

# Guests' Satisfaction Level in the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures in Restaurants: A Servqual Model Approach

Asia Pacific Journal of  
Management and  
Sustainable Development  
Vol. 10 No. 1, pp 40-50  
March 2022  
ISSN 2782-8557

Juvy C. Tamondong<sup>1</sup>, Hazel M. Culala<sup>2</sup>, Keith T. Ogoc<sup>3</sup>, Danielle T. Villegas<sup>4</sup>

College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management  
Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna  
Juvy.tamondong@lpulaguna.edu.ph<sup>1</sup>, hmculala@lpulaguna.edu.ph<sup>2</sup>,  
ktogoc@lpulaguna.edu.ph<sup>3</sup>, dtvillegas@lpulaguna.edu.ph<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract** — *In times of pandemic, choosing the right restaurant is important as the guests tend to consider the implemented safety measures, security, and quality. This study determined the significant relationship of the guests' psychographic characteristics to their evaluation and satisfaction towards pandemic safety measures in accordance with SERVQUAL criteria. Descriptive method was used in this study to determine guests' responses towards experienced services. With the use of a self-made questionnaire given out, 134 responses were gathered from the respondents. Chi square was used to correlate the psychographic characteristics and the respondents' satisfaction. The results show that guests' lifestyle is not their basis for their evaluation but rather values play an important role in their evaluation. Also, pandemic safety measures in accordance with SERVQUAL criteria have been implemented effectively to help reduce the transmission of the deadly corona virus. On the other hand, empathy is lacking from the employees and strict implementation of personal protective equipment seems to have been somehow disregarded as well. Due to these results, an enhancement program in the service quality in terms of strict implementation of PPE, empathy towards the customers as well as the adjustment towards the guests' lifestyle is recommended to improve the service quality. This study can help ensure the guests' safety to face the new normal.*

**Keywords** –, pandemic safety measures, restaurant industry, SERVQUAL

## INTRODUCTION

Restaurants are creating strategies to attract guests; the service quality plays an important role to fulfill the needs and satisfaction of the customers. Providing an excellent quality of service is vital to maintain the competitiveness of the restaurants. There are instruments used to measure service quality and SERVQUAL approach is one of those [1]. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and reliability. These dimensions bridge the gap between the customers' expectations and their level of satisfaction [2]. Moreover, customer satisfaction is the measurement of how happy the customers are towards the products and services given to them. Satisfaction is vital to restaurant industry. Sustainable competitive advantage relies on high quality of service provided by restaurants to achieve high number of satisfied customers [3]. Additionally, there is a significant relationship between the service quality and the customer's satisfaction [4]. It is proven by the study of Tuncer et al., [5] which stated that the quality of service has a positive effect to the customers' satisfaction.

Due to the current situation of the world, these dimensions of measurement for service quality have been affected. Most of the restaurants must limit their services, dine ins are not allowed and were asked to operate only through take outs and deliveries and tourists cannot enter boundaries [6].

However, pandemic should not be a hindrance to face the new normal. Since the whole world is fighting this virus for more than half a year now, little by little the government is lifting the restrictions, borderlines have been lifted and tourism services became open. By applying the food safety practices, gradually the restaurants are making a progress [7]. The quality of the services has direct effects to the customer's satisfaction and some customers are still afraid to go out and to dine-in [8].

Nowadays, customers do not merely look for the quality of food but rather to the quality of service in terms of safety because health weighs more than anything else during this time. We chose to study the psychographic characteristics of the guests to determine their deeper preferences in choosing restaurants. This research is limited to the restaurants in SM Calamba. The focus of

this study is the safety measures applied by the restaurants to serve their customers with both safety and quality as well as the satisfaction of the customers towards their services.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this study is to determine the satisfaction level of the customers in the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures in the selected restaurants in SM Calamba.

More specifically to: Assess the psychographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of interests, lifestyle, personality and values; determine the evaluation of the guests in the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures using the following SERVQUAL criteria: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibles. Also, to assess the level of satisfaction of the guests in proper safety measures in accordance with the SERVQUAL criteria: social distancing, equipment and utensils' sanitation and personal protective equipment. Moreover, to correlate the psychographic characteristics of the guests to their evaluation in the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures; correlate the psychographic characteristics of the guests to their level of satisfaction in the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures. Further, to correlate the evaluation of the guests to their level of satisfaction towards the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures in the selected restaurants in SM Calamba. Lastly, propose an enhancement program in terms of service quality and food safety for the restaurants in the implementation of their safety protocols.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

#### **Research Design**

The researchers used descriptive research which identified the satisfaction level of the customers and determined how these affected the decisions of the customers in choosing restaurants in able to establish an enhancement program that would benefit the selected restaurants in SM Calamba. Moreover, since the pandemic is a phenomenon, using descriptive research is applicable in gathering the perceptions of respondents in terms of implemented safety measures. Further, the assessment of many people will be useful to determine the number of customers that are satisfied with the services and the covid-19 safety protocols response of the restaurants.

