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Mohammad Badruddoza TALUKDER*, Dil Afrin SWARNA**, Sanjeev KUMAR***

IMPACT OF FOOD SERVICE QUALITY ON GUEST SATISFACTION IN FIVE-STAR HOTELS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Wpływ jakości usług gastronomicznych na satysfakcję gości w hotelach pięcigwiazdkowych: badanie eksploracyjne

Streszczenie

Przeprowadziliśmy badanie eksploracyjne i przyjrzelśmy się relacji między jakością usług gastronomicznych a zadowoleniem gości, aby określić narzędzia jakości usług gastronomicznych DINESERV, które przyczyniają się do zadowolenia gości w branży hotelarskiej. W badaniu tym zastosowano metody jakościowe i objęto nimi grupę fokusową składającą się z ośmiu osób oraz pogłębiane wywiady z 32 gośćmi restauracji z 11 hoteli w Bangladeszu. Celem tego badania jest rzucenie światła na narzędzia DINESERV w branży hotelarskiej i przyczynienie się do przyszłych inicjatyw badawczych, przy jednoczesnym zbadaniu relacji między jakością usług gastronomicznych a zadowoleniem gości. W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono najlepsze praktyki w zakresie poprawy jakości usług gastronomicznych w punktach gastronomicznych hoteli w celu zapewnienia zadowolenia gości. Pewność, empatia i czynniki materialne to trzy czynniki, które goście uważają za najważniejsze przy ocenie jakości usług gastronomicznych; w rezultacie czynniki te mogą korzystnie wpłynąć na zadowolenie gości. Z drugiej strony, niezawodność i responsywność miały mniejszy wpływ na zadowolenie gości. Reasumując, ogólna satysfakcja ma większy wpływ na jakość usług gastronomicznych w pięcigwiazdkowych hotelach. Te praktyczne i teoretyczne implikacje przyczyniają się do poszerzenia wiedzy menedżerów ds. żywności i napojów na temat tego, jak poprawić jakość usług gastronomicznych i zwiększyć zadowolenie gości, a jednocześnie pogłębiają teo-

* <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1662-9221>; PhD, Associate Professor and Chairman; College of Tourism and Hospitality Management, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh; e-mail: badru01@gmail.com (corresponding author)

** <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9176-920X>; Student, Business Administration; National University, Bangladesh; e-mail: sdilafrin@gmail.com

*** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7375-7341>; PhD; School of Hotel Management and Tourism, Lovely Professional University, India; e-mail: kumarsharma12360@gmail.com

retyczną wiedzę na temat narzędzi DINESERV wpływających na zadowolenie gości w kontekście pięciogwiazdkowego hotelu.

Słowa kluczowe: branża hotelarska, jakość usług gastronomicznych, satysfakcja gości, DINESERV.

Abstract

We have conducted an exploratory study and looked at the relationship between food service quality and guest satisfaction to determine the DINESERV tools of food service quality that contribute to guest satisfaction in the hotel industry. This research applies qualitative methods and comprises a focus group of eight people and in-depth interviews of 32 restaurant guests from 11 hotels in Bangladesh. This study aims to shed light on DINESERV tools in the hotel industry and contribute to future research initiatives while examining the relationship between food service quality and guest satisfaction. This paper provides the best practices for improving food service quality for hotel food service outlets for guest satisfaction. Assurance, empathy, and tangibles are the three factors that guests consider most significant when evaluating the quality of the food service; as a result, these factors may benefit guest satisfaction. Besides, reliability and responsiveness were less influential factors in guest satisfaction. Again, overall satisfaction has a more significant impact on the food service quality of five-star hotels. These practical and theoretical implications contribute to the knowledge of food and beverage managers on how to improve food service quality and enhance guest satisfaction while advancing the theoretical understanding of the DINESERV tools influencing guest satisfaction in the five-star hotel context.

Keywords: hotel industry, food service quality, guest satisfaction, DINESERV.

Introduction

A five-star or luxury hotel is a substantial structure with many amenities, including enormous restaurant spaces, banquet halls, coffee shops, bars, pastry shops, room services, water parks, clubs, staff cafés, bunkers, closets, numerous shops, administrative offices, food production facilities, and more (De-Franco et al., 2022; Sundram et al., 2022). All these hotel outlets significantly contribute to generating revenue for the hotel. However, hotel food service outlets contribute substantial income to the hotel revenue. The food services department serves all meals and refreshments to guests at the hotel. The food service department must comprehend the factors affecting the quality of food because quality affects hospitality guests' satisfaction (Arici et al., 2022). To manage the food service operations of hotels and earn revenue, the hotel authority should prioritize food service quality in the competitive hotel industry (Talukder et al., 2024).

On the other hand, through guest satisfaction, revisiting the intention in the hotel's food service outlets generates more revenue for the hotel. According to Cai et al. (2021) and Pan & Ha (2021), prospective restaurant customers are frequently encouraged to visit hotel restaurants for food service quality, which de-

termines that increasing restaurant sales lead to generating more revenue. Therefore, this study will benefit those employed in the hotel, primary or secondary catering industry. We have worked with 11 five-star hotels, eight from Dhaka and three from Cox's Bazar. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MOCAT) has determined that providing excellent food service to hotels encourages domestic and foreign visitor expenditure.

