Influence of quick-service restaurant's service quality towards customer online review

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Abstract

The service quality of a Quick-Service Restaurant (QSR) highly influences and affects the significance of online customer review since customers' impression and perception of the QSR is based on the service quality of the restaurant. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of QSR's Service Quality Dimensions (i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time) towards Customer Online Review. This study is based on data from the questionnaire on QSR's customers regarding QSR's Service Quality Dimensions towards online customer reviews. This study's target population is the customers of QSR who had experience purchasing from QSR (i.e., Taco Bell, 4Fingers, and FuelShack) and have experience searching for online customer reviews. The items used to measure the constructs were adapted from previous studies and tailored to the study setting. Four hundred and one completed questionnaires were obtained within two weeks of data collection using google form adopting convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using SPSS to test the five sub-hypotheses. The research suggested that QSR Service Quality Dimensions, i.e., Restaurant Ambiance, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time, significantly influence online customer reviews. At the same time, Employee Skills and Food Quality is found to be insignificant. By taking into these considerations, for the future study, it might need to consider adding more dimensions that might be more relevant to the study whenever focusing on QSR's Service Quality Dimensions towards online customer reviews.

Keywords:

Quick-Service Restaurant's Service Quality Dimension; Employee Skills; Restaurant Ambiance; Food Quality; Restaurant Cleanliness; Waiting Time; Customer Online Review

1 Introduction

The advancement of technology has given a new depth to the importance of social media as a medium of promotion. It has broadened the scope of customers' convenience and fast-paced information accessibility to search for reviews on a particular establishment on the internet (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Online review, a form of electronic word of mouth (in short: eWOM) which is a part of the internet, has been noticed as a means of giving consumers a voice and is more influential than traditional word-of-mouth (Chopra et al., 2020; Gottschalk & Mafael, 2018; Parikh, 2013). An online review can be described as a review made by a customer who has experienced service or purchased a product from an establishment.

Before purchasing a product or service, customers will first search for online reviews uploaded by previous customers to build expectations and help their decision-making process towards the establishment (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). Online reviews act as first-hand information that would indirectly influence the potential customers' purchase decisions and behaviour besides contributing to the establishment's sales at a higher percentage than other mediums (MarketingCharts, 2019). Online customer reviews can benefit establishments if used wisely as a marketing tool since they can monitor and know how customers perceive the establishment. Furthermore, online customer reviews can help improve the products and services, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and improving online reviews' positivity. Moreover, positive online reviews are the most impactful to convert and help customers choose a specific establishment rather than its competitors due to the positive e-WOM and the influence of the review from their peers (Mighty, 2017; WebAlive, 2016).

Customer online review is a part of restaurant selection in which most consumers generally refer to due to the credibility and trustworthiness source (Jannach et al., 2009; Park & Nicolau, 2015). The amount of data offered in online customer reviews, including consumer feedback, overall rating, food tested by consumers, and locations, could improve the consumer experience (Jurafsky et al., 2014). Hence, online reviews have allowed potential customers to discover food establishments interactively (Gavin, 2013). Most Malaysian customers placed online reviews on TripAdvisor, Google Review, Zomato, and FourSquare. Social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter) also act as a platform for sharing information among customers. Hence social media essentially act as a new online review platform (Pantelidis, 2010; Parikh et al., 2017). Online reviews enable customers to share their purchasing experience and enable customers to exert each other in positive or negative comments (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Jalilvand, 2012; Tran, 2015). Some websites also allow customers to rank the establishment using stars or ranking systems, affecting the popularity and awareness of positive establishments compared to negatively reviewed establishments on the website (Baehne, 2018; Wan & Nakayama, 2014). Customers, both the younger and older generation, have adapted to obtaining information on the internet and are easily swayed by these reviews (Von Helversen et al., 2018).

Quick-Service Restaurant (in short: QSR) increased customer popularity due to efficient serving time, product price, and familiarity concept (Smead, 2018; Wu & Mohi, 2015). Zomato (n.d) listed 4Fingers, Fuel Shack, and Taco Bell among Malaysian QSR. Considering the large number of customers who dine at QSR, there are also many online customer reviews on QSR present on third-party online websites, which is very significant in swaying customers' purchasing decisions (Masset & Weisskopf, 2021). Customers seek online reviews to reduce any risk that the purchase might lead to disappointment determined and influenced by the online review of peers (Parikh et al., 2014).