#### **Participants of the study**

This research study had 134 respondents who dine at restaurants in SM Calamba. The researchers determined the sample size using the G-power analysis.

The respondents answered the given questionnaire and measured the safety protocols implemented by the restaurants.

#### **Instrument**

The instrument tested with a Cronbach Alpha of .964. Also, the researchers provided a consent along the questionnaire to the respondents regarding the purpose of the study and the guidelines regarding the data privacy of the individuals.

#### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The first step was that the researchers conceptualized the topic and titles that can be used for the research study and after the title was approved, the researchers constructed objectives for the study before gathering data to use for related literature from reliable online sources such as journals, articles, magazines, newspaper, and books. Moreover, the researchers developed a research instrument which was the survey questionnaires. The researchers gathered the data through the survey questionnaire form, and the respondents came from Calamba City that had experienced in the implementation of safety measures in the restaurant in SM Calamba. The respondents of the study took part in data gathering voluntarily and the researchers secured the identities of the respondents who participated in answering the survey questionnaires and ensured the confidentiality of the data that are gathered. The data was interpreted, analyzed, and gathered with the help of the statistician.

#### **Data Analysis**

The researchers used various formulas such as weighted mean and Chi Square. The weighted mean measured the psychographic characteristics of the respondents, Chi square was used to correlate the psychographic characteristics of the respondents to their level of satisfaction towards the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures in the selected restaurants in SM Calamba, to correlate the psychographic profile of the guests to their evaluation on the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures and lastly, to correlate the evaluation of the guests to their level of satisfaction towards the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures in the selected restaurants in SM Calamba.

#### **Ethical Consideration**

The researchers provided a consent along the questionnaire to the respondents regarding the purpose of the study and the guidelines regarding the data

privacy of the individuals. Furthermore, the personal and critical information is kept private and not be exposed publicly [9]. All the personal information would stay confidential all throughout the conducting of the study. In designed for the public support, the researchers would stick to the ethical standard for this study. Respondents are informed, aware and understood the privacy [10].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1. Summary of the Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests

Indicators	Mean	VI	Rank
Interest	3.67	SA	3
Personality	3.79	SA	1
Values	3.69	SA	2
Lifestyle	2.94	A	4
<b>Composite mean</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>A</b>	

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 1 shows the psychographic characteristics of the guest, most of the respondents strongly agreed that the interest (3.67), personality (3.79), and values (3.69) plays an important role as part of the psychographic characteristics. This means that the guests’ value their interest upon choosing a restaurant. It also signifies that the interest of the guests is indeed important for the restaurant’s success. Also, as customers personality reflects on their chosen restaurant, they choose a restaurant that is very suitable for them. This implies that the respondents prefer a restaurant which is aligned with their personality in times of pandemic. In terms of respondents’ values, it means it is important to restaurants as it brings needs and wants of the guests. Especially now that we’re still at the point of pandemic, the customers are still sensitive to virus. Lastly, for lifestyle with composite mean of (2.49), this signifies that the Covid-19 virus push people to change their lifestyle, people nowadays choose to live in more healthy way. Also, the respondents tend to change their lifestyle because of their health. More people change their lifestyle to healthier one, because the pandemic push them to [11].

The table 2 shows the summary of the evaluation of the guests in the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures with a composite mean of (3.41). The respondents said that restaurants in SM Calamba were able to fully implement safety procedures in terms of

tangibles (3.55) and reliability towards pandemic safety measures (3.55).

Table 2. Summary of the Evaluation of the Guests in the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures.

Indicators	Mean	VI	Rank
Tangibility	3.55	FI	2
Reliability	3.55	FI	2.1
Assurance	3.58	FI	1
Empathy	3.49	I	3
Responsiveness	3.55	FI	
Composite mean	3.54	I	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 – Fully Implemented (FI) 2.50 – 3.49 – Implemented (I); 1.50 – 2.49 – Somewhat Implemented (SI); 1.00 – 1.49 – Not Implemented (NI)

This means that tangibles such as plexiglass, sanitized equipment, and utensils as well as border lines for social distancing are all present in restaurants in SM Calamba. This also means that the customers are satisfied to what the selected restaurants of SM Calamba have been showing in terms of consistency in the quality of service which made these restaurants reliable.

The restaurants were able to fully implement safety measures in-lined with the Covid-19 safety protocols in accordance with the SERVQUAL criteria of assurance (3.58). Restaurants were able to show confidence in providing excellent quality of service in times of pandemic. In terms of empathy in the service, it is essential to connect with the customers. With this, it can be anticipated that restaurant employees know and understand their customers’ feelings to solve a particular problem. The ability to know and understand what the guests feel is the great way to ease their anger or pain even if you cannot solve their problem. To end this, with the composite mean of (3.55), the respondents are strongly agreeing that restaurants in SM Calamba are responsive to the implemented safety protocols. This signifies that the guests feel that they are safe and protected from the virus due to the fast response of the restaurant. Responsiveness is one of the significant dimensions in SERVQUAL as it provides a good and quick service quality to the customers as well as the willingness of specific firms or markets to help the customers with their needs and wants [12].

