

Customer's Nationality towards Service Quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant in Tagaytay City

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Abstract: The study aimed to assess the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant in Tagaytay City, Cavite, as well as its relation to the nationality of its customers. The research used a quantitative method, using survey questionnaires and the customers as the respondents of the study. In analyzing and interpreting results, the researcher used frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation and ranking. Findings stated that there was a significant difference in the service quality in Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant with regards to nationality. The Korean Restaurant has an overall mean of 2.71; showing that the respondents in the Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant agreed that the restaurant has met its standards for service quality.

Keywords: Korean Restaurant, Service Quality, Nationality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's food market offers a wide range of local and international food. It started from the unlimited rice offer, milk tea, unlimited chicken wings and eventually Samgyeopsal. In the Korean language, it is called Hansik; which is their traditional food. Korean food is known for their healthy cuisine such as low-calorie food with a good balance of whole grains, vegetables, seafood, meat and fish. And has high potential to become globalized (Kim, Suh, &Eves, 2010; Lee & Lee, 2008; Min, 2009).

Although just this year, numerous restaurants offering Hansik opened all over the Philippines and the struggle for finding a Korean restaurant in the country was not a problem anymore. To give a short background about this food, it offered a thin slice of meat showing layers of its fats, these go well with the Korean paste called ssamjang; wrapped in fresh lettuce with some tasty side dishes. (KN, 2018).

Republic Act No. 10611, also known as the "Food Safety Act of 2013" defined food as any substance or product whether processed, partially processed, or unprocessed that was intended for human consumption. It included drinks, chewing gum, water, and other substances, which were intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation, and treatment. On the other hand, food safety referred to the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared or eaten according to its intended use.

In this manner, restaurants played an important role in tourism. Travelling was not limited to the sights or experience that a locality can offer, food on the other hand was one of the basic needs that we fulfil as a person. The development of Food tourism added up to the travel experience of a particular person, thus giving a positive effect to a place's ability to attract guests.

As per the last year, a million Koreans visited the Philippines and at least a 100, 000 were permanent residents of the country. (Escoda, 2018) A lot of foreigners chose to live in the Philippines because of several factors, such as lower cost

of living, cheaper education and economic opportunities. Not long after that, we found ourselves surrounded by different nationalities which resulted in diversity, not only in lifestyle but also in terms of fashion and food.

Due to escalation of competition among several businesses, a 40 - item instrument also known as SERVQUAL has been used in order to assess procedures done by hotels and restaurants. In that manner, they were able to reward ways to emphasize on their uniqueness among countless competitors. (Abukhalifeh et. al. 2015)

Improvement for services was crucial for any organization but was necessary in order to meet the customers' expectation or requirement. Once the lapses were recognized by carefully doing the study and data analyses, the organization would be able to determine its strong and weak points. (Martin, M., 2016)

The gradual changes that we experience in our daily life, the diversity of the coming together of different races and everything around them has greatly impacted the food market. Thus, expectation, requirement, and trends progressed. In this manner, each should be able to formulate a new strategy to attract customers and perform better than the other food joints. (Vijayvargy, L., 2014)

The word "satisfaction" is derived from the Latin word *satis* which means enough and *facere*, meaning to do or make; however, at present, satisfaction does not conform to experiencing enough, a person's behavior and needs can directly affect the consumer's feedback to a certain product or service. In the study of The Insight and Managerial Implications from the Frontier, it was concluded that Service Quality was subjective and was controlled by "perceived quality, value performance on non-quality dimensions, relevant prior expectations and the disconfirmation of those relevant expectations." At some point, all factors were directly related to how consumers react to the experience. All these were helpful on how to monitor and adjust certain aspects in order to improve their relationship and services. (Rust, R. T., & Oliver, 1993)

Service quality is a subjective concept and how customers perceive this is needed to have an effective management. In this study, the authors stated that service quality was directly related to two other aspects which are customer satisfaction and customer value. All these have both short - term and long-term effects on businesses. (Rust, R. T., & Oliver, R. L. (n.d.),

Service quality should evolve since customers' demands and satisfaction changes over time. Parameters should be adjusted or changed over time by conducting surveys that were carefully designed to address certain areas of improvement. (Borgave, 2012)

Tagaytay, also branded as "the second summer capital of the Philippines" is known to be one of the best tourist destinations not only in the Philippines but also in Asia. It is found in the province of Cavite and is famous for its cold climate. It is a 3rd class city, about 56 kilometers south of Manila and about 2, 250 feet above sea level (Tagaytay City, Philippines Most Popular Tourist Destination. (n.d.)