1.1 Problem Statement

An online customer review is a form of customer feedback or review of a product or service on various electronic commerce sites by a customer who has purchased and experienced consuming the product. The authenticity and logic of these reviews have always been questioned due to the non-restrictive sites and the anonymity of reviews by customers (Banerjee et al., 2017; Kim & Kim, 2020). Sometimes, the reviews are questionable because they are considered an incorrect product or service statement (Doward, 2011). Customers' online reviews are often based on their perception of the establishment, especially the service quality, which plays a massive role in determining the positivity of the review. The usage of third-party online reviews positively or negatively influences the establishment since it affects the purchasing behaviour and intention to visit other users (Zhao et al., 2015).

Failure of a QSR manager to effectively measure and improve service quality will create an issue between the establishment and their perceived service quality. Thus, reducing customer attrition and creating unsatisfied customers (Gyaan, n.d). Unsatisfied customers can go on websites or online review platforms to leave a negative online review affecting the restaurant's brand image. Restaurant managers can build a community by promoting a positive image of the business on their official website through regular updates and engaging with customers by responding to their reviews professionally, which will make the customer feel more connected (Rose et al., 2011; Sparks et al., 2016; Ullrich & Brunner, 2015). The manager will also gain insight into customers' perceptions of the establishment (Masset & Weisskopf, 2021).

The quality of service depends on the attitude of the staff in the establishment. Therefore, problems such as staff's empathy, lack of communication between workers, and the inadequacy of hospitality knowledge will directly influence customers' experience with the establishment, causing customers to leave negative reviews on online review websites (Ahmad et al., 2014; Wanjau et al., 2012). From customers' perspectives, dining in a restaurant is not just about the food. The customer also seeks an experience that makes them feel appreciated for choosing the restaurant. The customer wants to be greeted warmly by employees and treated with the care of the restaurant, which will leave the customer with a positive impression of the dining experience (Thompson, 2019).

As a professional employee working in the hospitality or service industry, having empathy towards customers' such as understanding the situation from the customers' perspective, is important to make them feel appreciated and heard. Hence, the level of empathy expressed during a service encounter will substantially impact service quality (Aftab et al., 2016; Toosi & Kohanali, 2011). Employees who lack empathy will be inadequate to deal professionally with customers' criticism. The employee might insult the customer, which will cause customers to have a negative impression of the establishment (Zhang et al., 2010).

Alternatively, having negative online reviews and how the management of the QSR restaurant reacts and rectifies the situation might influence the customers' perception (Browning et al., 2013). The most crucial issue is the effect and influence of online reviews on customers' perception of the service or the customers' perceived expectations. Customers' expectations depend on the available reviews, including exceptional and poor customer experiences (Ali et al., 2015; Parikh et al., 2014).

The research objective for this study is to examine the relationship of QSR's Service Quality Dimensions (i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time) towards Customer Online Review.

2   Literature Review, Development of Research Framework, and Research Hypotheses

2.1   Service Quality

Service quality, especially in pure service systems, is commonly seen as the performance of the service delivery system. In addition, the standard of service is related to customer loyalty. Finally, service efficiency is an interpretation of the client. However, from a single guide and several contributing factors, customers shape views on service quality (Bhargava, n.d).

Service quality is often viewed as the output of the service delivery system and is linked to customer satisfaction. Service quality is the customer's perception of the establishment based on what the customer can see (Akan, 1995; Bhargava, n.d). The customers' perception of the establishment's service results from comparing their expectations and the actual service. Measuring service quality is complex due to its unique characteristics: perishability, inseparability, intangibility, heterogeneity, and lack of ownership (Bateson, 1977; Clemes et al., 2000; Edgett & Parkinson, 1993; Judd, 1964; Rathmell, 1966; Regan, 1963; Sasser, 1976; Shostack, 1977; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Zeithaml et al., 1985).