It can be determined from the table 3 that most respondents are strongly agree that the restaurant in SM Calamba followed the proper safety measures (3.53). It can also be determined from the table below that most of the respondents strongly agreed that the SM Calamba applies proper safety measures in terms of equipment and utensils sanitation (3.55).

Table 3. Summary of the Level of Satisfaction of the Guests in Proper Safety Measures

Indicators	Mean	V1	Rank
Social Distancing	3.56	SA	1
Equipment and Utensils	3.55	SA	2
Personal Protective Equipment	3.47	SA	3
<b>Composite mean</b>	3.53	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)

It can clearly see that restaurants in SM Calamba guarantees that the equipment and utensils that the customers will use would be safe and clean and the customers will no longer feel fear.

Furthermore, in terms of personal and protective equipment, most of the respondents are strongly agreed that the restaurants in SM Calamba used PPE or personal protective equipment (3.47) to keep from the harm brought by the COVID-19 virus. This means that the selected restaurants in SM Calamba used PPE as a protection from the virus. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential among individuals to limit the spreads of the virus [13].

Table 4.1 Correlation of the Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests in Terms of Interests to their Evaluation on the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Interest vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.225	.009	Significant
Reliability	.199	.021	Significant
Assurance	.167	.054	Not Significant
Empathy	.216	.012	Significant
Responsiveness	.217	.012	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

It can be observed from table 4.1 that interests of the respondents are significant to tangibility (.009), weak direct relationship (.225); reliability (.021), weak direct relationship (.199); empathy (.012), weak direct relationship (.216); and responsiveness (.012), weak direct relationship (.217) since the below p-values are less the .05. This means that respondents’ interests are congruent to the implemented safety protocols of the selected restaurants in SM Calamba despite having a weak direct relationship in terms of tangibility such as plexiglass, presence of sanitizers and boarder lines for social distancing. Food industry management should comply with the strict safety protocols of Food Safety Management Systems that are based on the guidelines and principle of HACCP like providing sanitary

facilities such as installing plexiglass to prevent having contact with customers [14]. Establishing a strict health and safety protocols will protect the customers as well as employees by sanitizing and disinfecting the physical facilities [15]. Having a good personal protective will be able to get most protection from the virus and PPE must be essentially required when working in an industry [16].

It is also evident that restaurants’ reliability in service quality corresponds to the interests of the guests because their purchasing drive corresponds to restaurants’ ability to build customer loyalty. Additionally, responsiveness and empathy were also able to meet the interests of the guests. This means that selected restaurants in SM Calamba were able to cater the safety protocols which meets the interests of the guests.

From the same table, it can be observed that psychographic characteristic in terms of interests is not significant with assurance (.054), negligible direct relationship. This means that there is no significant relationship between interests and the implementation of Covid-19 safety measures in accordance with assurance. This may be due to the customers’ interests of eating or ordering at less crowded restaurants and at restaurants with less to no physical interactions rather than merely assuring them that virus will not spread through disinfection or sanitation and use of personal protective equipment.

Table 4.2 Correlation of the Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests in Terms of Personality to their Evaluation on the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Personality vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.227	.008	Significant
Reliability	.237	.006	Significant
Assurance	.211	.014	Significant
Empathy	.164	.059	Not Significant
Responsiveness	.125	.150	Not Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

It can be viewed from table 4.2 that psychographic characteristic in terms of personality is significant to tangibility (.008), weak direct relationship (.227); reliability (.006), weak direct relationship (.237) and assurance (.014), weak direct relationship (.211). This means that personality has significantly affects the respondents’ evaluation towards tangibility, reliability and assurance of pandemic safety measures and restaurants since the p-values are less the .05. Based on

this table, personality and tangibility, and reliability, and assurance of the selected restaurants in SM Calamba towards pandemic safety measures are associated with each other. Interests were the purchasing drive of the customers in terms of quality food and service [17]. Pandemic safety protocols implemented by the restaurants to ensure the safety their guests increase the interests of the customers to avail their services [18].

As time goes by and as the number of cases is increasing, the people are very mindful to their health especially to this new normal that we have. As the results shows, the guests are aware and are considering the hygiene of both the employees and the establishment which is essential to avoid contacting the life-threatening virus.

Furthermore, from the same table, psychographic characteristic in terms of personality appear to be not significant to the implemented Covid-19 pandemic safety measures in terms of empathy (.059), negligible direct relationship and responsiveness (.150), negligible direct relationship. This means that the priority of the customers of being in contact with the employees safely and touching the things around them while inside the establishment are what matters to them the most. It can also be associated with the guest's personality because restaurants also consider and understand the customers' intentions of dining at restaurants due to possible health risk [19].

