

# Status of Restaurant in Taal, Batangas, Philippines: Basis for Improvement

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**Abstract** – *This study aimed to determine the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to staff, facilities, amenities, services and product and how they are significant. Descriptive method was used to determine the status of the restaurants and 185 guests were chosen to be the respondents of this study. Based on results of the study the following are the foregoing conclusions. Majority of the restaurants operate for 3-15 years. Problems encountered mostly of the guests are insufficient parking lot, insufficient Wi-Fi connection and lack of knowledge and skills related to task. There is a significant relationship on the assessment of respondents on services and products of restaurants between the problems they encountered. The researchers were able to propose an action plan to help restaurant gain the continuous quality improvement through marketing and promotion in Taal, Batangas and to promote their native delicacies.*

**Keywords:** *Restaurant Business, Taal, Batangas, Improvement, Food service*

## INTRODUCTION

Improvement is the process of getting better. If there is an improvement in something, it becomes better. If you make improvements to something, you make it better. Restaurant owners or managers must not settle on what is good, it should be impressive and outstanding in the eyes of the guests. The unique hospitality industry requires that those who enter it as a career be passionate about serving others where food service is always a primary consideration to provide quality (Montalbo, 2015; Festijo & Yuzon, 2013; De Luna et al., 2014). The restaurant business is a major part of that industry (De Chavez et al 2013). Restaurants' primary objective is to provide comfort and satisfaction to guest without compromising the operational efficiency of the business (Barlan-Espino, 2017).

As people get hungry every day, people never stop spending money for foods that is the reason many businesses like restaurants boomed. There are lot of dishes worth trying and restaurant worth driving in Batangas province which is one of the top tourist destinations in the Philippines. Many foods of Batangueños will be loved and many of them are knowledgeable in terms of cooking. There are so many other best places to eat, top restaurants in Batangas Province that need to be discovered and promoted especially in Taal, Batangas (De Castro et al., 2014; Celis et al., 2015). Taal is a place where tourists can find Restaurant businesses. It is known as one of the cultural heritage sites. The place is also named as “The Vigan of the South” and it is a very modest town in Batangas (Anuran & Buenviaje, 2016; Buted et al., 2014; Aguda et al., 2013).

The researchers decided to conduct a study focused on the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as a basis for marketing and promotions in which management and the whole restaurant team strive hard to create constantly improving sales and quality for the sake of the business. For the students, this research will provide more knowledge on restaurant business in terms of strategies on improvement. Specifically, the researchers believed that the different types of restaurants that have a better application strategies for improvement may be a great help to enhance the tourism and hospitality industry of Municipality of Taal, Batangas. It could be a great help to solve economic problems in the Municipality by providing job opportunities for the residents.

The study may also provide the business entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their business through strategic improvement and generate revenue for the business to grow and become successful because it will promote kapeng barako and other native delicacies and Taal products. It could be the basis for the extent of creating new tactics to gain more guests and caught their attention. It will bring means and ways on how to achieve and apply the different marketing and promotion strategies in different Restaurants in Taal, Batangas.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study will assess the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as a basis for improvement. Specifically, it aims to assess the status of restaurants in terms of staff, facilities, amenities, services and product served and to identify the problems encountered by the customers.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The researchers used the descriptive type of research. Descriptive method is the description of data and characteristics about a population. It is also typically through collecting a questionnaire constructed by the researchers was the main instrument to gather data.

The participants of the study has a total of 189 customers, there were 27 respondents from each identified Restaurants in Taal, Batangas. The selected Restaurants were Café G, Taal Bayview Bistro, Taal Bistro, Villa Tortuga, Tampuhan Café, Don Juan Boodle House, and Casa Cecilia.

### **Instruments**

The questionnaire modified the variables but based from SERQUAL and CQI tool kit. It was validated by one of the experts in food industry and one professor in hospitality. And first part is the assessment of Restaurants in terms of staff, facilities, amenities service and products served. And the second part is the problems encountered by the customers.

### **Procedures**

The researchers gathered information from the available resources found in the library such as books, magazines, internet surfing and other previous studies or research. The researchers also conducted an interview to the tourism officers from Department of Tourism in Taal and gathered the information about the actual figure and names of the existing and registered restaurants.