We have chosen the topic of greater output in revenue generation for restaurant guests' highest satisfaction level with the hotel. The food service quality of the hotel is now a vital issue in the hospitality industry as most luxury hotels operate their food service outlets with their standard operation service procedure. However, the hotel's guests choose the best restaurants and a secure and relaxed dining environment (Bisui et al., 2022). So, the ultimate objective of the food service outlet is to satisfy guests by providing value-based food service quality (Wong et al., 2020). In the end, people who stay in five-star hotels think and expect that the restaurants will serve them food that is above and beyond what they would typically expect.

According to Uslu (2020), DINESERV tools (reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness) are perfect for measuring food service quality that affects guest satisfaction. This study will consider the DINESERV parameter for an effective relationship between food service quality and guest satisfaction. Hotel operators can use the results of this study to enhance their offerings and increase guest satisfaction.

This exploratory study looks at the effect of food service quality on guest satisfaction in several Bangladeshi five-star hotels. The findings will give hotel key managers helpful information that they can use to enhance their food service offerings and promote overall restaurant business success. So, this study aims to provide practical guidance and insights about food service quality and guest satisfaction that will help them raise the standard of the food service quality they offer and increase guest satisfaction in five-star hotels and food service outlets in Bangladesh.

This study uses qualitative methodology based on a focus group of eight participants and in-depth interviews with 32 diners from 11 hotels in Bangladesh that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MOCAT) designated as five-star hotels on its website.

The findings of this study will advance the understanding of guest satisfaction with food service quality with the DINESERV tools. The results will provide hotel management and other stakeholders with practical insights that can be applied to improve the standard of food service quality, enhance guests' satisfaction with overall experiences, and ultimately increase hotel revenue. Figure 1 illustrates the linkage between food service quality and guest satisfaction.

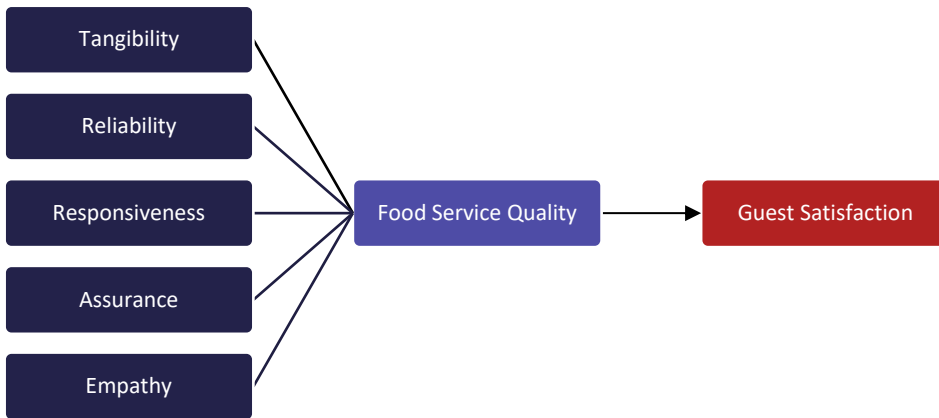


Figure 1

Linkage between dimensions of food service quality and guest satisfaction (Uslu, 2020).

Literature review

Food service quality

Food service quality refers to the overall standard and excellence of the food and beverage offerings, as well as the level of service provided by a restaurant, café, bar, banquet, and room service of the hotel that serves food and beverage (Vuksanović & Bajrami, 2020). It encompasses various factors that contribute to the overall food service experience, including the taste, presentation, freshness, variety, and nutritional value of the food, as well as the attentiveness, professionalism, and friendliness of the staff (Skrynnyk & Kuzmin, 2022). Ultimately, food service quality combines these factors and can vary depending on the type of establishment, its target audience, and the overall concept (Slack et al., 2020; Wright, 2021). Providing food service quality aims to create a positive dining experience that exceeds guests' expectations and encourages repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Deale & Lee, 2021). It is important to note that the specific offerings and level of food service quality may vary among different five-star hotels (Nair, 2019). According to Kim & Bachman (2019) and Suhartanto et al. (2019), the hotel's food service quality must include the ability of the restaurants to provide local and multi-cuisine food, to offer standard quality of restaurant equipment, restaurant physical environment quality, proper dining manners and etiquette, competitive food pricing, faultless restaurant service, restaurant image, restaurant cleanliness & hygiene, restaurant e-service quality. However, the overall objective of the food service quality is to create a memorable and exceptional dining experience that aligns with the luxury and sophistication associated with five star hotel restaurants (Kim et al., 2020).