2.1.1   The SERVQUAL Model

In the original SERVQUAL model, Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed 10 dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security,

competence, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access to measure the service quality. In a further study, these 10 dimensions overlap among some of the dimensions to five dimensions (i.e., tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This model SERVQUAL consisted of 22-pair questions to measure the five dimensions and was initially designed to focus on service firms and retailers (i.e., retail banking, credit card services, repair and maintenance of electrical appliances, and long-distance telephone services) (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

2.1.2 Limitations of SERVQUAL

Parasuraman et al. (1988) determined that the five dimensions of SERVQUAL are applicable across a broad spectrum of service industries. Since the SERVQUAL model was developed, this model has been adopted comprehensively, measuring service quality across various service industries. Nevertheless, findings from many studies revealed differently. The five dimensions are irrelevant across service industries. The SERVQUAL model was inappropriate to measure the most critical to successful service delivery in a specific business setting such as the hospitality industry (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Saleh & Ryan, 1991).

Several modifications towards the five generic dimensions have also been implemented throughout numerous studies (Knutson et al., 1990; Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Stevens et al., 1995). For example, Stevens et al. (1995) proposed an instrument DINESERVE adapted from SERVQUAL, which evaluates customer perception of service quality in the restaurant industry. However, the DINESERVE instruments overlook food quality, which is one of the primary factors in evaluating the overall customer experience in the restaurant industry (Clemes et al., 2018; Kivela et al., 1999; Raajpoot, 2002; Wu & Mohi, 2015).

It is evident that perceptions of service quality are multi-dimensional; there was no specific agreement on the number of service quality dimensions and the content of the dimensions. Despite that Parasuraman et al. (1988) strongly maintained their five service quality dimensions are generic across the service industries, but the service marketing researchers scholars generally agree that the number and definition of the dimensions vary depending on the service setting (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Carman, 1990; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Mohi, 2012). Therefore, in the light of the criticisms of SERVQUAL and the suggestion by previous studies, this paper proposes QSR Service Quality Dimensions, i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time.

2.2 Quick-Service Restaurant Service Quality Dimensions

2.2.1 Employee Skills

Employee skills link to the establishment and its customers, representing the values and service orientation. Customer perception of quality and overall satisfaction

depends on the employee's ability to satisfy customers' needs which refers to successful communication and understanding customers in interpersonal and emotional stages (Andaleeb & Caskey, 2007; Gracia et al., 2010; Purba et al., 2020).

Purba et al. (2020) stated that the categories of skills used in performing a job are mental skills (i.e., decision making and memorizing) and physical analysis skills (i.e., social skills, speech delivery, offering benefits, and ability to influence customers). In addition, knowledge, abilities, and skills enable a person to act in a way that will benefit their job performance and ability to act in a range of situations to achieve customer satisfaction (Hager & Gonczi, 1996; Leung et al., 2016). Customers rely on the quality of service provided by their skills, knowledge, speed of service, manner, and attitude to perceive the service given (Awan et al., 2011; Braciníková & Matušínská, 2017; Haddad, 2017). Furthermore, a study added that employee interaction with customers, varieties of service provided, speed of service, and attitude of the service employees are the major factors that affect customers' perception towards the service quality as well as reaching customers' satisfaction (Baker et al., 2013; Marinkovic et al., 2014).

2.2.2   Restaurant Ambiance

The elements of a restaurant's ambience are aesthetics, such as physical elements in the decorations and intangible characteristics such as temperature, music, smell, and environment (Desiyanti et al., 2018; Heung & Gu, 2012; Jalil et al., 2016; Kement et al., 2021; Tuzunkan & Albayrak, 2016).

Ambience relates to physical and non-physical elements made up of décor, lighting, music, noise, sight, and scent (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). These elements influence either positive or negative customer satisfaction because ambience creates the first impression on customers upon encountering the restaurant (Ansari & Jalees, 2018; Lin, 2004). Similarly, a study proposes that a restaurant's ambient condition and employee appearance contribute to the dining experience perceived by customers and customers' behavioural intentions post-dining experience (Ryu & Jang, 2007; Wade, 2008). The ambience also relates to customer turnover and return intention as a restaurant ambience affects customers' emotional response to how customers feel and perceive the service (Çetinsöz, 2019; Karki & Panthi, 2018; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994). Other studies also propose that ambience will result in a pleasant atmosphere, quality of staff interaction, and elements that contribute to customers' emotional response and customer satisfaction with a particular restaurant (Lim & Park, 2010; Marinkovic et al., 2014).