### **Data Analysis**

This study used various statistical tools to present data such as percentage, ranking, frequency and weighted mean. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to describe the profile of Restaurants while ranking was used to determine the highest and the lowest among the assessment of demographic profile and problems encountered by the selected Restaurants. Weighted mean was used to assess the status of the restaurant and the problems encountered. The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 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)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1. Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to Staff**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. greets guests upon arrival	3.39	A	1
2. does her task on time	3.28	A	4
3. shows a sincere interest in solving problems with the guests	3.29	A	3
4. answers to questions of the guest	3.26	A	5
5. gives customer individual attention	3.36	A	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 1 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to staff having a composite mean of 3.31 and verbally interpreted as agree. The staff greet guests upon arrival ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.39, followed by giving customers individual attention with a weighted mean of 3.36 and the third is showing a sincere interest in solving problems with the guests with a weighted mean of 3.29, are verbally interpreted as agree.

It is really important part of the Standard Operating Procedures of the restaurants to greet guests upon arrival. Staff was trained properly to do this upon arrival because it is the first and the last impression of each of the guests when they enter on the premises of the restaurants. The way staff welcome a guest influences the sales. It is as important as the arrival of the customer, as it is during their meal, or as when they go away.

Employee's ultimate goal in a restaurant is to enhance the dining experience for customers. It is one of the reasons why customers chose to dine at one restaurant over another. The objective of staffs is to give better dining experience for customers. From the entrance, on the way the receptionist welcomes the guests giving an opportunity to mark the restaurant's first impression, whether it is a loyal customer or a lost customer who will dine in the restaurant for the first time. The way of greeting the guests can result in gaining another regular customer (Mayhew, 2016).

The staff does her task on time has a weighted mean of 3.28 and ranked fourth. And answering to questions of the guest got a lowest weighted mean of 3.26 both verbally interpreted as agree.

Fifth, answering to questions of the guest is verbally interpreted as agree. The staffs can answer some of the guest's queries but there are not oriented properly and it may lead staff to guest complains. Dinning attendant or server must provide information about the products and services of a restaurant. They must be trained thoroughly to knowledgably respond to guest's request and queries. Learning to answer all of guest's questions really takes time. Some of these answers will come with experience, getting used to the rhythm of restaurant and what the average guest is like. Encouraging individual accomplishments during this training and rewarding them when managers see them put what they have learned into practice during service is also important.

**Table 2. Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to Facilities**

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. modern-looking equipment	3.20	A	4
2. visually appealing physical facilities	3.27	A	1
3. well maintained and clean facilities	3.26	A	2
4. available facilities all the time	3.25	A	3
5. parking lot	3.12	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 2 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to facilities with a composite mean of 3.22 and verbally interpreted as agree. Visually appealing physical facilities ranked first and got a weighted mean of 3.27. Next, well maintained and cleaned facilities with a weighted mean of 3.26 and the third available facilities all the time with the guests with a weighted mean of 3.25, are verbally interpreted as agree.

Visually appealing physical facilities is one of the factors influencing the dining experience of the guests. Facility can make the guest at ease even the staff can benefit because of it. It can make the work easier for the staff to serve food on time. One of the facilities is the comfort room or toilet, wherein guests want the toiletries to be available and the comfort room to be clean and no foul odor.

Architectural design, interior design and décor can contribute to the appeal of the dining environment means facility aesthetics. It could be crucial in captivating and keeping costumers. It influences consumer circulation to a restaurant. It can also affect the revenue of the restaurant. Recognizing and utilizing facility aesthetics creates specific restaurant themes (Ryu & Han, 2012).

Having modern-looking equipment ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.20 and the lowest is parking lot with a weighted mean of 3.12, both verbally interpreted as agree.

Parking lot ranked fifth on facilities because they have it but they need to have spacious parking lot to accommodate the vehicle of their guests. Some of them are located along the ways which do not have enough space to accommodate the number of seats in the premises.

Ideally, business establishment like restaurants must provide parking lots for their customers. Making sure for enough parking spaces to accommodate guests and taking into consideration how many people can be seated at a time are important. If restaurants do not have it, it could spend time for guests to take a look around and see if there is a suitable extra parking lot because is a waste of time for the guests to wait.