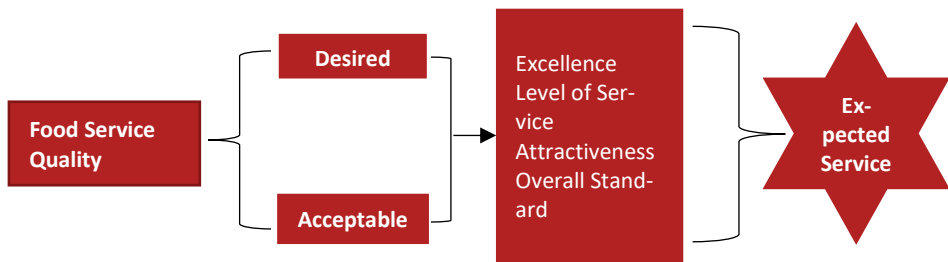


Figure 2

Food service quality and expected food service (Skrynnyk & Kuzmin, 2022)

Guest satisfaction

Satisfaction generally refers to offering goods and services that give customers a perceived value to remain pleased with the service (Özkan et al., 2019). We found that satisfaction in the hotel's food service department is justified through qualitative research. Guest satisfaction and performance expectancy in the food service department are influenced by the food service quality of the hotel's restaurant (Mohanty, 2019; Xu, 2021). Several conceptual and empirical studies examine guest satisfaction in primary and secondary catering industries. The expectation-disconfirmation model was used to justify guest satisfaction in restaurants, measuring service quality to determine guests' expectations about a product before eating food from the hotel's food service outlets (Shen et al., 2018). So, in the context of the food service outlet, guest satisfaction is defined as „a feature of an initial standard and some perceptions that differ from the initial basis for comparison of food consumption” (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Guests will evaluate their satisfaction based on the performance of the food service quality versus their expectations after eating the food and getting the benefit from the restaurant (Wooten et al., 2018). Generally, the food service quality performance measures satisfaction, and satisfied guests are more likely to frequent the hotel's food service outlets. On the other hand, if the guest is dissatisfied, it reduces repeat purchases of food services from the hotels (Sangpikul, 2022). Moreover, a satisfied guest is always a good indicator of increasing revenue because comfortable guests bring new guests with positive remarks for restaurant branding.

Relation between food service quality and guest satisfaction

Most guests expect luxury hotels to offer excellent food service quality to satisfy their guests. As a result, restaurant guests expect better food service qualities and facilities from higher-rated hotels, resulting in higher satisfaction levels. Excellent food service quality, a pleasant setting, and an enjoyable experience enhance guest satisfaction (Bungatang & Reynel, 2021). According to

Roberts et al. (2022), the mood of hotel food service outlets like coffee shops and specialty restaurants and the variety of the cuisine are vital determinants of guest satisfaction because people from every part of the world enjoy their food at the restaurant. In addition, the guest pays attention to the restaurant's cleanliness, service quality, and the expertise of service personnel, which are all essential elements in determining guest satisfaction (Tuncer et al., 2021). After all, it may be said that guests who are highly satisfied with the courtesy of hotel food service personnel are more likely to revisit food service outlets on their next visit or recommend that their peers visit the outlet to enjoy quality food service. What is more, some researchers such as Zhong & Moon (2020), Ali et al. (2021), and Kim & Kim (2022) think that the quality of the food service is a prerequisite for guest satisfaction, which may impact overall hotel service quality. According to empirical research by Majid et al. (2018), guest satisfaction is substantially affected by food service quality.

In a related development, recent research employing recursive structural models by Rajput & Gahfoor (2020) and Polas et al. (2022) provides empirical evidence that food service quality influences guest satisfaction. Guest satisfaction encompasses a broader concept than food service quality, which "focuses exclusively on qualities of service," empirically, it may be said that the quality of food service influences guest satisfaction (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Additionally, it is impacted by how a guest perceives the value and quality of the product, as well as by subjective elements like emotional state, attitudes, roles, beliefs, and values (Wong & Ho, 2019) and uncontrollable environmental factors like weather conditions, the economy, politics, and competitors.

Measurement of food service quality and guest satisfaction

Measuring guest satisfaction is not a precise science because it is a broad and multidimensional concept, and the study in this field seems more experimental (Alexander et al., 2021). There is no conventional way to measure the concept, though researchers have proposed several theories. The confirmation-disconfirmation technique, performance-only approach, and overall satisfaction approach are the most well-known (Wong & Ho, 2019).

The guest satisfaction survey is a technique extensively discussed in research on the performance-only strategy. To determine satisfaction throughout a service experience in food service, this instrument uses measurements of the quality of food service and guest satisfaction. The study scientifically gauges guest satisfaction with personal and hotel restaurant service settings. Each of these guest satisfaction metrics has been examined across a wide range of international businesses and shown to be serviceable. The measuring service quality paradigm (DINESERV), created by (Knutson et al., 1996), is a tool for assessing

service quality in the hotel sector (Uslu & Eren, 2020). It was inspired by research revealing numerous aspects contributing to a guest's satisfaction. Reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness are the five criteria for determining service quality developed by (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The DINESERV examines the discrepancies using a five-dimensional scale of 29 service attributes to compare customer perceptions and expectations. To assess the level of service, Stevens et al. (1995) developed DINESERV. However, the DINESERV assessment is utilized globally in numerous cultures and businesses to measure food service quality. So, it is well-known as a reliable way to gauge the calibre of the food service quality, yielding a measure of guest satisfaction.

