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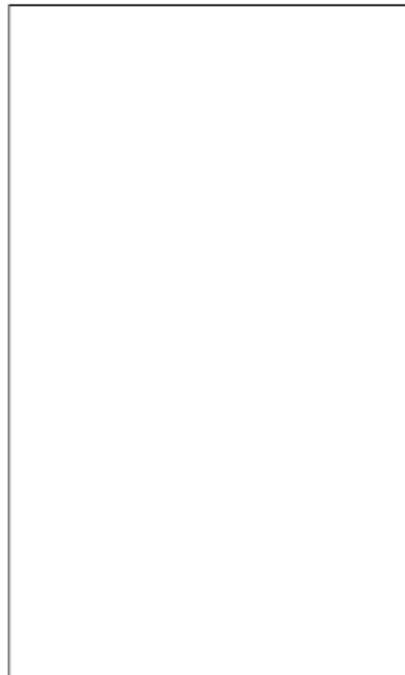
SERVICE QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN THE FAST-FOOD RESTAURANT USING A MODIFIED DINESERV MODEL

Dusica Saneva[544]
Sonja Chortoseva[545]

Abstract: Many researchers make efforts to evaluate the services quality in the hospitality industry by using SERVQUAL scale, in its original form or modified. The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate services quality in fast-food restaurants, on the basis of the modified DINESERV scale. The main objective is to evaluate the level of expectation and the level of perception of consumers as regards the quality of the service in fast-food restaurants. The questionnaire is comprised of 32 assertions and 32 questions, formulated and established on the basis of SERVQUAL and modified DINESERV model, as most frequently cited and used models of service quality questionnaires in literature. The questionnaire was carried out in five fast-food restaurants, which resulted in obtaining 248 usable questionnaires that were then analysed. All 32 attributes were with negative gap value, which shows that the level of expectation is higher than the level of consumers' perception as regards the services quality and this point out the low level of the services quality in fast-food restaurants. This study is of primary importance since the level of services quality will be established through identifying the strong and weak sides of the services quality in fast-food restaurants.

Key words: *service quality, SERVQUAL, DINESERV, hospitality industry, fast-food*

1. INTRODUCTION

Service quality is one of the key factors to consumers' satisfaction especially in hospitality industry such as fast-food restaurants, because it is essential to make an effort to measure the service and to improve their quality [1]. The measurement of service quality must be done very often and in time, in order to have an exact service quality level at the fast-food restaurants in order to increase consumers' satisfaction and to keep their attendance [2]. The most popular method for measuring service quality is the SERVQUAL model [3], [4]. The results from the SERVQUAL instrument show that this method can provide useful information to assess the expectations and perception of consumers in order to see the gaps in the dimensions of individual service quality [5]. This model is applied in various service activities, including: the hospitality industry, hotels [6], [7]; classical restaurants [8], [9]; fast-food restaurants [10], [11]. The modified version of the SERQUAL model is proved to be a suitable model for getting reliable data of service quality [12].

Due to restaurants specifications and characteristics, in the assessment of service quality literature it has been applied SERVQUAL questionnaire called DINESERV [13]. The DINESERV model was created to assess consumers' perception of restaurant service quality [14] and is proposed as reliable and relatively simple tool to determine the level of restaurant service quality [15]. Most researchers agree that service quality can be measured by comparing

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[544] Faculty of Tourism and business logistics, University „Goce Delcev", str.„Krste Misirkov"10-A, 2000 Stip, R. Macedonia
[545] Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University „Ss. Cyril and Methodius", str.„Ruger Boskovic" 16, 1000 Skopje, R. Macedonia

of consumers expectations with their perception for service performances [16], [17]. There are many factors that can affect the assessment of consumers regarding the service quality at fast-food restaurants. According to the most researches the main components of the overall service quality at fast-food restaurants are food quality, physical surroundings and employees [18], [19]. Fast-food restaurants that provide a high quality service have competitive advantage compared to other restaurants.