Table 4.3 Correlation of the Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests in Terms of Values to their Evaluation on the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Values vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.389	.000	Significant
Reliability	.287	.001	Significant
Assurance	.271	.002	Significant
Empathy	.302	.000	Significant
Responsiveness	.217	.012	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

It can be gleaned from the table 4.3 that guests' values have significant relationship with tangibility (.000), moderate direct relationship (.389); reliability (.001), weak direct relationship (.287); assurance (.002), weak direct relationship (.271); empathy (.000), moderate direct relationship (.302); and responsiveness (.012), weak direct relationship (.217). It can be viewed that the respondents' values can be the basis of what the customers believe as acceptable and unacceptable Covid-19 precautionary measures implemented by the restaurants.

This means that the safety protocols implemented by the restaurants in SM Calamba is their response towards the sensitivity of the customers towards safety and sanitation due to the threat of the virus. The customers' priority is also the restaurant's priority; the business run because of the customers especially when the restaurant gains the loyalty of their customers. Restaurants were able to provide trust and transparency to the guests, thus satisfying their consciousness towards safety and sanitation [20].

Values have a weak to moderate direct relationship with their evaluation. The restaurants were still able to cater the service quality during times of Covid-19 pandemic. Even though there are restrictions in terms of physical contact, there were changes in the mood and ambiance of the establishments due to the health risk, the good service quality was still provided amidst the Covid-19 restrictions.

Table 4.4 Correlation of the Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests in Terms of Lifestyle to their Evaluation on the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Lifestyle vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.151	.081	Not Significant
Reliability	.131	.130	Not Significant
Assurance	.124	.154	Not Significant
Empathy	.152	.079	Not Significant
Responsiveness	.119	.170	Not Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

Based on the results from table 4.4 lifestyle is not significant with the implemented pandemic safety measures (.081), with weak direct relationship (.151); reliability (.130), weak direct relationship (.131); assurance (.154), weak direct relationship (.124); empathy (.079), weak direct relationship (.152) and lastly, responsiveness (.170), weak direct relationship (.119). There is no significant relationship between the two variables because guests' lifestyle is not the top priority these days. There is a weak direct relationship between the sub variables. Due to the threat of the corona virus, the top priority is the safety and sanitation of each establishments including restaurants and all other public places, so that the spread of the virus can be prevented. Saving the lives of the guests or customers and prioritizing their health is what matters and not the branding. To support the claim, since this corona virus pandemic happened, it has changed the life that we used to have, and it affected both the physical and mental health [21].

It can be observed from table 5.1 that social distancing appears to be significant with values (.007)

(.233) weak direct relationship; lifestyle (.034) (.183) negligible direct relationship. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the social distancing and the psychographic characteristics of the guests such as values and lifestyle. In terms of interest; (.072) (.156) negligible direct relationship as well as personality; (.298); (.091).

Table 5.1 Correlation Analysis of the Proper Safety Measures in Terms Social Distancing to Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests

Social Distancing vs	Rho-value	P-value	Interpretation
Interest	.156	.072	Not Significant
Personality	.091	.298	Not Significant
Values	.233	.007	Significant
Lifestyle	.183	.034	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant

Moreover, it can also be viewed that social distancing meets the values and lifestyle of the guests. This means that social distancing has significant effects to the values as the customers tend to dine and order at the restaurants that value the safety of the customers and the respecting about the sensitivity of their customers towards the precautionary measures. Safety measures like social distancing can help to lessen the spreading of the virus since there is little interaction between people. It is also evident that social distancing has significant relationship to the lifestyle [22].

Furthermore, from the same table, safety measures in terms of social distancing tends to be not significant to the psychographic characteristics of the guests in terms of interest (.072); (.156) and personality (.298); (.098). This may be due to the interest that customers didn't enjoy the socializing with the practice of social distancing like plexiglass and the personality are not congruent to the social distancing.

Table 5.2 Correlation Analysis of the Proper Safety Measures in Terms Equipment and Utensils' Sanitation to Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests

Equipment and Utensils' Sanitation Distancing vs	Rho-value	P-value	Interpretation
Interest	.244	.004	Significant
Personality	.194	.024	Significant
Values	.327	.000	Significant
Lifestyle	.146	.091	Not Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

It can be viewed from the result presented in table 5.2 that equipment and utensils sanitation are significant to the interest; (.004) (.244) weak direct relationship; personality (0.24) (.194) negligible direct relationship; values (.000) (.327) have moderate direct relationship. It can also be seen that there is a significant relationship between equipment and utensils sanitation and the interest, personality, and values.

This signifies that the equipment and utensils sanitation have significant effects to the interests of the respondents as they tend to consider their health and safety. It is also cleared it meets the personality of the guests as they are conscious to safety environment given by the restaurant in SM Calamba. In addition, it also corresponds to the values of the respondents. This means that the restaurants in SM Calamba are strictly following the proper safety measures at the same time they can still provide the quality that the guests are looking for. Psychographic profiling is essential for restaurants and other businesses to assess the proper marketing strategies to attract customers [23]. Guests are looking for the cleanliness and sanitation of an area hence the unclean environment tends to be the greatest negative impact on the level of satisfaction and to their interest, personality as well as values. Additionally, it is important to the restaurant to understand the safety and sanitation of the area as well as the equipment and utensils used by the guests.