Due to these reasons, this city attracts not only Filipinos, but likewise foreigners also to be permanent residents in this place. To name some of it, the ever-famous Taal Volcano, Palace in the Sky, Picnic Grove, and some hotels that allow people to relax and forget the hustle and bustle of life. What is more important is it accommodates different types of restaurants, from cheap ones to expensive ones, and cuisines of different kinds too.

After considering some important factors, the researcher was to conduct a study having Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant as their subject. First, the accessibility of the place to the researcher; second, the location must be ideal for business setting; third, the present situation of the business is realistic and workable.

The researcher believed that using the Five Dimension of Service Quality or simply the RATER Scale enabled them to give a dense result. First, Responsiveness; it is important for the study to know whether employees are able to immediately and instantly respond to their customers. Second is Assurance; this study aims to know if the personnel are knowledgeable and are courteous which is essential in establishing both trust and confidence. It is not only limited to the service but also to some documents that are necessary for guests to trust their business. Third focus on Tangibles; pertaining to everything that customers are able to see within the parameter of the business. Fourth is Empathy; It is not enough that they execute the requests and services but also to effectively show their enthusiasm in having them as guests. Lastly, Reliability; tag lines, mission and vision are just words if the restaurant does not have the ability to convey it to their customers. Regardless of how nice the store is, or how good their equipment is, if the customers could not feel that they are reliable enough, it is either they lose them or do not progress as a business.

The conceptual framework was used as the basis of the study's title, statement of the problem and survey questionnaire construction was from Zeithaml, Parasuraman, Berry (1990) concept of the five dimensions of service quality also as ServQual. The research relied on the concept of the Service Quality Model that measured the wellness of the customer's expectations, as every customer has different expectations which makes it a challenge towards the business. There were five dimensions that evaluated the type of service; those were reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy that indicated the standard of the service quality. Responsiveness refers to willingness to help customers and provide services. Assurance refers to knowledge and courtesy of the employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Empathy refers to caring, individualized attention that the firm provides the customers. Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials and lastly, Reliability, it refers to ability to perform the promised services dependently and accurately. (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, Berry 1990)

The research paradigm of the researcher showed the process of how the research will be conducted. Figure 1 contained the dependent and independent variable. The dependent variable, which is the Action Plan, is a variable often denoted by y whose value depends on that of another. On the other hand, independent variable is a variable often denoted by x whose variation does not depend on the other namely: nationality/race and the process of using SERVQUAL in terms of responsiveness, assurance, tangible, empathy, and reliability. The independent variables are the data that the researcher needed to determine, and the dependent variables are the result coming from the independent variables.

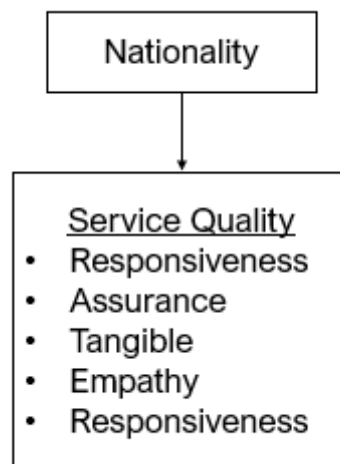


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the process of doing the research study, the researcher was expected to answer the following questions:

In order to collect useful data that is beneficial to this study, responses to the following questions was be met:

1. How do the respondents assess the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant?
 - a. Reliability
 - b. Assurance
 - c. Tangible
 - d. Empathy
 - e. Responsiveness
2. Is there any significant difference in the assessment of the respondents in the service quality in Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant and Nationality?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was intended to directly help the current situation of Kuya Rex Restaurant since its sales has been greatly affected by the numerous Korean Restaurants that opened in the past few months. The researcher's goal was recognize the aspects that need to be addressed at the time being

To support this study, the researcher used Quantitative research method which was descriptive in nature. For the sampling method, the use of convenience sampling was implemented since the subject's expected estimated customers in a day was about 20 at minimum and 30 at maximum on most days of the week. The questionnaire was patterned from the five dimensions of service quality or ServQual.