Dimensions of food service quality

DINESERV is a widely used food service quality evaluation paradigm (Stevens et al., 1995) created to solve the discrepancy between guest satisfaction and perceptions. DINESERV, which is extensively utilized, has several flaws, including the fact that measuring guest satisfaction with hotel food service quality is redundant (Wu & Mohi, 2015). In addition, methods like DINESERV are used to assess guest satisfaction (Knutson et al., 1996). This model has been improved to estimate the actual outcome of guest satisfaction more accurately (Chun & Nyam-Ochir, 2020). The following dimensions of DINESERV can be defined:

- Reliability: delivering the promised service on time and correctly to the guest.
- Responsiveness: the capacity to respond to guest concerns and address them.
- Assurance: the capacity to instill confidence and trust in guests.
- Empathy: the capacity to understand and sympathize with guests.
- Tangibles: personnel, equipment, and the look of the physical facilities.

Overall satisfaction

Other scholars, Eklof et al. (2020), Goić et al. (2021), and Aakash & Gupta Aggarwal (2022), mentioned that overall guest satisfaction is a more accurate indicator because it is cumulative over time. Additionally, it is less susceptible to guest reactions to particular transactions or questions regarding order implications (Lee, 2018). So overall satisfaction comes from every service interaction, from greetings to food bill payments at the restaurant. Overall satisfaction almost reflects how a guest feels about the good or service (Ali et al., 2021). Furthermore, no study has been conducted to determine whether a guest's intentions to make another purchase is influenced by transaction-specific or general satisfaction. However, research done by Xu (2022) raises the possibility that transaction-specific fulfillment significantly affects overall satisfaction.

Summary of literature review

We found broad ideas about food service quality and guest satisfaction closely related. Recent academic research by Dam & Dam (2021) provides empirical evidence for the argument that high guest satisfaction typically results from high service quality. Guest satisfaction is affected by numerous variables, including individual, environmental, and product-related ones (Ratnasari et al., 2020). Additionally, it was determined that the DINESERV model is a popular and accurate way to gauge the quality of the food service in a restaurant. The service aspect of a food service operation is mainly intangible. Food service quality cannot be seen, listened to, or touched. It is, therefore, difficult to quantify, measure, and evaluate service. An operator can measure the speed at which food is delivered to the table, listen and evaluate the effectiveness of a customer service script, or set out service actions and delivery procedures and see and assess how closely they are followed. Figure 3 shows the product/service matrix as a dining experience characterized by a customer’s encounter with the restaurant’s products and service, comprising tangible and intangible factors.

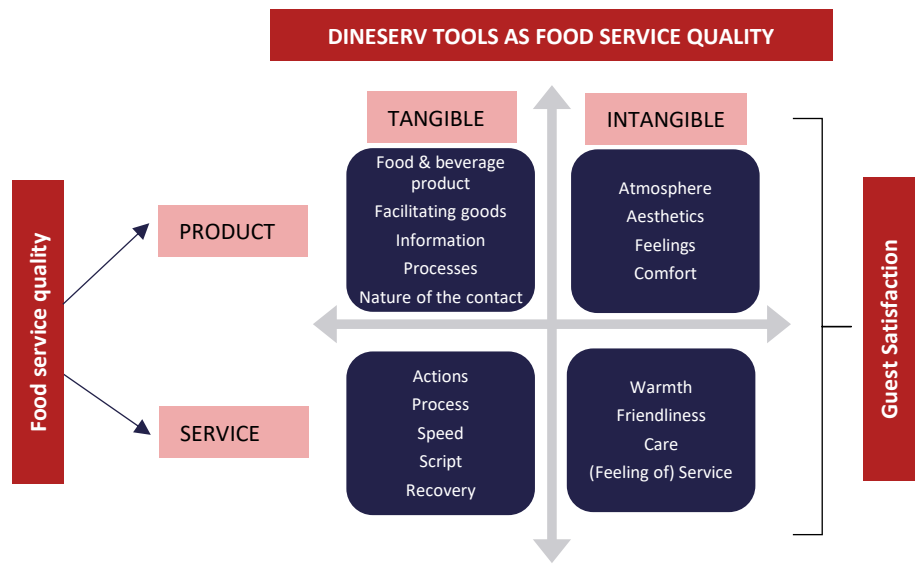


Figure 3
The product/service matrix. Source: Adapted from Davis, B., Lockwood, A., Alcott, P., Pantelidis, I., Food and Beverage Management, fifth Edition, p. 334.

Objectives of the study

We determined the following objectives:

- To assess the level of food service quality in five-star hotels in Bangladesh.
- To examine the factors of DINESERV concerning food service quality and guest satisfaction in five-star hotels in Bangladesh.
- To measure overall guest satisfaction in five-star hotels in Bangladesh.

Methodology

Research Design

Since the study is qualitative, estimating guest satisfaction with food service quality for qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology (Gopi & Samat, 2020). The paper investigates the factors influencing guest satisfaction with food service quality in five-star hotels in Bangladesh. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the research problem and helps triangulate the findings.