It can also be revealed from the same table that equipment and utensils sanitation is not significant to lifestyle (.0091); (.146) negligible direct relationship. There is also no significant relationship between equipment and utensils sanitation and psychographic characteristic which is the interest. This may be due to the customer's lifestyle that they tend not to consider the brand of the restaurants and the food itself.

Table 5.3 Correlation Analysis of the Proper Safety Measures in Terms Personal Protective Equipment to Psychographic Characteristics of the Guests

Personal Protective Equipment vs	Rho-value	P-value	Interpretation
Interest	.253	.003	Significant
Personality	.207	.017	Significant
Values	.221	.010	Significant
Lifestyle	.155	.074	Not Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant

It can be observed from the table 5.3 that personal protective equipment is significant to interest (.003)

(.253); personality (.017) (.207) with both weak direct relationship as well as values (.010) (.221). This entails that personal protective equipment has significant relationship with the psychographic profile in terms of interest, personality, and values.

This implies that the restaurants staff in SM Calamba ensures that personal protective equipment was used accurately. Thereby, personal protective equipment is significant to the interest of the respondents in eating or ordering at less crowded restaurants, personality as the customers is aware of hygiene of both the restaurant and the employees and lastly values as the customers tend to assess the safety protocols that exercised by both public and employees.

Additionally, the safety measures in terms of personal protective equipment tends to be not significant to lifestyle (.074). This means that the guests tend not to buy healthy foods as well as farm cuisine and not considering the brand of the restaurant. People became conscious of their health and changed their diet into a healthy diet to boost their immune system due to the threat of the virus [24].

Table 6.1 Correlation of the Evaluation of the Guests to their Level of Satisfaction Towards the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Social Distancing vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.571	.000	Significant
Reliability	.575	.000	Significant
Assurance	.645	.000	Significant
Empathy	.534	.000	Significant
Responsiveness	.512	.000	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

It can be seen in this table 6.1 that according to the evaluation of the customers, social distancing has a significant relationship to tangibility (.000), strong direct relationship (.571), as well as reliability (.000), strong direct relationship (.575); assurance (.000), strong direct relationship (.645); empathy (.000), strong direct relationship (.534) and responsiveness (.000), strong direct relationship (.512).

The guest level of satisfaction towards the implementation of the Covid-19 safety protocols has a strong direct relationship to social distancing. And this implies that the customers are very aware and pleased to the implementation of the of the social distancing as part of the safety measures that is strictly implemented in the public places, just like how it is implemented in SM Calamba and in the selected restaurants that is part of the study. The relationship of the social distancing to

tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness is significant to one another as the implementation is ideal to the customers liking. As the customer satisfaction has an effect to the customer loyalty, restaurants are doing their best for the customers to stay loyal to them.

With that being said, the implementation of the social distancing in the selected restaurants in SM Calamba is reliable, social distancing was implemented as one of strategy to fight the virus [25]. Moreover, social distancing saves lives as this reduce contact from person to person, so infecting others can never be a problem [26]. As for the tangibility and social distancing relationship, safety measures can be easily do if everyone is participating and presented properly [27]. On other hand for assurance, the quality of the service keeps the customers loyal, amidst this pandemic restaurant still function the way before this happened and the safety measures is just a plus [28]. As for the empathy, empathy is strongly influenced by the given service experienced of the customers [29]. Lastly, for the responsiveness and social distancing relationship, social distancing is the response to the consumers and by exercising this safety measure everyone is being cooperative [30].

Table 6.2 Correlation of the Evaluation of the Guests to their Level of Satisfaction Towards the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Equipment and Utensil's Sanitation vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.603	.000	Significant
Reliability	.551	.000	Significant
Assurance	.634	.000	Significant
Empathy	.569	.000	Significant
Responsiveness	.624	.000	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

The table 6.2 below shows that all of them have a significant relationship to one another. The relationship of equipment and utensil's sanitation and tangibility (.000), strong direct relationship (.603) together with reliability (.000), strong direct relationship (.551); assurance (.000), strong direct relationship (.634); empathy (.000), strong direct relationship (.569); and responsiveness (.000), strong direct relationship (.624); shows that it is significant to one another.

As it is shown on the table, it can be verified that the restaurants are doing their job to keep their customers safe by doing the right job for the restaurant's equipment and sanitation to the utensils. Restaurant is

part of the public place that re-opens for the customer, but restaurants owners are very much aware that the virus is still everywhere and by the approval of the government they re-open but with the strict implementation of the safety protocols. The relationship of the utensils' sanitation and equipment to the tangibility is in lined to a study which states that facility is complying to the health and safety procedure as suggested by the government [31]. For the reliability, the restaurants transparency can be seen by the customers who dine frequently [32]. Moreover, for the assurance and empathy, customers can see that by the promotion program and scooping up with this new normal on food safety and hygiene, restaurant continue to rose amidst this pandemic [33]. Lastly, for the responsiveness, the staffs are still doing their best to give to the customers what they deserve [34].