The researcher conducted a study focusing on the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant to assess restaurant customers' expectations and perceptions; and to identify main dimensions of perceived and expected city restaurant service quality. The study gave emphasis on five aspects of restaurant service namely, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy

An interview with the owner and so with the staff was helpful in the process of doing the study. Every data was kept confidential by the researcher. The researcher not only conducted a study but was also expected to experience dining at the said restaurant. In that manner, the researcher was also able to observe the measures that can be addressed.

The purpose of this study was to be able to come up with a concrete evaluation of the customers' dining experience at Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant. The researcher wanted to know more about their feedback and perception when it came to the business' strengths and weaknesses. In that case, the result of the study was more beneficial to the owners once they consider applying changes in order to attract more customers in the future.

For the data collection process, a combination of different data collection techniques was implemented in order to support possible outcomes of the study, specifically the following: interviews from random customers, observation and distribution of survey questionnaires. Specifically, Convenience Sampling Method to a sample size of 20 – 30 customers based on the average customers since the business was able to cater their service to 50 – 75 guests per as per its manager.

The statistical tools used are Frequency & Percentage, Mean & Standard Deviation, T-Test and Analysis of Variance.

The survey questionnaires were formulated and passed by the researcher the soonest possible time for the validation process.

3. RESULTS

Table 1. Nationality of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Filipino	175	87.50
Foreigner	25	12.50
Total	200	100.00

The table above indicates the results regarding the nationality of the respondents, majority are Filipino citizens with 87.5% and the minority are Foreign Nationals with 12.5%.

This implied that it is more likely for Filipinos to crave Korean Food in comparison to foreigners. Korean cuisine has become more popular in the Philippines as the influence of the Korean wave became more prominent in the country. The attraction to Korean culture, including its food, was a product of people's fondness for K-pop and Kdramas for the past two decades. (Tupas & Lee, 2020) According to the findings of Joven (2000), due to the popularity of Kdramas, Filipinos became more interested in trying out Korean cuisine. The unique tastes of Korean food: exotic, spicy, tangy, sparked the curiosity of Filipinos. Korean restaurants in the Philippines in turn, dilute or tone down authentic Korean cuisine, making Filipinised versions in order to keep the Filipino consumers.

Table 2. Assessment of Service Quality in terms of Reliability

Reliability	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
1. The restaurant provides accurate information about prices and services.	2.88	0.86	agree	1
2. Employees perform the service at the designated time.	2.76	0.93	agree	3
3. When you have a problem, the restaurant shows a sincere interest in solving it.	2.79	0.96	agree	2
4. Employees are never busy to respond to the customer's request	2.64	0.89	agree	5
5. The restaurant insists on error-free records (e.g. Billing) accurately	2.72	0.89	agree	4
Overall	2.76		Agree	
<i>Interpretation 1.00 to 1.49 Strongly disagree 1.5 to 2.49 Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 Agree and 3.5 to 4.00 Strongly Disagree</i>				

As shown from the table above, the result of the assessment of service quality in terms of reliability. The results showed that the highest mean can be found in “The restaurant provides accurate information about prices and services” with a mean of 2.88 and interpreted as agree while the lowest mean can be found in “Employees are never busy to respond to the customer's request” with a mean of 2.64 and interpreted as agree. The overall mean of 2.76 suggests that most of the respondents agree that the service quality was reliable.

This shows that the respondents could rely on Kuya Rex Koren Restaurant and its staff to provide services correctly. In proportion to Lee & Ralson (2011), in the occasion that services demonstrate reliability, guests are expected to exhibit pleasure and a sense of satisfaction with the service encounter. Moreover, according to a study in Pakistan, individualists treated service providers as just other individuals and focused more on reliability. They expected to be treated formally and professionally. (Raajpoot, 2004)

Table 3. Assessment of Service Quality in terms of Assurance

Assurance	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
1. Employees are consistently courteous and friendly.	2.87	0.85	agree	1
2. You feel safe with their transactions in the restaurant.	2.78	0.86	agree	2
3. Employees get adequate support from the restaurant to do the job well.	2.66	0.87	agree	5
4. Employees have the knowledge to answer customer's demands.	2.71	0.86	agree	3
5. The employees are trustworthy.	2.74	0.90	agree	4
Overall	2.74		Agree	
<i>Interpretation 1.00 to 1.49 Strongly disagree 1.5 to 2.49 Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 Agree and 3.5 to 4.00 Strongly Disagree</i>				

Table 3 shows the result of the assessment of service quality in terms of assurance. The results showed that the highest mean can be found in “Employees are consistently courteous and friendly.” with a mean of 2.87 and interpreted as agree while the lowest mean can be found in “Employees get adequate support from the restaurant to do the job well” with a mean of 2.66 and interpreted as agree. The overall mean of 2.74 suggests that most of the respondents agreed that the service quality gives assurance.