Sampling and sample size

A strategy known as purposive sampling was utilized to choose the five-star hotels included in the research. The sample size is adequate to guarantee that the results are relevant and appropriate. The selection of participants based on their possession of DINESERV features and dining experiences from five-star hotels in Bangladesh is essential to the research goals. Focus groups of eight people and 32 restaurant guests were used to gather the data. They helped determine guests' perceptions, experiences, preferences, and behavior, which directs this study on guest satisfaction to consider and interpret guests' experiences of food service quality (Slack et al., 2020).

Many scholars, Hodgkinson et al. (2020), El-Manstrly et al. (2021), and Khan et al. (2022) recommended their study about focus groups that were used as a forum for people to express their genuine emotions and grievances while receiving food service from a hotel food service outlet. According to the research by Sallis et al. (2021), the focus group method is dependable and valid since respondents consistently recognized categories and contents as crucial to whether a food service experience is enjoyable or unpleasant. According to research by Baillie (2019), a focus group should have six to ten participants. To avoid complex and subjective factors such as guest satisfaction, we have selected a focus group of eight people, and we surveyed 32 restaurant guests who had eaten at a five-star hotel between September and October 2022. A moderator conducted

an unstructured, free-flowing interview with the participants after selecting them randomly from databases of 11 restaurants and hotels in Bangladesh. The participants were invited to talk about their recent experiences at the restaurants and to remark on any parts of the food service quality and the environment they found pleasing or unsatisfactory. We saw from the previous study conducted by Domanski (2020) that an in-depth interview is one of the instruments in qualitative methods for justifying guest satisfaction with food service quality in the hotel industry. The benefit of in-depth interviews is that issues can be explored in greater detail than in a particular study group (Rutakumwa et al., 2020; Deterding & Waters, 2021). They also shed more light on delicate subjects or peculiar happenings. From eleven restaurants or hotels in Bangladesh, 32 respondents were randomly chosen and asked about their most recent dining experience regarding food service quality. These individuals attend restaurants frequently, once or twice monthly.

Data Collection

In-depth interviews were held with hotel restaurant guests to collect qualitative data. These interviews delved into the guests' opinions, preferences, and ideas regarding the quality of food service and satisfaction. The qualitative information offered deep insights into the variables affecting guest satisfaction. In the hotel sector, the DINESERV instrument is frequently used to rate the excellence of the food service quality. We have modified the DINESERV tool's dimensions and items to create open-ended questions that let restaurant guests submit in-depth replies for the study. Most focus group persons were experienced as food and beverage managers, and they suggested the data collection process. Accordingly, we asked permission from food service managers to collect data, and they asked the guests about the purpose of data collection. Some guests kindly mentioned the urgency during data collection. Few respondents have given time to answer and share their views about the meaning of the research.

Data Analysis

One might take a few approaches to analysis with qualitative data. The qualitative data we acquired through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were subjected to a thematic analysis by the researchers. Before collecting data, we first held conversations with the focus group. The focus group suggested gathering data from diners hosted at five-star hotels in Bangladesh, and they recommended doing so. We organized all the answers serial-wise, interpreted the data from the participants, and discussed the results with the study's focus group. We tried to see the issue of bias as the researcher intends to get pure development and strengthen the study. Following the completion of the

interview of the 32 patrons regarding the dining experience in terms of the quality of the food service, we solicited suggestions and recommendations from five hotel industry professionals.

Results & discussion

Service dimensions

Reliability

We asked the restaurant guests if they had encountered any instances where the selected five-star hotels had failed to deliver their promised food service. Most of the time, the food service staff could not make their guests satisfied in this regard. Being on time, accurate, consistent, and quickly responding to guest requests are all important to providing the promised food service (Ahuja & Alavi, 2022). Some guests were satisfied with how quickly they got their food but not with how consistent it was. When people go to a restaurant, they are more likely to return if the staff is honest about what is on the menu, what is in it, and how it is made. Research by Gabrow (2021) shows that guests are satisfied and more likely to trust the quality of the food service when they get their orders quickly and on time. Customers expect their orders to be handled correctly and without problems. We found that customers are likelier to give a good rating if the employees always meet their expectations by providing them with precisely what they order. If the service quality is steady, guests will trust and respect it more. Most guests will be satisfied with a hotel if the service, cleanliness, and quality of the amenities always meet or exceed their expectations. Customers like getting quick and thorough answers to their questions and concerns about food service quality. The results show that customers think the staff is trustworthy when they respond quickly to their needs, questions, and problems. The “Reliability” part of DINESERV does not meet the guests’ expectations.

Responsiveness

We asked the guests about the satisfaction rating of the staff’s promptness and efficiency in addressing requests or concerns during the dining experience in these hotels. Most of the guests expressed their dissatisfaction with responsiveness factors. Promptness in service, attentiveness to guest needs, anticipating guest needs, problem resolution, friendly and polite service, and communication and feedback are essential for responsiveness of food service quality to guest satisfaction (Ratnasari et al., 2020). Guests appreciate the staff members who are attentive and responsive to their needs. When food service staff actively listen to guest inquiries, provide helpful recommendations, and address

special requests promptly and accurately, it enhances guests' perception of responsiveness. Guests appreciate friendly and polite service interactions during their food service. Studies by Dam & Dam (2021) have shown that when staff members display positive and welcoming attitudes, exhibit genuine friendliness, and use polite language, it positively influences guests' perception of responsiveness. In that case, the guest suggested that the staff prioritize the responsiveness factor of DINESERV tools.