**Table 3. Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to Amenities**

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. free Wi-Fi	3.20	A	5
2. adequate space for customer	3.24	A	3
3. clean and attractive surroundings	3.29	A	1
4. fully air-conditioned	3.22	A	4
5. complete toiletries	3.26	A	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 3 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to amenities with a composite mean of 3.24 and verbally interpreted as agree. The clean and attractive surroundings

ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.29. Second is that complete toiletries with a weighted mean of 3.26 and third is adequate space for customers with a weighted mean of 3.24, all verbally interpreted as agree.

Clean and attractive surroundings got a highest impact to the guest's perspective in dining a restaurant. The guests will lay out most of their time inside the premise. They give importance to the cleanliness of the surroundings. People will not enjoy their meal if the place is dirty and annoying.

Fourth is being fully air-conditioned with a composite mean of 3.22 and the fifth is free Wi-Fi with a composite mean of 3.20, both verbally interpreted as agree. Guests verbally interpreted it as agree because most of restaurants have a free Wi-Fi but it is not sufficient. It is slow and cannot accommodate the number of guests connecting. A limited number of guests can only use it.

**Table 4. Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to Services**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. performs service right on the first time	3.33	A	4
2. understands specific needs of its customers	3.34	A	3
3. provides prompt services to the customers	3.29	A	5
4. provides individual attention to the guests.	3.36	A	1
5. has convenient operating hours	3.35	A	2
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 4 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to services with a composite mean of 3.33 and verbally interpreted as agree. Providing individual attention to the guest got the highest rank of 3.36 as interpreted as agree. While ranked second, having convenient operating hours got the weighted mean of 3.35 and verbally interpreted as agree. Third ranked, understanding specific needs of its customers got the weighted mean of 3.34 as agree.

As a result, providing individual attention to the guest ranked first; every time guests visit a restaurant, they want them to feel welcome. Staff treatment affects the service, when guests felt cared and respected while providing an excellent meal, they will return to restaurant frequently, and giving individual attention to guests will lead to guest satisfaction.

Giving individual attention to customers by having best interests at heart is the sole reason to understand the specific needs of guests. They could be confident enough to render their service without having a second thought. Proper behavior to sum it all benefits not only the staff but also the guest itself. Apprising the staff on customer's nature and schedule of services must be made available in the organization (Mealy, 2016).

Performing service right on the first time has ranked lowest 4 with weighted mean of 3.33 and interpreted as agree. While rank 5 which is providing prompt services to the customers has weighted mean of 3.29 and interpreted as agree.

As a result, providing prompt services to the customers' ranks fifth. Management team can cheer up staffs to provide prompt services. Basically, by instructing them to keep lists of customer needs, giving care to first customer before transferring to the next one, employees can practice guest service by making special creations for guests through, offering them drinks to go, bringing mints after dinner and engaging in other little practices that show they are going above and beyond the competition.

Being prompt is not forcing staff to do things quickly. It does mean taking care of customers' needs in an appropriate time frame. Having to wait 10 or even five minutes for drink refills, butter, sauce or the check can quickly make a good dining experience turn sour. Customers can feel awkward when wondering if they should remind their servers about the request. They may even eat food without the proper condiments or a beverage -- something no restaurant owner wants (Morley, 2016).

**Table 5. Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to Product**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. uses fresh and quality ingredients	3.41	A	1.5
2. promotes native Taal delicacies	3.33	A	3
3. serves tasty and flavorful food	3.32	A	4
4. serves hot and fresh food	3.41	A	1.5
5. offers product with affordable price	3.21	A	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>A</b>	

Table 5 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas as to product with a composite mean of 3.34 verbally interpreted as agree. Using fresh and quality ingredients and serving hot and fresh food got the same rank and considered highest with 3.41 and interpreted as agree. While ranked third, promoting native Taal delicacies got the rank of 3.33 and verbally interpreted agree.

Guests basically give importance to their health that is why they value it. Fresh and hot food is better and delicious that is why using fresh and quality ingredients and serves hot and fresh food got the highest rank.

Fresh ingredients are always better for preparing healthy food, when compared to processed ingredients. There are basically those that have not been exposed to chemicals or processed in any way to increase their shelf life. They have to be consumed on the same day or

within a day or two. Food cooked with fresh ingredients is healthier than food cooked with processed ingredients or those stored using preservatives (Keys, 2013).