In the Republic of Macedonia, there are over 250 fast-food restaurants that have been registered and it is of great importance to know how to monitor measure and improve consumers' satisfaction with quality services. Because of everyday use of service, which is offered by these restaurants, by the younger population but also by the more mature

Dusica Saneva
Dusica graduated in 2006 on Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, Macedonia. She continued her studies on the same faculty and in 2012 she got her master's degree. In the same year she became PhD candidate on Quality Management on the same faculty. She started working in 2008 in the Faculty of Tourism and Business Logistics, University "Goce Delchev", Shtip, Macedonia, and in 2011 she became an assistant. Dusica is an author and co-author on many scientific papers and an active participant on several national and international projects from the area of tourism and hospitality.

population there is bigger justification to improve the existing service quality. The research regarding the level of service quality in the fast-food restaurants in Republic of Macedonia is not so frequent, so the aim of this research to contribute to fixing and improving service quality in the hospitality industry. In order to understand all characteristics of the service quality in the restaurants it is necessary to develop an appropriate measurement model [20]. In this paper is applied additional and modified version of DINESERV questionnaire.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this paper will be analyzed the consumer's satisfaction and their perception regarding the quality of service at fast-food restaurants via questioners and based on the analyses of the data received, the current state of quality of services will be determined and guidelines for their improvement will be referred. The research methodology was in five steps through:
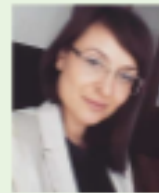
1. Planning of the measurement with a choice of a fast-food restaurants, in terms of influential factors (consumers structure and location);
2. Designing questionnaires and defining the sample;
3. Research by conducting the survey and measuring the satisfaction and perception;
4. Analysis of the data received, and
5. Conclusion.

The research was conducted in private fast-food restaurants with the total of 248 consumers, which number, according to the indicators of monitoring, can be taken as a sufficient sample. The fast-food restaurants are chosen on the bases of: location-central city area, number of employees and available space for consumers. The research was conducted in five fast-food restaurants in several different cities in Macedonia.

The questionnaire that was applied in this study consists of three parts (appendix 1). First part consists of consumer's data: age, education, and previous visits to the fast-food restaurant. The second part researches the expectations of the consumers, and third part examines the

perceptions of consumers based on 32 attributes. Consumers' expectations and perceptions are measured on five point Likert's scale, grading as: "Strongly agree=1" to "Strongly disagree=5". The research was conducted based on modified SERVQUAL and modified DINESERV model, in which is added another dimension to the quality of service – food quality with a total of 32 attributes divided into 6 dimensions of quality of service. 270 questioners were distributed and 248 were filled in.
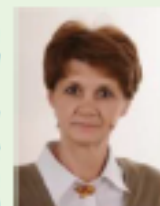
3. RESEARCH RESULTS
3.1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of 248 consumers in the fast-food restaurants. Most are aged between 21-30 years, representing 39% of the total

Sonja Chortoseva
Sonja graduated in 1977 on Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, Macedonia. She got her master's degree in 1989 and her PhD in 2000 from the same faculty. In 1979 she started working in the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, Macedonia, and currently has a position of a full-time professor. Sonja is an author and co-author on many scientific papers in the area of Total Quality Management (TQM), statistical methods etc. Furthermore, she participates in several conferences, workshops, training programs, seminars and research projects.

number of the surveyed consumers, and 24% are consumers under 20 years of age. The lowest percentage is consumers over 61 years of age or only 3% of the total number of consumers. The highest number of the consumers is with high school education 48% and with high education are 24%. According to this data the most common are the consumers from high school and students from the universities as well as consumers younger than 30, who have more spare time and more social activities. Most of the consumers visit the fast-food restaurant once to twice in a month (31% of the total number), or 19%, once or twice weekly.

