to have a culture supported service quality. Service quality plays a vital role in the success of organizations. Service quality is valuable to achieve competitive advantage in the service-oriented world by distinguishing itself from competitors (Ueltschy et al., 2009). In fact, service quality as a notable input to customer satisfaction can be considered a driver of customer life time value.

Quality goods last longer, break down less frequently, are worth repairing and often use less energy. It is important that any environmental attributes do not detract from quality or the effectiveness of the product. Good quality can also be widely defined to include both positive environmental and social attributes (Welford, 2000).

Proposed Enhancement Programs on Service Quality for Marketing 5P's

Based from the results, it was noted that there are some aspect in the business operations that need for enhancement. Therefore, the following programs and activities are proposed.

Table 10: Proposed Enhancement Programs on Service Quality for Marketing 5P's

Areas of Consideration	Proposed Enhancement
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food service providers must plan for the renovation of the establishments and must be implemented as soon as possible, since most of its competitors are inside the mall. • Floor plan must be laid-out based on the current trends, and interior designs should be in accordance with the image being projected by the food service providers.
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialty products can be retained but there should be a continuous research and development on the product offerings. • Health related issues and nutritional quality of the products must be given importance during planning, purchasing and preparation procedures.
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price reductions and/or discounts on selected products should be offered and must vary based on the season. It should be correlated in the marketing/promotional activities of the food service providers. • Increase on cost of commodities really affects the price of the products, but for as long as the quality speaks for itself, no doubt that the valued customer will repeatedly repurchase the product.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings and seminars for the personnel must be mandatory so that everyone would be kept posted of the changes on the policies and procedures which might arise or implemented at anytime. • Food service providers should have a regular incentive program in-lined with the delivery of quality services, performances, personality development, professional decorum and work etiquettes. • Participate or sponsor on various events and create linkages could be a good opportunities to maintain and to improve the customer relation management. • Free trial or sampling can a productive tool to make the food service providers' customers more confident in purchasing the product, as the free trial increases the reliability of the product also increases.
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of the technology advancement in promoting the product and service offerings through social networking sites and marketing sites in particular. It must be updated from time to time. • Promotional paraphernalia such as streamers, billboards, flyers, brochures and leaflets shall be posted, placed and distributed in a more accessible and visible areas for customers.

4. Conclusions

Majority of the respondents are middle-aged, male, baccalaureate degree holder and young in service. On the other hand, food service establishments mostly are family restaurants, offers common services and patronize from generation to generation by Lipeños. The respondents strongly agreed in the service quality level provided by food service establishments in Lipa City are the main attributes in providing service quality level of food service providers. However, they only agreed that price and place secondly followed in determining the service quality level. The service quality is not affected by the profile of the food service establishments in Lipa City. Absenteeism and tardiness and guest reservation are the common problem encountered by food service establishments. Proposed measures maybe formulated to enhance the business operation.

5. Recommendations

Marketing practices and proper time management of food service establishments must be observed. The food service management may provide freebies and other promotional strategies to attract more customers. An in-depth evaluation may be considered by the food service management to sustain its business operation. The management may conduct seminar on professional decorum to lessen absenteeism and tardiness. Proposed measures may be discussed among managers of selected food service establishments in Lipa City. Future researchers may consider studying other variables related to service quality level of food service providers that were not covered by this study.

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