2.2.3   Food Quality

Food quality sums up the properties and attributes of the food in terms of the nutritional content, temperature, texture, appearance, portion size, and consistency. Aspects of food quality link to customer satisfaction and customer perceived

expectation depending on individual's preferences in the food itself in the context; namely, the food is fresh, the food is delicious, the food looks appealing, and the food is valuable (Namkung & Jang, 2008; Van Rijswijk & Frewer, 2008; Wu & Mohi, 2015).

Food quality is the essential component of the overall dining experience and significantly affects the quality of the final restaurant perception (Ha & Jang, 2010). Food is the essential and critical product of a restaurant; hence, the food quality presented is a crucial factor in meeting customers' perceived value (Shaharudin et al., 2011). Studies have found that food quality directly and positively influenced customer satisfaction within QSR (Johns & Howard, 1998; Kivela et al., 1999; Law et al., 2004; Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Wu & Mohi, 2015). Potential customers develop an expectation towards the quality of food based on customer reviews, which will significantly attract or repel the customers and affect customer expectation if the food quality does not exceed the perceived value formed by reading previous customer reviews (Gilbert et al., 2004; Lee & Kim, 2020; Qazi et al., 2017; Qin & Prybutok, 2009; Zhang et al., 2021). Another study further supported that food quality influences customers' satisfaction and retention due to QSR's limited ability to enhance retention by exceeding and surpassing customers' expectations in terms of food quality (Al-Tit, 2015; Liu & Jang, 2009; Othman et al., 2012).

2.2.4 Restaurant Cleanliness

Restaurant cleanliness is an essential aspect of how customers evaluate and determine the dining place's quality and create perception towards the establishment besides representing the safety of the food. Not only that, but it also refers to the overall cleanliness of the establishment. Employee hygiene, food handling, kitchen cleanliness, and restroom cleanliness are also included in measuring the overall restaurant cleanliness. In addition, cleanliness plays a crucial role in manipulating the ambience of the restaurant in such to make the customers feel comfortable and at ease during their visit (IntegrityServices, 2018; Kim & Bachman, 2019; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002).

Restaurant cleanliness is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of how a customer evaluates the overall cleanliness of the establishment and will influence the restaurant quality and return intention and leads to the perception of the overall cleanliness of the food and employees in the restaurant (Barber et al., 2011; Kim & Bachman, 2019; Yoo, 2012). The QSR customers use to assess the cleanliness of a restaurant depends on the customer's perception. Previous studies stated that the physical environment, such as the interior of the dining area, is used to evaluate the overall cleanliness of the restaurant, while other studies focus on the restroom and employees' appearance (Barber & Scarcelli, 2009; Liu & Jang, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2008). The QSR industry is highly competitive; hence, focusing on the restaurant's overall cleanliness will increase customer satisfaction and influence the overall dining experience. Thus, the outcome will increase the positive behavioural intention such as

positive e-word-of-mouth, increasing the ability to attract potential customers and winning the loyalty of existing customers (Boulding et al., 1993; Brady et al., 2000; Walter et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2017; Yoo, 2012).

2.2.5   Waiting Time

In operation, waiting time is between the actual process where customers must wait after placing an order or requesting a service before the service occurs (MBASkoolTeam, 2019). Categories of waiting time in the context of operation are customers' estimation of time waited, time measured by customers before being served, the cognitive aspect in customers' evaluation of the wait as being (or not being) reasonable, and the emotional response of customers from waiting such as boredom, stress or satisfied (Alsumait, 2015; Lahap et al., 2018; Palawatta, 2015).