Serving tasty and flavor full food got a weighted mean of 3.32. Fifth, is offering product with affordable price got the weighted mean of 3.21, both verbally interpreted as agree.

Guests expect that having affordable price got the low quality of food. The quality of food is worth paying for. The customers use price and brand to evaluate the prestige of the product but do not generally use these cues when they evaluate the products food and taste.

**Table 6. Summary Table on the Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas**

Indicators	CM	VI	Rank
1. Staff	3.31	A	3
2. Facilities	3.22	A	5
3. Amenities	3.24	A	4
4. Services	3.33	A	2
5. Product	3.34	A	1
<b>Overall Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>A</b>	

The table 6 reveals the status of restaurants in Taal, Batangas with a composite mean of 3.29 and verbally interpreted as agree. Product got the highest rank of 3.34 and interpreted as agree. While ranked second is services with a weighted mean of 3.33 and ranked third, staff got the rank of 3.31 all interpreted as agree.

Products are what people aim not only in restaurant but in all aspects of market. People can observe and taste it, if it satisfies them or go beyond their expectations. Using a fresh and healthy ingredient is important tool.

It is important to remember that customers buy products and services because they want to solve a problem or meet a need. When customers enter the restaurant, they need ask questions of servers and get accurate, detailed responses in return. This helps both customer and server communicate effectively. Beyond just understanding menu, servers need to be able to discuss common side dishes and drink orders that customers may expect, even if they are not on the menu (“Communicating Product Knowledge”, 2016).

Ranked fourth is the amenities with a weighted mean of 3.24 and verbally interpreted as agree and ranked 5 is facilities with a weighted mean of 3.22 and verbally interpreted as agree. Guest complaint includes the appearance and cleanliness. It leads to disappointment because other area is dirty or not sanitized. The guests do not focus on the facilities when they are dining in a restaurant.

A number of customers do not only consider the facility; they are much more focused on the products restaurants are offering. Facilities play a major role in defining the brand and



the target market restaurants are pertaining for. It aims for the satisfaction of the guests. Both exterior and interiors are important aspects (Agulo et al., 2015).

Table 7 reveals the problems encountered by the respondents in the restaurants in Taal, Batangas with a composite mean of 2.46 and verbally interpreted as disagree. Insufficient parking lot is ranked first and has a weighted mean of 2.79, insufficient Wi-Fi connection ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.66, and Lack of knowledge and skills or training related to task ranked with weighted mean of 2.51. Long waiting time for orders is the fourth and got a weighted mean of 2.49 all verbally interpreted as agree.

**Table 7. Problems Encountered by the Respondents**

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Lack of knowledge and skills or training related to task	2.51	A	3
2. Unpleasant behaviour like being impatient, rude, or irritable	2.39	D	9
3. Lack of manpower	2.41	D	8
4. Insufficient comfort room for guests	2.37	D	10
5. Has old/ obsolete interior and exterior	2.44	D	6
6. Insufficient parking lot	2.79	A	1
7. Insufficient Wi-Fi connection	2.66	A	2
8. Long waiting time for orders	2.49	D	4
9. Does not have unique selling point	2.45	D	5
10. Out of stock or not always available menu items	2.33	D	11
11. Few menu items to choose from	2.42	D	7
12. Food is not presented well both in packaging or plating	2.32	D	12
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>D</b>	

Having a parking lot helps guests to lessen the time they waste. Sometimes guests are in a hurry so they brought vehicle for them not to consume time. Not enough space for parking lot is the number one problem encountered by the guests, they cannot accommodate the number of seats they have in a restaurant.

One of the factors business owners need to consider is having a good location and a parking lot. It also makes a restaurant a great location. Ideally, new restaurant should have its own parking lot. Taking into consideration how many people can be seated at a time and making sure having enough parking spaces to accommodate them. If restaurant not have it, guests sometimes make a choice to transfer to different restaurant because it is more accessible.

Lack of manpower ranked eight and got the weighted mean of 2.41. Unpleasant behaviour like being impatient, rude or irritable ranked ninth and got the weighted mean of 2.39. Ranked tenth, insufficient comfort room for guests got a weighted mean of 2.37. Eleventh,

out of stock or not always available menu items got a weighted mean of 2.33. Twelfth, food is not presented well both in packaging or plating got a weighted mean of 2.32 all verbally interpreted as disagree.