Assurance

We asked the guests about the competence and knowledge of the staff regarding the menu items, ingredients, and allergen information of the hotel's food service quality. We found that guests of the food service outlets are satisfied with the assurance factors like menu knowledge, staff competence, trust in food quality and safety, clear communication, professional appearance and conduct, and handling of guest inquiries and complaints. The results related to the "Assurance" dimension of DINESERV are influenced by sample characteristics and the quality of the hotels' food service. Guests appreciate staff members who understand the menu well, including information about ingredients, preparation methods, and potential allergens. Studies have shown that when staff can provide accurate and detailed menu knowledge, it positively influences guests' perception of assurance (Mendocilla et al., 2021). Guests value competent and knowledgeable staff members. Findings indicate that when staff show expertise, professionalism, and confidence in delivering the dining experience, it enhances guests' perception of assurance. Guests expect assurance regarding the quality and safety of the food being served. According to Assaker (2020), when hotels prioritize food safety practices, maintain high hygiene standards, and use quality ingredients, food service quality positively impacts guests' perception of assurance. Guests appreciate staff members who present themselves professionally through appearance, grooming, and behavior. Studies by Schwark et al. (2020) have shown that staff exhibiting professionalism, maintaining proper hygiene, and adhering to dress codes impact food service quality and guest satisfaction. Findings indicate that staff members actively listen to guests' concerns, promptly address inquiries, and resolve complaints satisfactorily, enhancing guests' perception of assurance.

Tangibles

We asked the guests about the physical appearance and cleanliness of the dining area in the selected five-star hotels. In the views of expert opinion from group discussions, tangibles were critical in choosing a hotel restaurant. Although some respondents stated that the atmosphere and decor primarily motivated visiting an excellent restaurant, they were satisfied with the physical com-

fort, visual appeal, quality of furnishings and equipment, atmosphere and ambience, adequate space, and layout. Guests appreciate comfortable and well-maintained dining settings. The dining area's visual appeal and food presentation also impact guests' perception of tangibles. The research done by Talukder et al. (2023) has shown that when the dining area is aesthetically pleasing, with attractive decor, appealing table settings, and visually appealing food presentation, it enhances guest satisfaction and perception of tangibles. Guests notice and value the quality of furnishings and equipment in the dining area. When hotels invest in high-quality furniture, fixtures, and equipment, it positively influences guests' perception of tangibles. The overall atmosphere and ambience of the dining area play a significant role in guests' perception of tangibles.

The study by Mendocilla et al. (2021) has shown that factors such as music, lighting, background noise, and overall ambience contribute to the guests' dining experience and their perception of tangibles. Sufficient space and a well-planned layout contribute to guests' perception of tangibles. Findings indicate that when the dining area provides adequate space for guests to move comfortably, facilitates easy navigation, and allows for privacy, it positively impacts guest satisfaction. The results and findings related to the "Tangibles" dimension of DINESERV are influenced by the abovementioned factors. When these characteristics of service, which fall under the category of tangibles, are offered, the respondents gave their feedback about the quality of food service at the restaurant a high rating.

Empathy

According to the focus group recommendations, we asked the respondents about the staff's ability to understand and accommodate special requests or dietary restrictions of food service quality and guest satisfaction. The people who answered were happy with the empathy dimension. However, they suggest emphasizing personalized attention, understanding guest preferences, being responsive to special requests, anticipating guest needs, and dealing with guest feedback. The guests like how the staff treats them as individuals (Yu, 2020). Findings show that guests feel the team cares about them when they greet guests warmly, talk to them in a friendly way, and show genuine interest in their needs and preferences. According to Sun et al. (2021), when staff members actively listen to what guests want, make personalized recommendations, and customize the dining experience to each person's preferences, it makes guests feel the staff has more empathy. When guests have special requests or dietary restrictions, they like it when the team is willing to accommodate them. Findings suggest that guests feel hotels care more about them when they respond quickly and correctly to special requests, such as vegetarian or gluten-free options. It is essential to anticipate and meet guests' needs before they even say so. Studies

have shown that guests feel the staff cares about them more when they offer refills or suggest other menu items before they are asked. Empathy means actively listening to and responding to both positive and negative feedback from guests. Findings show that when staff members listen to and respond to guest feedback, take their concerns seriously, and try to solve any problems or complaints, guests feel the staff cares more about them.