Customers often choose QSR due to its quick service. Previous studies (De Vries et al., 2018; Hui & Tse, 1996; Lahap et al., 2018; Lee & Lambert, 2000; Pruyn & Smidts, 1998; Wu & Mohi, 2015) have found a relationship between waiting time and customer satisfaction. When customers are presented with an uncertain waiting period, it will influence customers' emotional responses, which will affect their service evaluation to the restaurant (Antonides et al., 2002; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; De Vries et al., 2018; Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Hwang & Lambert, 2006; Lahap et al., 2018). Providing an attractive waiting environment determined by the physical designs of the area and any activities or distractions provided will help customers feel less bored in the waiting process (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007).

2.3   Online Review

Although digital means has been today's marketing tool of choice for companies, it does not mean that word of mouth is outdated. Social media remains a powerful medium for promoting a brand. It is simpler than ever for customers to tell others about their best and worst interactions with the integrated network of digital platforms at their fingertips. Online reviews are today's word-of-mouth marketing (McCormick, 2018).

Online reviews are reviews from customers who have purchased the product or used the services and left their opinions on a third-party website or the restaurant's official website (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2003). Due to the highly evolving technological era, more customers seek online reviews before purchasing from an establishment (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Customers who read these online reviews trust them as much as they would trust a personal recommendation from friends or families (Park & Nicolau, 2015).

2.4 Development of Research Hypotheses

Service quality positively affects customer satisfaction and might influence customer loyalty to the establishment, giving the firm an edge in the market share and attracting revenue (Bougoure & Neu, 2010; Desiyanti et al., 2018; Hossain & Aktar, 2012; Jeong & Jang, 2011). Furthermore, customer satisfaction influences the tendency for customers to leave an online review for the establishment. Few studies have stated that food quality, restaurant atmosphere, and service quality positively correlated with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention on online reviews (Chow et al., 2007; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Soriano, 2002; Uslu, 2020; Zhang et al., 2010). Therefore, in this study, the service quality elements of QSR are discussed in employee skills, restaurant ambience, food quality, restaurant cleanliness, and waiting time, and the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1:   There is a significant relationship between QSR Service Quality Dimensions towards Customer Online Review

In the context of employee skills, the ability of an employee to provide excellent service as such to influence others, offer goods, listen to customer's needs and complaints, being attentive to the customer will contribute to customer satisfaction and behavioural intention (Baker et al., 2013; Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Marinkovic et al., 2014; Wall & Berry, 2007). For example, customers will recommend the QSR to other customers, provide positive e-word of mouth, affect their intention to revisit and customer loyalty (Chow et al., 2013). Besides that, employee skills are categorised into three groups, namely (1) Mental skills (e.g., analysing, decision making, memorising, and calculating), (2) Physical skills (e.g., skills related to one's work), and (3) Social skills (e.g., communication abilities, influence others and offer goods) that the employees can influence the customer's dining experience as well as make the customers feel important by responding to customer's request (Hager & Gonczi, 1996; Leung et al., 2016; Purba et al., 2020; Söderlund & Rosengren, 2007).

Marketing and Human Resource researchers found that the degree of personal interactions between customers and employees can directly affect and largely determine customer satisfaction and retention (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Furthermore, an analysis of complaint behaviour found that most customer complaints are associated with the establishment's employees (Manickas & Shea, 1997; Sparks & Browning, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H$_{1a}$:   There is a significant relationship between Employee Skills towards Customer Online reviews

The ambience in a restaurant consists of interior decoration, exterior appearance, room temperature, lighting, music, noise, and odour influences customers' first impression and dramatically affects how customers perceive a particular restaurant's environment. The ambience of a restaurant plays an important role in customers'

perceived service quality and indirectly affects the spreading of positive e-word of mouth by online reviews (Banerjee et al., 2017; Çetinsöz, 2019; Karki & Panthi, 2018; Omar et al., 2015; Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Siddiqui, 2020; Waller, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_{1b}:   There is a significant relationship between Restaurant Ambience towards Customer Online Review

Food quality is an essential component of the restaurant dining experience. Food quality is one of the most common factors in assessing customers' satisfaction in the restaurant (Kim et al., 2010; Mohi, 2012; Wu & Mohi, 2015). Furthermore, it positively affects customer behavioural intention, such as e-word-of-mouth recommendations and returns intentions (Al-Tit, 2015; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Jung et al., 2015; Law et al., 2004; Liu & Jang, 2009; Othman et al., 2012; Qin & Prybutok, 2009).