Age	Number	%	Previous visits to the fast-food restaurant	Number	%	Education	Number	%
≤20	60	24	Never	22	9	Primary school	38	15
21-30	97	39	Every day	19	8	High school	118	48
31-40	39	16	1-2 times weekly	48	19	Faculty	84	24
41-50	34	14	1-2 times in 2 weeks	41	17	Degree and master's degree	7	3
51-60	10	4	1-2 times monthly	78	31	PhD studies	1	
≥61	8	3	1-2 times yearly	40	16			

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of consumers

3.2. Data analyses

For the analysis was determined mean and standard deviation for each fast-food restaurant, for each attribute of the questionnaire and in the total of all fast-food restaurants in terms of expectation and perception of consumers regarding the quality of service. The purpose of this analysis was to perceive the current situation in terms of satisfaction of the consumers in each restaurant and in total of all fast-food restaurants in relation to perceive consumers' satisfaction with service quality in this kind of hospitality industry. To determine these attributes and their

connection with the general satisfaction of the consumers a gaps analysis had been used-according to the SERVQUAL method which determines the difference between perceived and expected service quality. The significance of the expected and perceived service quality is performed using the t-test for independent samples at the level of significance at 0.05 and the number of degrees of freedom df=N-2=494. The processing of the results was performed using the software package Statistic 10.

Dimension	Attributes	Perceptions			Expectations			Gap	t-test
		Mean	SD	Mean (SD)	Mean	SD	Mean (SD)		
Tangibles	V1	2.60	1.29		3.94	1.01		-1.34	12.87
	V2	3.20	1.08		4.10	0.87		-0.89	10.17
	V3	3.35	1.12		4.19	0.85	4.18 (0.13)	-0.83	9.34
	V4	3.86	1.02	3.20 (0.43)	4.40	0.77		-0.54	6.61
	V5	3.28	1.03		4.29	0.84		-1.00	11.90
	V6	2.56	1.28		4.09	1.09		-1.52	14.21
	V7	3.30	0.99		4.25	0.83		-0.95	11.54
	V8	3.43	0.99		4.21	0.85		-0.79	9.47
Reliability	V9	3.57	1.07		4.29	0.81		-0.71	8.89
	V10	3.39	1.01		4.14	0.85		-0.75	6.41
	V11	3.58	1.00	3.58 (0.13)	4.21	0.84	4.28 (0.10)	-0.64	6.33
	V12	3.74	1.21		4.39	0.79		-0.65	6.96
	V13	3.64	1.04		4.37	0.78		-0.73	8.39
Food Quality	V14	3.88	1.04		4.41	0.79		-0.53	8.91
	V15	3.74	1.00		4.27	0.86		-0.53	7.66
	V16	3.66	1.03	3.69 (0.13)	4.27	0.90	4.31 (0.06)	-0.60	7.14
	V17	3.66	1.04		4.26	0.88		-0.60	6.94
	V18	3.53	1.07		4.34	0.86		-0.81	9.25
Responsiveness	V19	3.20	1.19		4.00	1.00		-0.80	8.11
	V20	3.47	1.10	3.30 (0.14)	4.12	0.85	4.06 (0.06)	-0.66	7.46
	V21	3.24	1.15		4.04	0.95		-0.80	8.47
Assurance	V22	3.26	1.12		4.04	0.93		-0.77	8.36
	V23	3.41	1.08		4.14	0.82		-0.73	8.46
	V24	3.25	1.14	3.32 (0.08)	4.07	0.95	4.11 (0.05)	-0.82	8.67
	V25	3.43	1.05		4.13	0.91		-0.70	7.87
	V26	3.25	1.08		4.17	0.89		-0.92	10.29
	V27	3.30	1.03		4.13	0.81		-0.83	9.99
Empathy	V28	3.28	1.10		4.09	0.86		-0.81	9.11
	V29	3.30	1.03		4.05	0.96		-0.75	8.41
	V30	3.27	1.11	3.39 (0.15)	4.09	0.95	4.16 (0.13)	-0.82	8.81
	V31	3.52	1.06		4.22	0.88		-0.70	7.96
	V32	3.58	1.12		4.37	0.83		-0.79	8.91

Table 2: Mean, standard deviation of expectations and perceptions, gap value of each attributes and dimensions at fast-food restaurants