Overall Satisfaction

According to the focus group recommendations, we asked the respondents about the staff's ability to understand and their opinion on what factors contribute to overall satisfaction with the food service in these five-star hotels. We request that they put suggestions or recommendations for improving the food service quality in these hotels, based on overall satisfaction. A guest says, "The overall satisfaction of the hotel restaurant: it offers a diverse menu with options for vegetarians, vegans, and those with dietary restrictions. It includes creative dishes that showcase the innovative side of the hotel's chef." The hotel's specialty seafood restaurant emphasizes the day's fresh catch, and the chef personally selects high-quality ingredients from local markets. A hotel restaurant ensures that orders are prepared and delivered within a specified time frame, meeting the expectations of customers looking for a quick meal that satisfies the guests. A hotel coffee shop consistently gets orders right, whether it is a complex customized coffee or a specific request for a sandwich with no onions or gluten-free bread, which satisfies the guests immensely. A guest said that a fine dining restaurant focuses on the taste of the dishes and the artistic presentation of each plate, enhancing the overall dining experience. Typically, five-star hotels provide quality food service as they maintain standard operating procedures (Mitrović, 2021). Most five-star hotels in Bangladesh hire qualified and skilled employees for their food service outlets. However, respondents expressed the opinion that food service quality differs from one staff group to another. Our studies have consistently shown a positive correlation between the different dimensions of DINESERV and overall satisfaction. According to Park et al. (2021), higher ratings in tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy tend to lead to higher overall satisfaction. However, reliability and responsiveness factors could not satisfy the guests when it came to food service quality. While all dimensions of food service quality contribute to overall satisfaction, their relative importance may vary from one dimension to another (Ferdous & Mim, 2021). For instance, the summer field at the Hotel Sarina and the café Bazar in Sonargaon are two of Bangladesh's most significant delicate dining establishments. They are one of the highest-quality food pricing restaurants among eleven hotels. The excessive prices range from Tk 750 to Tk 8000 per head, depending on the individual restaurant among all hotels. Some respondents ex-

pressed satisfaction with the availability of extra payment options for food through e-payment facilities. For several respondents, choosing a restaurant was about impressing a spouse, kids, or any unique person, celebrating a special occasion, or doing business. For some respondents, the cuisine was still the primary, crucial factor in choosing a restaurant. They found that the remaining factors leading to satisfaction with the hotel food service outlets are merely ancillary to eating at a restaurant. Hotel Sonargaon introduces specialty restaurants, especially highlighting Italian cuisine for this. Finally, guests were satisfied with the food service quality of the five-star hotels in Bangladesh.

Findings suggest that tangibles, reliability, and responsiveness significantly impact overall satisfaction, as they represent the tangible aspects of the dining experience and the efficiency of service delivery. According to Geczy & Karminas (2022), a minimum service quality threshold must often be met to achieve high overall satisfaction. Findings suggest that any dimension falling below the acceptable threshold can significantly impact overall satisfaction, even if other dimensions perform well. Results may also reveal variations in the importance of measurements and overall satisfaction across different segments of guests. For example, the overall service quality of the hotels may prioritize different dimensions, leading to variations in their overall satisfaction ratings.

Recommendations & managerial implications

The respondents gave their opinions about the hotels' food service quality. They gave their ideas about food service quality and guest satisfaction. The respondents were very satisfied with offering Gueridon service, which creates extraordinary value for the guests. They want to feel that a five-star hotel's food service department should always provide tremendous benefits for unique feelings. The authorities of the food service outlet can implement new services like a special occasion menu, multi-cuisine food from different parts of the world, a virtual food ordering system, etc. Also, most guests tend towards informal attire, such as wearing a cap and casual dress code, which lowers the satisfaction of a pleasant food service experience. The staff's etiquette and manners are not always respected in restaurants either. Hotels must follow the dress code more strictly to improve the restaurant's level of service, which will boost guest satisfaction. The study contends that tangibles, assurance, and empathy are crucial aspects of hotel restaurants' service quality and may help increase guest satisfaction. The authorities also need to implement training and motivate their service staff, giving them more priority in restaurants, so that they can focus on finding ways to make the dining experience memorable for their guests (Rachão et al., 2020; Talukder et al., 2024). According to our study, most hotel chains are

renowned for their service dimensions and have higher guest satisfaction scores than local properties. The research results should help the hotel authorities develop and enthusiastically adopt these findings in their food service outlets to enhance the quality dimensions.

Hotel owners should prioritize educating their workers about food and beverages to improve the quality of their food service. Hoteliers should remember that interior design is an essential element of the specialized restaurant experience, and it is one of the factors distinguishing a good quality family restaurant from a fine dining one. The Garden Kitchens of Intercontinental have extraordinary design, and the respondent recommended the place as one of the best interior restaurants in Dhaka. That dynamism in design is preferred for other restaurants, so the guests feel a sense of anticipation when they visit the restaurant throughout the year. Hoteliers might also redesign their restaurants regularly to keep guests interested according to their needs and demands.