Besides, the food quality influences good reviews as higher quality food stimulates the positive attitude of customers to spread positive reviews to others for the establishment. The selection of a restaurant is highly dependent and correlated to the quality of food provided by the restaurant (Jeong & Jang, 2011; Jung et al., 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_{1c}:   There is a significant relationship between Food Quality towards Customer Online reviews

A restaurant's cleanliness is the number one factor determining whether customers will purchase or visit the restaurant. Studies have perceived that restaurant cleanliness is one of the key factors in customers' evaluation of restaurant quality (Barber et al., 2011; Barber & Scarcelli, 2009; Becker et al., 1999; Kim & Bachman, 2019; Liu & Jang, 2009; Yoo, 2012). The cleanliness of the restroom in restaurants was an important criterion where the customer evaluates the restaurant's overall service experience (Barber et al., 2011; Barber & Scarcelli, 2009; Becker et al., 1999; Liu & Jang, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2008). Furthermore, the cleanliness of the restaurant influences customers' intention to revisit and willingness to recommend the restaurant since the level of cleanliness affects customers' pleasantness with the surrounding and increase customer satisfaction (Boulding et al., 1993; Brady et al., 2000; Yoo, 2012). Hence, hygienic aspects of a restaurant (i.e., restroom, service personnel hygiene, and kitchen) significantly influence customer's evaluation and affect the customer's perception and choice of dining in the restaurant (Aksoydan, 2007; Kim & Bachman, 2019; Vilnai-Yavetz & Gilboa, 2010). QSR that fails to meet customers' food hygiene standards and cleanliness will be assessed as having low or poor-quality service.

Due to the timeframe of official health inspections done annually, potential customers now rely on others who document their prior experience with the restaurant (Arevalo, 2017; Atif et al., 2019). This information is readily accessible on

the internet, such as health inspection results and other customers' reviews (Dalli, 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_{1d}:   There is a significant relationship between Restaurant Cleanliness towards Customer Online Review

The influence of waiting time and customer satisfaction is more affected for the QSR since customers value their time, and the act of waiting is perceived as unfavourable and will lower customers' satisfaction and intention to recommend the restaurant (Antonides et al., 2002; Law et al., 2004; Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004). However, customers are more inclined to be understanding when the waiting time is reasonable and when the employee provides an estimate of the time for the wait (Antonides et al., 2002; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; De Vries et al., 2018; Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Hwang & Lambert, 2006; Lahap et al., 2018). Based on several studies' findings, perceived waiting time is a more significant factor influencing customer satisfaction than the actual waiting time. If the waiting time is inevitable, the service provider should make the process a happy experience, adding to customers' satisfaction and loyalty (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; Clemes et al., 2018; Mohi, 2012; Wu & Mohi, 2015). In contrast, a long and unoccupied wait will make customers lose their original intention to purchase even if the other elements of the service are excellent (Clemes et al., 2018). Waiting time has an insignificant influence on customer's service satisfaction; however, the waiting environment does relatively affect customer behaviour since the waiting environment influences waiting for time satisfaction and service satisfaction (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Bielen & Demoulin, 2007)

Sumaedi and Yarmen (2015) proposed that QSR is a popular restaurant choice due to the short period in preparation of food, hence acknowledging that time is essential for its customers. Customers opt for QSR due to the speed of service. Thus, it can be proposed that the waiting time in a restaurant will impact customers' perceptions and buying decisions (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). The act of waiting is seen as a negative experience, and unhappy customers will affect their perception of the quality of food and service after they are served (Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; Davis & Heineke, 1998; McDougall & Levesque, 2000). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_{1e}:   There is a significant relationship between Waiting Time towards Customer Online Reviews

2.5   Development of Research Framework

Figure 1.1 illustrates the research framework of this study. The proposed research framework suggests that the customers of QSR in Malaysia are expected that the QSR Service Quality Dimensions may influence customers' online reviews in quick-service restaurants in Malaysia. This study focuses on QSR Service Quality Dimensions, i.e.,

Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambience, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time, which influence customers' online reviews in QSR in Malaysia.
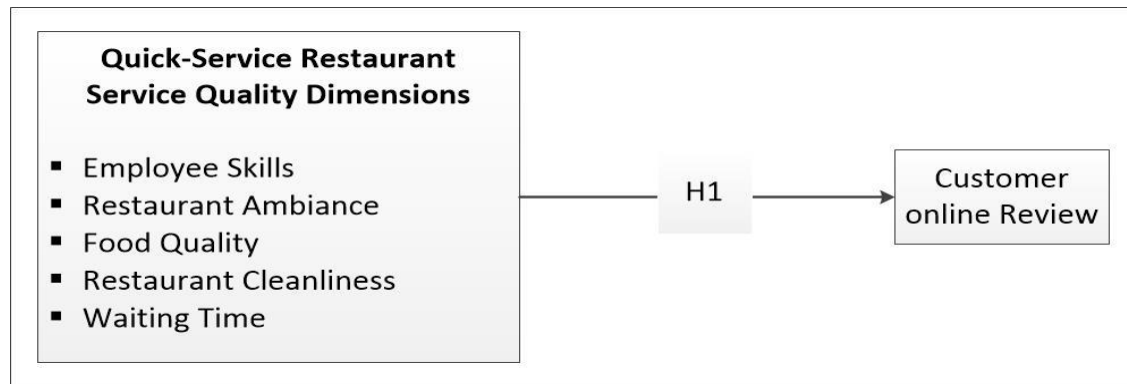

Figure 1: Research Framework

Dimensions and construct adapted from previous studies: Employee Skills (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Mohi, 2012; Purba et al., 2020), Restaurant Ambience (Heung & Gu, 2012; Jalil et al., 2016; Kement et al., 2021; Stroebele & De Castro, 2004; Wu & Mohi, 2015), Food Quality (Huang et al., 2004; Mohi, 2012; Shaharudin et al., 2011), Restaurant Cleanliness (Kim & Bachman, 2019; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002; Wu & Mohi, 2015; Yoo, 2012), Waiting Time (Antonides et al., 2002; Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Palawatta, 2015; Pruyn & Smidts, 1998; Taylor, 1994; Wu & Mohi, 2015; Xie & Or, 2017).

3 Methodology

The target population is the customers of QSR aged 18 years and above who had experience ordering the food from QSR. The selected QSRs are Taco Bell, 4Fingers, and FuelShack. In addition, the target population must have experience searching for online customer reviews before purchase are selected as the unit of analysis in this study. Before the potential respondent completes the questionnaire, they must answer the screening question. This procedure ensures the accuracy of the data and avoids biases. The screening question asked the respondent has experience reading and seeking out online reviews before. The duration of distributing the online questionnaire is for two weeks during May 2021. A minimum of 384 respondents was required for this paper based on the calculation of an unknown population (ProjectRegards Admin, 2019). The data was collected from customers who have experienced referring to online customer service before choosing the restaurant before dining or ordering food from QSR (i.e., Taco Bell, 4 Fingers, and FuelShack).

The questionnaire focuses on the QSR service quality dimensions (i.e., Employee Skill, Restaurant Ambience, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time). Items measuring the constructs are adapted from previous studies and tailored to the QSR service quality dimension's effect on online customer review in Malaysia (See Table 2). All items were measured on a seven-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The draft questionnaire was through validity and reliability procedures. Five academicians with a hospitality background and five customers of QSR who have experience searching for online customer reviews before placing the food order were chosen to provide comments and suggestions to improve the questionnaire's content. A pilot study was conducted once the draft questionnaire

was corrected following the suggestion. Next phase, 50 respondents had experienced who had experience searching for online customer reviews before deciding to dine-in, take-away, or order online from the QSR services responded to the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha score demonstrated a high coefficient alpha range from 0.851 and 0.928, indicating good internal consistency. (Hair et al., 2010). Besides, each variables' values are significant as the Cronbach Alpha's value is greater than 0.70. Due to the COVID-19 restriction, the questionnaire is created in Google Form shared with QSR customers through several social media platforms, i.e., WhatsApp, Twitter, and Telegram.