This denoted that the staff of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant have a sense of competence and commitment in assuring its customers. In contrast, the findings of Tsoukatos (2011), Asian factor reflects conservatism in evaluating service quality in conjunction with unwillingness to openly express criticism when service delivery is poor. The Asian factor, therefore, was associated with lower expectations and, as a result of extraordinary long-term orientation, tolerance of poor service delivery (Assurance, Responsiveness) provided that Reliability expectations are met. In contrast to the study of Lee et al (2011), in regard to the interaction involving assurance, participants who were Chinese were less sensitive to assurance changes, as compared to participants from the United States and Korea

Table 4. Assessment of Service Quality in terms of Tangibility

Tangibility	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
1. The dining area inside the restaurant is visually appealing.	2.87	0.88	agree	1
2. The restaurant utensils are clean	2.80	0.83	agree	2.5
3. The restaurant restroom is clean.	2.80	0.85	agree	2.5
4. Employees are well dressed and neat looking.	2.71	0.88	agree	4
Overall	2.78		Agree	
<i>Interpretation 1.00 to 1.49 Strongly disagree 1.5 to 2.49 Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 Agree and 3.5 to 4.00 Strongly Disagree</i>				

Table 4 shows the result of the assessment of service quality in terms of tangibility. The results showed that the highest mean can be found in “The dining area inside the restaurant is visually appealing.” with a mean of 2.87 and interpreted as agree while the lowest mean can be found in “Employees are well dressed and neat looking.” with a mean of 2.64 and interpreted as agree. The overall mean of 2.78 suggests that most of the respondents agreed that the service quality is tangible.

Therefore, Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant maintained the appearance and tidiness of its facilities, assets, and personnel. In proportion to Ladhari (2009), where the quality index structure suggested that tangibility was one of the most important dimensions in predicting overall service quality, cognitive satisfaction, emotional satisfaction, recommendation, loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium price.

Table 5. Assessment of Service Quality in terms of Empathy

Empathy	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
1. The restaurant has staff who give you personal attention.	2.67	0.84	agree	2
2. The restaurant staffs understand your specific needs	2.66	0.88	agree	3
3. The restaurant staff listened carefully to your complaints.	2.62	0.92	agree	5
4. The restaurant has the best interest at heart.	2.64	0.93	agree	4
5. The restaurant staffs addressed the complaints before leaving	2.75	0.96	agree	1
Overall	2.67		Agree	
<i>Interpretation 1.00 to 1.49 Strongly disagree 1.5 to 2.49 Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 Agree and 3.5 to 4.00 Strongly Disagree</i>				

Table 5 shows the result of the assessment of service quality in terms of empathy. The results showed that the highest mean can be found in “The restaurant staff addressed the complaints before leaving” with a mean of 2.75 and interpreted as agree while the lowest mean can be found in “The restaurant staff listened carefully to your complaints.” with a mean of 2.62 and interpreted as agree. The overall mean of 2.67 suggests that most of the respondents agree that the service quality displays empathy.

The researcher has concluded that Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant expresses obvious concern for their individual guests. In contrast to the findings of Lee et al (2011), results indicated that individuals representing three nationalities had very different responses to empathy in the service encounters. Further, the values indicated that, cross-nationality differences in responses to service encounters have much greater effect on negative affect than on delightedness and positive affect.