Table 2 shows the results for the respondents' expectations and perceptions of service quality, as well as service quality gap. In order to assess whether the difference between perceived and expected quality of service, or calculated SERVQUAL scores is statistically significant, a t-test

for independent samples had been applied. The mean of the score of the consumers' expectation ranges from 3.94-4.41, and the mean of the consumers' perception rates from 2.56-3.88. The biggest expectations as well as the biggest perception regarding the dimensions of the service quality consumers have relating the quality of the food and service. The lowest value for the consumers' expectations obtained the statement $V1$. The lowest assessment relating the perception of service quality is the question $V6$. On the other hand, the highest assessment relating expectations, in terms of perceived quality is the statement $V14$, which means that the taste of food is an important attribute for attendance of a fast-food restaurant and in this case the consumers of this attribute are more satisfied in comparison with the other attributes of the service quality. All six dimensions show a negative value of SERVQUAL assessment, as the difference between perceived and expected service quality. The significance tested of the differences between them is tested using the t-test for each distinct attribute. For all the t-values the significance level is $p=0.00$ or 0%, which is less than 0.05, which confirms statistically significant difference between perceived and expected service quality. This shows that perception of consumers is far lower than their expectations.

In the first dimension the attribute $V6$, is with the largest negative value, and $V4$ has the smallest negative value of this dimension. In the second dimension *reliability* the biggest gap with negative value is $V13$, while in the third dimension, *food quality*, lowest and equal gap have the two attributes $V14$ and $V15$, which means that the expectations for the service received by consumers is close to their perception of it, but it's not enough for a positive value. In the fourth dimension *responsiveness*, two of the attributes $V19$ and $V21$ are with the same negative value. In the fifth dimension *assurance* the attribute $V26$ has the largest negative value of this dimension and in terms of *empathy* dimension the largest negative value of SERVQUAL assessments has the attribute $V30$, something as less negative value is for the attribute $V28$.

In table 3 it has been calculated the overall SERVQUAL score. All the means of the dimensions are with negative value. The first dimension with common elements has the largest negative value, and the quality of food dimension has the lowest negative value. The total overall SERVQUAL score has negative value of -0.77. This indicates that the consumers' expectations regarding service quality at fast-food restaurants are far greater than their perception of it.

Dimensions	SERVQUAL score
1. Tangible	-0.98
2. Reliability	-0.70
3. Food Quality	-0.61
4. Responsiveness	-0.75
5. Assurance	-0.79
6. Empathy	-0.77
Overall SERVQUAL score:	-0.77

Table 3: Overall service quality score for all dimensions

The graphic figure 1 shows the mean values of each and individual dimension of service quality at the fast-food restaurants starting from the highest to the lowest negative value SERVQUAL score. The common elements dimension has the highest negative value. This shows that the level of perception of tangible elements at the fast-food restaurant was the lowest in comparison with expectations of consumers who have higher expectations. The food quality dimension has the lowest negative value, which means that consumer' perception and satisfaction for the service that they had received are not very distinguished.
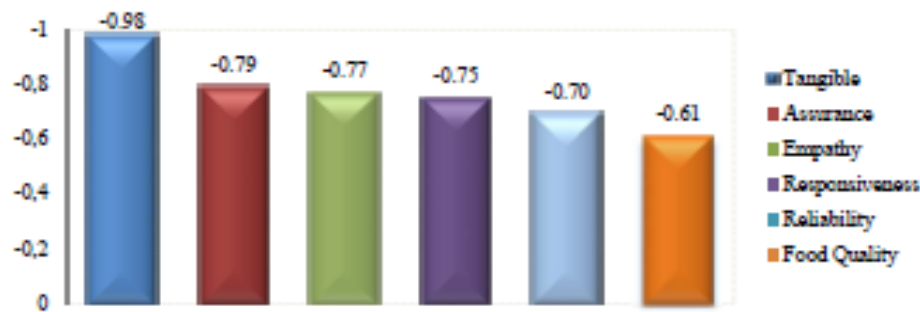
Figure 1: Mean values of dimensions from highest to lowest negative value