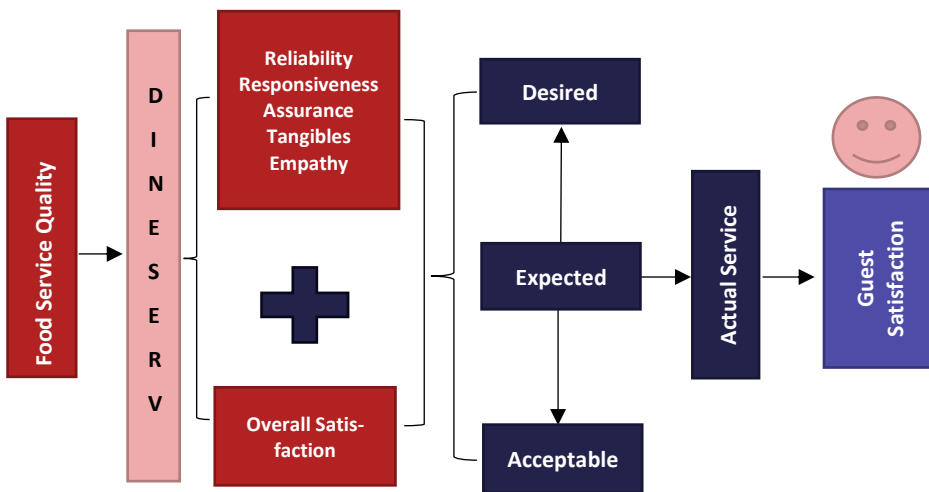


Figure 4

Conceptual model of food service quality and guest satisfaction (self-developed)

The study validates the model's applicability and relevance in Bangladesh's five-star hotels by using the DINESERV tool. It validates the model's ability to assess food service quality and guest satisfaction. The hotel manager should implement staff training recommended by the focus group and respondents. Reliability and responsiveness factors, which can enhance guest satisfaction, should be improved. According to the study conducted by Pramezwary et al. (2021), variety, flavor, and presentation affect guest satisfaction. These findings can help hotel management improve their menus to offer a variety of high-quality food service to their guests' satisfaction. The studies by Gong et al. (2020) and

Kandampully & Solnet (2019) show that staff behavior and attitude influence guest experiences. Hotel managers may encourage staff friendliness, attentiveness, and empathy with guests. The study by Montargot et al. (2022) emphasizes clean and attractive dining areas. Hotel managers may create a welcoming atmosphere by prioritizing cleanliness, aesthetics, and ambiance. Comment cards, online reviews, and guest satisfaction surveys can help hotels improve their overall quality. Five-star hotels in Bangladesh can benefit from regularly assessing and taking guest feedback to increase satisfaction levels and to improve food service quality.

Conclusion, limitations, & future research

The DINESERV tool study has provided valuable insights into food service quality and guest satisfaction. By analyzing the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, the study aimed to understand the factors contributing to a positive dining experience in five-star hotels in Bangladesh. The findings of the study revealed actual results in each dimension. Regarding tangibles, the cleanliness and hygiene of the dining area, visual appeal, and the quality of furnishings and equipment were found to impact guest satisfaction significantly. In the reliability dimension, promptness of service, the accuracy of order fulfillment, and consistency in service standards emerged as crucial factors for guest satisfaction. The responsiveness dimension highlighted the importance of staff attentiveness, problem resolution, and effective communication in enhancing guest satisfaction. The assurance dimension emphasized the significance of menu knowledge, staff competence, and building trust in food quality and safety for guest satisfaction. Lastly, the empathy dimension emphasized the importance of personalized attention, understanding guest preferences, and proactive handling of guest needs in creating a positive dining experience. These findings have practical implications for five-star hotels in Bangladesh, suggesting that attention should be given to maintaining cleanliness, training staff to deliver prompt and accurate service, providing personalized attention, and ensuring staff competence to enhance guest satisfaction. Theoretical implications of the study include contributing to the body of knowledge on food service quality and guest satisfaction in the context of five-star hotels in Bangladesh. The findings align with existing literature on service quality and further support the importance of various dimensions in influencing guest satisfaction.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the study's limitations, such as a small sample size or the focus on selective five-star hotels, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could have a wider scope by including a larger sample size, considering different types of hotels, and exploring

other factors that influence guest satisfaction. DINESERV tools may have limitations when scaling up to meet the needs of larger hotel chains. DINESERV might fail to capture specific nuances of guest satisfaction in case of challenges when trying to integrate with existing point-of-sale (POS) systems, customer relationship management (CRM) software, or other essential restaurant management tools. Tools that allow customization to fit diverse hotels' specific needs and branding are more likely to be well-received.

This exploratory study on the impact of food service quality on guest satisfaction in selective five-star hotels in Bangladesh using the DINESERV tool provides valuable insights for hotel management, practitioners, and researchers, highlighting the dimensions contributing to a positive dining experience and suggesting avenues for improvement to enhance guest satisfaction.

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

This study was conducted in accordance with the world medical association declaration of Helsinki. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Daffodil Institute of IT, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The participants of the study are hereby providing consent to participate in this study.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mohammad Badruddoza Talukder: Conceptualization; Methodology; Software; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Writing – Review & Editing; Visualization; Supervision; Project administration; Funding acquisition.

Dil Afrin Swarna: Conceptualization; Methodology; Software; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Writing – Review & Editing; Visualization; Supervision; Project administration; Funding acquisition.

Sanjeev Kumar: Conceptualization; Methodology; Software; Validation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Resources; Data Curation; Writing – Original Draft; Writing – Review & Editing; Visualization; Supervision; Project administration; Funding acquisition.

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