It is shown on the table 6.3 that personal protective equipment is significant to the tangibility (.000), strong direct relationship (.515) as well the reliability (.000), strong direct relationship (.541); assurance (.000), strong direct relationship (.6,14); empathy (.000), strong direct relationship (.556); and responsiveness (.000), strong direct relationship (.693).

It shows that the personal protective equipment has a strong direct relationship to the level of satisfaction towards the implementation of the Covid-19 safety measurement. By wearing of face mask and face shield can decrease the percentage of the individual getting the virus, that's why this is also strictly implemented. Properly wearing of personal protective equipment is important as this prevents to widespread the virus [35]. Even though we're still dealing with the virus, more and more people are going to eat and play, as the number of customers increase it also increases the risk in the working environment to be susceptible in the emergence of the virus [36]. Though wearing of PPE is a burden as this can limit productivity, PPE of the individuals should be worn always at the public places [37]. The actual satisfaction of the customer is not easy to measure, and a good customer service is by following the management rules and regulations [38]. The safety measure is an additional to the rules and regulation of the management and by following this, the restaurant will keep up to this new normal we have. following the management rules and regulations [38].

Table 6.3 Correlation of the Evaluation of the Guests to their Level of Satisfaction Towards the Implementation of COVID-19 Safety Measures

Personal Protective Equipment vs	Rho-Value	P-value	Interpretation
Tangibility	.515	.000	Significant
Reliability	.541	.000	Significant
Assurance	.614	.000	Significant
Empathy	.556	.000	Significant
Responsiveness	.693	.000	Significant

Legend: If p-value is <.05, Significant. If p-value is >.05, Not Significant.

Table 7. An enhancement program in terms of service quality and food safety for the restaurants in the implementation of their safety protocols

Enhancement Areas	Goal/Plan /Concept	Action to be taken	Persons /Group of People Responsible	Time Frame	Expected/Supposed Results
Adjustment on Guests' Lifestyle	Adaptation towards the Changes in Lifestyle	Restaurants must consider what the guests' needs and wants in times like pandemic such as the changes priorities in terms of services offered prior to the pandemic safety protocols and guest relations.	Restaurant management and staffs	Immediate action must be taken. /A week of evaluation and preparation in terms of the guests' changes in lifestyle. This could take a month or two.	This may result to the restaurant staff adapting to the changes of guests' lifestyle in times of pandemic. The restaurant can come may be to a modified quality of service or even the menu if possible.
Empathy to Guests	Improved customer relationship.	Reorientation guests service and retraining on staff-customer relationship.  Orient the staffs with regards to how they will properly execute or provide their services in times of pandemic and to teach them to be cautious	Restaurant manager for reorientation.  Staffs who will be attending the activities.	Immediate action must be taken. /1 or 2 days for the seminar.	The guests will probably feel more satisfied with the restaurant services in times of pandemic since there will be a reorientation and retraining to the staff, this will help them to provide service quality to the guests. As this

		and considerate with the extra demands of all the guests.	Human Resource Manager		training will help the staffs to be more competent and can handle the customers easily.
Implementation on Personal Protective Equipment	Strict implementation towards wearing of Personal Protective Equipment	<p>Guest Entry Policy Information Campaign of No Mask, No Face Shield, No Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through Restaurants' Facebook Account.</li> <li>• Restaurants' reminders</li> <li>• Training on "Firing the Customers" (TQM Concept)</li> </ul> <p>Restaurant management must not allow the guests who are not wearing their face shield and facemasks properly to enter the establishment. It will also be applied to the restaurant staffs.</p>	Restaurant staffs/employees and the management.	Immediate action must be taken. / This will take a day or two to inform the employees and the customers about the strict implementation of the policy.	It will be safer for both the employees and customers since all of them will be protected upon entering the restaurant establishment. Additionally, there will be a disciplined action in the restaurant.

Given the results and discussions, the researchers came up with an enhancement program. This customer service enhancement program's purpose is to improve and to adapt with the "new normal" caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Enhancement areas include adaptation towards the changes in lifestyle of the guests, improved customer relationship, and strict implementation towards wearing of personal protective equipment.

The components of this enhancement program are: first, start with reorientation with regards to the enhancement of service quality in-lined with SERVQUAL and pandemic safety protocols. Secondly, to train the staffs about how to properly clean, sanitize and disinfect the areas as well as the equipment and utensils used by both the employees and the customers. Lastly, to implement and practice these safety precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the guests alongside with the quality of service that restaurants used to provide.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The researchers conclude that psychographic characteristics plays an important part when choosing restaurants. In times of pandemic, personality, values, and interests equally take a huge part in decision making. On the other hand, lifestyle has only slightly affected their restaurant choices. Even as, the restaurant may lack in empathy as they address the demands and problems of the customers. The restaurants' employees may have shown empathy and connected with their guests, but they may be lacking in understanding high demands of their guests when it comes to too many requests regarding the safety measures during these times of pandemic.