Figure 2 graphically displays SERVQUAL score of each fast-food restaurant. Restaurant number 3 has the most negative assessment which means the consumers' expectations were much higher than the satisfaction from the service that they received. Restaurants 4 and 5 have the lowest negative value of SERVQUAL score. This shows that the level of consumers' quality service satisfaction is approximately with the level of their expectations, but not enough for a positive SERVQUAL score.
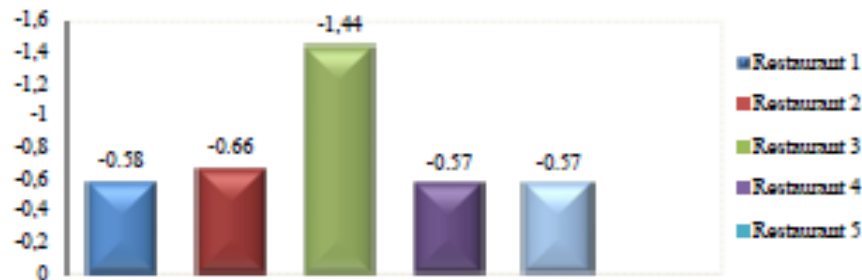

Figure 2: SERVQUAL score according to Liker's scale for each fast-food restaurant

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The difference between consumer's expectations and their perception for the service received is a key indicator for assessing and evaluating service quality at fast-food restaurants. The questionnaire provided important information on how real-performance services met consumers' expectations. Therefore, it is justified in fast-food facilities the services to be measured with this questionnaire to see if the services are fulfilled, or are they over or below the consumers' expectations.

From the analysis of the obtained values for consumers' service expectations as the most important are attributes *V14*, *V4* and *V12*, which are part of *food quality*, *tangible* and *reliability*. The results show similarities to other works written by other authors [21], [22], [23]. Attributes with less value are *V19*, *V21* and *V22* of the dimensions *assurance* and *responsiveness*. These attributes are only less important in comparison with the other attributes, because on the Likert's scale of five values, the lowest is four. This indicates that the consumers' qualities of service expectations in fast-food restaurants are great. The values obtained for the perception of consumers are lower than the values of their expectations. The lowest values have the questions *V6* and *V1* of the dimension *tangible*. The highest values have the questions *V14* and *V4* which

means that consumer's perception is close to the value of their expectations for service quality. Most of the authors have obtained approximately results which point out that the food quality and the environmental elements are of significant importance for consumers' better perception [24], [25].

The calculated gap values show that the service provider does not meet the consumers' expectations. The total SERVQUAL score is -0.77 which indicates that overall service quality is below the consumers' expectations and the same can be improved. According to the data the most negative score has the tangible dimension which means that consumers prefer better environment (parking space, restrooms, comfortable seats, need and properly dressed employees etc.). The attributes with the widest significant statistical gap represent serious deficiencies and require serious investment for their resolution, improvement and overcoming. The restaurant 3 has the most negative assessment which shows that consumers' expectations are far greater than the service they had received. Perhaps this negative assessment is due to the spatial environment or the lack of staff during busy hours as well as bad communication and coordination between staff, which leads to inability to meet the consumers' needs and preferences. This paper also has its limitations. The results obtained are on the bases of small number of fast-food restaurants, only five. The measuring of service quality is limited to 32 attributes and 6 dimensions. This research has its benefits such as: the results obtained show what are the expectations and what is consumers' satisfaction with the service received in a fast-food restaurants which identified the strengths and weaknesses of service quality. These results will help managers to determine the level of service quality and its improvement by identifying the deficiencies and their monitoring, improving and removal. By measuring the service quality and the application of the appropriate measurement model, the necessary data is provided and is used for quality management, with which fast-food restaurants will be able to monitor, keep and improve the service quality.

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Appendix1: Questionnaire

Respected,

This questionnaire is to form the assessment of customer satisfaction of the expected and received service at fast-food restaurants. The questionnaire is composed of three parts as follows: part A, part B and part C. The survey results will be used for scientific purposes only. We hope that you will help and take few minutes of your time to fill in this questionnaire.