Table 6. Assessment of Service Quality in terms of Responsiveness

Responsiveness	Mean	Std Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
1. Employees tell exactly when services will be performed.	2.74	0.89	agree	1
2. Employees give prompt service to customers	2.62	0.87	agree	2
3. Employees are always willing to help customers.	2.61	0.90	agree	3.5
4. Employees are never too busy to respond to customer’s requests	2.61	0.89	agree	3.5
5. Employees respond to your request promptly.	2.61	0.69	agree	3.5
Overall	2.64		Agree	
<i>Interpretation 1.00 to 1.49 Strongly disagree 1.5 to 2.49 Disagree, 2.5 to 3.49 Agree and 3.5 to 4.00 Strongly Disagree</i>				

Table 6 shows the result of the assessment of service quality in terms of responsiveness. The results show that the highest mean can be found in “ Employees tell exactly when services will be performed” with a mean of 2.74 and interpreted as agree while the lowest mean can be found in three items, “Employees are always willing to help customers.”, ”Employees are never too busy to respond to customer’s requests.”, and “Employees respond to your request promptly.”, all with a mean of 2.61 and interpreted as agree. The overall mean of 2.64 suggests that most of the respondents agreed that the service quality is responsive.

This implies that Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant valued the accountability and willingness of its personnel to provide prompt services. In proportion to the study of Lee et al (2011), findings show that the responsiveness for Korean participants scored higher on negative affect than participants from the US and China. It contrasts with the results of the study of Malhotra, et al. (2005), findings showed that elements of responsiveness and speed of service were considered as an important attribute by the Western people.

Table 7. Significant difference between the assessment of the respondents in the service quality in Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant and Nationality

Nationality	Mean	Deviation	T comp	Sig	Decision	Interpretation
Filipino	2.6768	.59535	7.491	.007	reject null	there is significant
Foreigner	3.0192	.50493			hypothesis	difference
Overall Mean	2.7196	.59460				

IF SIG IS LESS THAN THE LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE 0.05, REJECT THE NULL HYPOTHESIS

The table above shows the result on the significant difference of the nationality of the respondents and the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant. The result showed that there was a significant difference between the nationality and the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant as the result is under 0.05 significance value.

The possible reason for this was the difference in preferences of different cultures and nationalities relating to service quality. Asians preferred the basic and practical aspects of service while Westerners preferred proactive aspects of service. Western tourists seeked service over and above basic service provision. Tourists coming from similar cultural backgrounds were more critical in perceiving and judging service quality and satisfaction. (Kee-Fu Tsang and Ap, 2007) The findings reflected the study of Lee et al, (2011) where interaction between nationality and reliability, assurance, and empathy was significant for all three outcome variables (delightedness, positive affect, and negative affect) According to Cunningham et al. (2006), culture may be a strong determinant of evaluating services.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, findings showed that out of 200 respondents most were Filipino with 87.5%. The result of the respondents’ assessment of the service quality in terms of reliability resulted with an overall mean of 2.76, which is interpreted as agree. While the result of the respondents’ assessment of the service quality in terms of assurance resulted with an overall mean of 2.74, which is interpreted also as agree. In terms of tangibility, the result of the respondents’ assessment of the service quality resulted with an overall mean of 2.78, which is interpreted as agree. The result of the respondents’ assessment of the service quality in terms of empathy resulted with an overall mean of 2.67, which is interpreted as agree. The result of the respondents’ assessment of the service quality in terms of responsiveness resulted with an overall mean of 2.64, which is interpreted as agree. The findings show that there is significant difference in the service quality in Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant with regards to nationality

Therefore, the researcher concluded that most of the customers of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant were Filipinos. According to the assessment of the respondents, with an overall mean of 2.71, the Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant has displayed all the Five Dimensions of Service Quality, namely: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy, and Responsiveness. This implies that the restaurant was trusted by its customers. Its staff were knowledgeable and courteous. Its facilities and employees maintained their appearance and cleanliness. Personnel showed genuine concern towards their customers and responded promptly to their needs.

Findings stated that there is a significant difference in the service quality in Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant with regards to nationality. Thus, it is concluded that Filipinos and Foreigners generally have different preferences in assessing Service Quality.

Based on the given findings, the researcher has made the following recommendations to improve the service quality of Kuya Rex Korean Restaurant. Enhance customer service experience through continuous development and training of personnel, especially in terms of responsiveness and empathy, of which garnered the lowest mean among the criteria assessed in the study, as well as being knowledgeable of the different preferences of different cultures in order that staff may be able to deliver good service according to the customers' needs. It is also recommended to establish and implement core values that may reflect the hospitable practices of an authentic Korean restaurant. It is also beneficial to consider that employees must receive proper compensation and benefits in order to manifest a good working environment.

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