Food presentation is the art of modifying, processing, arranging, or decorating food to enhance its aesthetic appeal. An attractive plate can make the food tastier. It could make the food look good. Guests give value for the food presentation on both plating or packaging when it will be served. It could be a great help to catch the attention of your customers. By the presentation of food, the customers will be attracted to it. Eating is a sensuous experience. Before our mouths have tasted a thing, our eyes have already judged it. This makes visual appeal just as important as the taste

Allocating a small portion of precious time to presenting food in an attractive way comes with surprising benefits. Unlike specific art forms, cooking is entirely universal. Food presentation is just as essential to the success of a dish as its taste and flavour. The way the food looks on the plate is what tempts. The eyes and makes customers want to taste it. Everyone needs food. A meal then can play storyteller, showcasing the personality, background and culture of its creator. Though taste plays a vital role here, so does appearance. How a meal is presented says a lot about its origin (Kazemi, 2013).

**Table 8. Relationship between the Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas and the Problems Encountered**

Status	F - value	p - value
Staff	-0.081	0.267
Facilities	0.019	0.799
Amenities	-0.034	0.640
Services	-0.153*	0.035
Product	-0.191**	0.009

*Legend: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Table 8 reveals the relationship between the Status of Restaurants in Taal, Batangas. As seen from the table, the computed r-values indicate almost negligible to weak correlation. However, the computed p-values of service (0.035) and product (0.009) were less than 0.01 and 0.05 alpha level, thus a relationship exists. This implies that the better the status of the restaurant as to services and product, the lesser problems they encountered.

Respondents or guests in restaurants in Taal, Batangas consider the services as an important factor in their dining experience. It depends on the staff who provides service to them and the quality varies with each person's abilities and day to day job performance. They

must enhance their service because it is a significant factor. Services are intangible; guests cannot see or touch it before the purchase decision. Developing, pricing, promoting and delivering services are challenging. The quality of service is often conflicting coming from inconsistency and a main problem in services.

Great service is essential to one's success thus communicate and give genuine attention to diners. Everybody wants to feel welcome when visiting a restaurant. When staffs treat guests with care and respect while providing an excellent meal, they will return to the restaurant frequently (Restaurant Engine, 2015).

Products are also considered significant. Customers often feel that the most expensive food is probably the best in terms of quality. Customers want a money back guarantee. What comes to mind when thinking of food? One of the first thoughts is people gathering. Food is central to celebrations, anniversaries, deaths, weddings, birthdays, family gatherings, and even lunch time with co-workers. The food and dining culture in the countries across the board was focused on bringing people together.

Food is the primary product of a restaurant. It is what people aim to not only in restaurant but in all aspects of market. People can observe and taste it, if it satisfies them or go beyond their expectations. Using a fresh and healthy ingredient is important tool. Caring about what is in food is increasingly becoming a universal trend (Testa, 2016).

On the other hand, there were no significant relationship existing between the status of the restaurant with regards to staff, facilities and amenities and the problems encountered.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Majority of the respondents were from Taal, Batangas; operate for about 3-15 years. Guest's assessed the selected Restaurants in Taal, Batangas to identify the status of restaurants in terms of staff, facilities, amenities, services and product served. Problems encountered mostly of the guests are insufficient parking lot, insufficient Wi-Fi connection and lack of knowledge and skills related to task. There is no significant relationship on the assessment of respondents on staff, facilities and amenities of restaurants between the problems encountered by them. Assessment of respondents on services and products of restaurants between the problems they encountered. The researchers were able to propose an action plan to help restaurant gain the continuous quality improvement through marketing and promotion in Taal, Batangas and to promote their native delicacies.

It is recommended that the restaurants may improve using guest comment card for the problems in staff, facilities, amenities, services and product served in order to inform the restaurant owner, manager and staff. The restaurant owners should conduct a seminar on how to answer guest's questions, study on improving parking lots, the effect of free Wi-Fi, how to give prompt services to the customers and lastly on how to offer product with affordable price to enhance or improve the restaurants. The municipality may conduct a survey regarding the

impact of restaurants in Taal, Batangas to the guests or tourists. The restaurants may adapt the proposed action plan to strategies on improvement study. The future researchers may conduct a similar study using different variables.

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