A) Questions from 1 to 3 are answered by completion of one of the numbers

1. Age	2. Education	3.Previous visits to the restaurant
1) ≤ 20	1) Primary school	1) Never
2) 21-30	2) High school	2) Every day
3) 31-40	3) Degree	3) 1-2 weekly
4) 41-50	4) Degree and Master's	4) 1-2 in two weeks
5) 51-60	degree	5) 1-2 monthly
6) ≥ 61	5) PhD Studies	6) 1-2 yearly

B) We politely ask you to answer the following statements regarding your expectations at the fast-food restaurant by completion of the number from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 (Strongly agree) - 5 (Strongly disagree).

1.	The restaurant has visually attractive parking areas and building exteriors.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	The restaurant has visually dining area.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	The restaurant has staff members who are clean, neat and appropriately dressed.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	The restaurant has a menu that is easily readable.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	The restaurant has a dining area that is comfortable and easy to move around in.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	The restaurant has restrooms that are thoroughly clean.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	The restaurant has dining areas that are thoroughly clean.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	The restaurant has comfortable seats in the dining room.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	The restaurant serves you in the time promised.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	The restaurant quickly corrects anything is wrong.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	The restaurant is dependable and consistent.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	The restaurant provides an accurate guest check.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	The restaurant serves your food exactly as you ordered it.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	The food tastes good.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	The food is served at a proper temperature.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	The food is fresh.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	The choice of food is different.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	The food is served in good portions.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	The restaurant during busy times has employees helping each other to maintain speed and quality of service.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	The restaurant provides prompt and quick service.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	The restaurant gives extra effort to handle your special requests.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	The restaurant has employees who can answer your questions completely.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	The restaurant makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	The restaurant has personnel who are both able and willing to give you information about menu items, their ingredients, and methods of preparation.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	The restaurant makes you feel personally safe.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	The restaurant has employees which seem educated, competent and experienced.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	The restaurant seems to give employees support so that they can do their job well.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	The restaurant has employees who are sensitive to your individual needs and wants, rather than always relying on policies and procedures.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	The restaurant makes you feel special.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	The restaurant anticipates your individual needs and wants.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	The restaurant has employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something is wrong.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	The restaurant seems to have the customers' best interests at heart.	1 2 3 4 5

C) We politely ask you to answer the following questions regarding your perception of service quality at the fast-food restaurant by completion of the number from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 (Strongly agree) - 5 (Strongly disagree).

No.	Question	Rating
1.	Whether the restaurant has visually attractive parking areas and building exteriors.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	Whether the restaurant has visually dining area.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Whether the restaurant has staff members who are clean, neat and appropriately dressed.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	Whether the restaurant has a menu that is easily readable.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	Whether the restaurant has a dining area that is comfortable and easy to move around in.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	Whether the restaurant has restrooms that are thoroughly clean.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	Whether the restaurant has dining areas that are thoroughly clean.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	Whether the restaurant has comfortable seats in the dining room.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	Whether the restaurant serves you in the time promised.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Whether the restaurant quickly corrects anything is wrong.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Whether the restaurant is dependable and consistent.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	Whether the restaurant provides an accurate guest check.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	Whether the restaurant serves your food exactly as you ordered it.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	Whether the food tastes good.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	Whether the food is served at a proper temperature.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	Whether the food is fresh.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	Whether the choice of food is different.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	Whether the food is served in good portions.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	Whether the restaurant during busy times has employees helping each other to maintain speed and quality of service.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	Whether the restaurant provides prompt and quick service.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	Whether the restaurant gives extra effort to handle your special requests.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	Whether the restaurant has employees who can answer your questions completely.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	Whether the restaurant makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	Whether the restaurant has personnel who are both able and willing to give you information about menu items, their ingredients, and methods of preparation.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	Whether the restaurant makes you feel personally safe.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	Whether the restaurant has employees which seem educated, competent and experienced.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	Whether the restaurant seems to give employees support so that they can do their job well.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	Whether the restaurant has employees who are sensitive to your individual needs and wants, rather than always relying on policies and procedures.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	Whether the restaurant makes you feel special.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	Whether the restaurant anticipates your individual needs and wants.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	Whether the restaurant has employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something is wrong.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	Whether the restaurant seems to have the customers' best interests at heart.	1 2 3 4 5