It can also be concluded that the interest and personality do not have a significant relationship with the social distancing while the equipment and utensils sanitation and personal protective equipment safety measures has no significant relationship with the psychographic characteristics in terms of lifestyle. Lastly, since there are evident lapses in terms of the service quality in response to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions based on the answers of the respondents, the researchers proposed an enhancement program/plan to help improve the restaurants' service quality in terms of Covid-19 safety protocols.

Since the respondents' psychographic characteristics plays a vital role on choosing a restaurant, the restaurant should consider their needs and wants if it is still in line for the safety measurement that the government implemented all over the country. For the restaurant to understand better the customers, a guests' survey form or a suggestion box that is designed for the customers is better, because in here the restaurant will really know what the customers' wants and needs. Also, with regards to empathy, a reorientation and training in terms of customer relationship coming from the restaurants' management is recommended.

Considering the PPE or personal protective equipment, the lowest rank in assessment of proper safety measures, the restaurant must give strict protocols to the restaurant staff when wearing the PPE as well by informing them about the important use of this safety measure by giving them seminars as it helps them to keep from the harm brought by the COVID-19 virus.

Moreover, the respondents' values highly affected their evaluation of the restaurants' response to Covid-19, their attitudes and demands must always be prioritized when thinking of new products and improving their services. Lastly, the action plan can be used by the restaurants as a basis for improvement of their service quality in terms of their successful implementation of pandemic safety measures.

This research is limited to the restaurants in SM Calamba. The focus of this study is the safety measures applied by the restaurants to serve their customers with both safety and quality as well as the satisfaction of the customers towards their services.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Al-Ababneh, M. (2017). Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3633089>
- [2] Datta, K. S., & Vardhan, J. (2017). A SERVQUAL-Based Framework for Assessing Quality of International Branch Campuses in UAE. *Business and Management Journal*, 7(1), 215824401667629. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016676294>
- [3] Raji, M. M. A., & Zainal, A. (2016). The effect of customer perceived value on customer satisfaction: A case study of Malay upscale restaurants. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 12(3). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307902497>
- [4] Almomani, G. (2017). Measuring Service Quality and Customers Satisfaction in the UK Mobile Telecommunications Market Using the SERVQUAL Instrument. *University of Lincoln*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326831963>
- [5] Tuncer, I., Unusan, C., & Cobanoglu, C. (2020). Service Quality, Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction on Behavioral Intention in Restaurants: An Integrated Structural Model. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2020.1802390>
- [6] Gursoy, D., & Chi, C. G. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry: review of the current situations and a research agenda. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 29(5), 527–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2020.1788231>
- [7] De Freitas, R. S. G., & Stedefeldt, E. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic underlines the need to build resilience in commercial restaurants' food safety. *Food Research International*, 136, 109472.
- [8] Mmutle, T., & Shonhe, L., (2017). Customers' perception of Service Quality and impact on reputation in the Hospitality Industry. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure* 2223-814X.6. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319208588>
- [9] Pitogo, V. (2019). Commitment on data privacy towards e-governance: The case of local government units. *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3326365.3326404>
- [10] Sarikakis, K., & Winter, L. (2017). Social Media Users' Legal Consciousness About Privacy. *Social Media and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117695325>
- [11] Balanzá-Martínez, V., Kapczynski, F., de Azevedo Cardoso, T., Atienza-Carbonell, B., Rosa, A. R., Mota, J. C., & De Boni, R. B. (2021). The assessment of lifestyle changes during the COVID-19 pandemic using a multidimensional scale. *Revista de Psiquiatria y Salud Mental*, 14(1), 16–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rpsm.2020.07.003>
- [12] Alarussi, A. S., & Alhkami, A. A. (2016). Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction in Telecommunication Companies in Yemen. *Asian Journal of Business and Management*, 4(3). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316972544>
- [13] U.S Food and Drug Association (2020). Personal Protective Equipment for Infection Control. <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/general-hospital-devices-and-supplies/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control>
- [14] Olaimat, A. N., Shahbaz, H. M., Fatima, N., Munir, S., & Holley, R. A. (2020). Food Safety During and After the Era of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Microbiology*, 11, 1854. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2020.01854>
- [15] Becker, S., Haas, S., Kuehl, E., Marcos, I., & Venkataraman, K. (2020). Quick-service restaurants in coronavirus times. *McKinsey and Company*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/delivering-when-it-matters-quick-service-restaurants-in-coronavirus-times#>
- [16] Paital, B., Das, K., & Parida, S. K. (2020). Inter nation social lockdown versus medical care against COVID-19, a mild environmental insight with special reference to India. *Science of the Total Environment*, 728, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138914>
- [17] Kumar Yadav, S., & Mishra, B. (2017). Impact Factor: RJIF 5.22 [www.managejournal.com](http://www.managejournal.com) Volume 3; Issue 1. *In International Journal of Commerce and Management Research*. [www.managejournal.com](http://www.managejournal.com)
- [18] Seyitoğlu, F., & Ivanov, S. (2020). Service robots as a tool for physical distancing in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1774518>
- [19] Radic, A., Lück, M., Al-Ansi, A., Chua, B.-L., Seeler, S., Raposo, A., Kim, J. J., & Han, H. (2021). To Dine, or Not to Dine on a Cruise Ship in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Tripartite Approach towards an Understanding of Behavioral Intentions among Female Passengers. *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2516. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052516>
- [20] Yost, E., & Cheng, Y. (2021). Customers' risk perception and dine-out motivation during a pandemic: Insight for the restaurant industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 95, 102889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102889>

- [21] Alzueta, E., Perrin, P., Baker, F. C., Caffarra, S., Ramos-Usuga, D., Yuksel, D., & Arango-Lasprilla, J. C. (2021). How the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives: A study of psychological correlates across 59 countries. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 77(3), 556–570. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23082>
- [22] De Vos, J. (2020). The effect of COVID-19 and subsequent social distancing on travel behavior. *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 5, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2020.100121>
- [23] Chatibura, D. (2018). Profiling the demographic and psychographic characteristics of traditional cuisine diners in Botswana. *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, 6(2), 153. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijltm.2018.097233>
- [24] Alhusseini, N., & Alqahtani, A. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic's impact on eating habits in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Public Health Research*, 9(3), 354–360. <https://doi.org/10.4081/jphr.2020.1868>
- [25] VoPham, T., Weaver, M. D., Hart, J. E., Ton, M., White, E., & Newcomb, P. A. (2020). Effect of social distancing on COVID-19 incidence and mortality in the US. *In medRxiv* (p. 2020.06.10.20127589). [medRxiv. https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.06.10.20127589](https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.06.10.20127589)
- [26] Thunström, L., Newbold, S. C., Finnoff, D., Ashworth, M., & Shogren, J. F. (2020). The Benefits and Costs of Using Social Distancing to Flatten the Curve for COVID-19. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 11(2), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.1017/bca.2020.12>
- [27] Fan, M., Antle, A. N., Hoskyn, M., Neustaedter, C., & Cramer, E. S. (2017). Why tangibility matters: A design case study of at-risk children learning to read and spell. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*, 1805–1816. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3026048>
- [28] Izogo, E. E. (2017). Customer loyalty in telecom service sector: The role of service quality and customer commitment. *TQM Journal*, 29(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-10-2014-0089>
- [29] Umasuthan, H., Park, O. J., & Ryu, J. H. (2017). Influence of empathy on hotel guests' emotional service experience. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 31(6), 618–635. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-06-2016-0220>
- [30] Adolph, C., Amano, K., Bang-Jensen, B., Fullman, N., & Wilkerson, J. (2020). Pandemic Politics: Timing State-Level Social Distancing Responses to COVID-19. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. <https://doi.org/10.1215/03616878-8802162>
- [31] Banerjee, R., Bhattacharya, J., & Majumdar, P. (2021). Exponential-growth prediction bias and compliance with safety measures related to COVID-19. *Social Science and Medicine*, 268, 113473. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113473>
- [32] Agrawal, S. R., & Mittal, D. (2019). How Does Transparency Complement Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Restaurant Business? *Global Business Review*, 20(6), 1423–1444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150919848935>
- [33] Adane, M., Teka, B., Gismu, Y., Halefom, G., & Ademe, M. (2018). Food hygiene and safety measures among food handlers in street food shops and food establishments of Dessie town, Ethiopia: A community-based cross-sectional study. *PLOS ONE*, 13(5), e0196919. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0196919>
- [34] Simon O, W., Moses N, M., & Vincent N, M. (2021). Foodservice clientele tipping behavior and its impetus on restaurant service reliability in Kenya. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 24(1), 42–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2020.1834058>
- [35] Hasan, S. S., Kow, C. S., & Zaidi, S. T. R. (2021). Social distancing and the use of PPE by community pharmacy personnel: Does evidence support these measures? *In Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* (Vol. 17, Issue 2, pp. 456–459). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.04.033>
- [36] Paes, I. C. E., Guilherme, R. C., Livera, A. V. D. S., Do Valle, R. G. R., & Da Silveira, K. C. (2020). Occupational risks of commercial restaurant workers in the metropolitan region of Recife-PE. *Gestao e Producao*, 27(3), <https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-530x4330-20>
- [37] Foster, J., Hodder, S. G., Goodwin, J., & Havenith, G. (2020). Occupational Heat Stress and Practical Cooling Solutions for Healthcare and Industry Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*, 64(9), 915–922. <https://doi.org/10.1093/annweh/wxaa082>
- [38] Kaura, V., Prasad, C. S. D., & Sharma, S. (2015). Service quality, service convenience, price and fairness, customer loyalty, and the mediating role of customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-04-2014-0048>

#### COPYRIGHTS

Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to APJMSD. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4>)