4   Findings

The first section of the questionnaire is sought to identify respondents who have experience searching for online customer reviews of QSR. Thus, respondents who chose "no" (those subjects who had never checked online customer reviews) during the screening question were excluded from completing the questionnaire. Four hundred eighty-five responses were received after spreading within a two-week time frame. Eighty-five respondents (17.5%) who had not checked the online customer review of QSR mentioned were excluded, and 401 respondents (82.3%) were used for the analysis (see Figure 2).
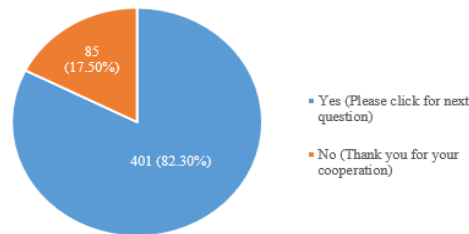

Figure 2: Result for Screening Question

The demographic profile of respondents is described as follows; males were 34.4%, while females were higher than males at 65.6%. Most respondents were aged between 18-27 years (57.4%), while the lowest frequency is at 48 years and above (6.7%). The highest spending power of respondents per visit to QSR is from RM21-RM30, at 155 respondents (38.7%) followed by 84 respondents (20.9%) who spend RM31-RM40, 51 respondents (12.7%) spend RM41-RM50, 65 respondents (16.2%) spend RM11-RM20, 36 respondents (9.0%) spend RM50 and above, and only 10 respondents (2.5%) spend below RM10. Lastly, social media as an online review platform is preferable, showing 255 (63.6%) respondents than third-party platforms picked by 146 (36.4%) respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile (N=401)

Category	Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	138	34.4
	Female	263	65.6
Age	18-27	230	57.4
	28-37	98	24.4
	38-47	46	11.5
	48 years and above	27	6.7
Quick-service food purchasing frequency	Always	102	25.4
	Usually	176	43.9
	Sometimes	104	25.9
	Seldom	19	4.7
Have you ever been to any quick-service restaurants (4Fingers, Taco Bell, and Fuel Shack)?	Yes	365	91.0
	No	36	9.0
How much do you spend per visit?	Below RM10	10	2.5
	RM11-RM20	65	16.2
	RM21-RM30	155	38.7
	RM31-RM40	84	20.9
	RM41-RM50	51	12.7
	RM50 and above	36	9.0
How often do you check online customer reviews?	Very often	49	12.2
	Quite often	153	38.2
	Sometimes	125	31.2
	Rarely	74	18.4
When looking through online reviews, what platform do you primarily refer to?	Third-party review platforms	146	36.4
	Social media platforms	255	63.6

Table 2 provides the means and standard deviation distribution of all items. Table 2 also itemized the source of the measuring items used in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (N = 401)

Items Coding	Statement	Authors	Mean	Std Deviation
	Employee Skills			
B1	The employee in the quick-service restaurant is friendly.		5.69	1.015
B2	The employee in the quick-service restaurant is helpful.	(Brady & Cronin, 2001; Mohi, 2012; Purba et al., 2020)	5.76	1.085
B3	The speed of service is accurate as described.		5.88	1.117
B4	The employees are knowledgeable about the products offered in the quick-service restaurant.		5.91	1.027
B5	The employee is capable of handling problems and complaints.		5.77	1.170
	Restaurant Ambiance			
B6	The interior design and decorations of the quick-service restaurant are visually appealing.	(Heung & Gu, 2012; Jalil et al., 2016; Kement et al., 2021; Stroebele & De Castro, 2004)	5.96	1.029
B7	The arrangement in the quick-service restaurant is comfortable and provides enough seating space.		5.93	1.030

Items Coding	Statement	Authors	Mean	Std Deviation
B8	The temperature and humidity of the quick-service restaurant are comfortable.		5.93	1.075
B9	The odour in the quick-service restaurant is pleasant.		5.79	1.162
B10	The music in the quick-service restaurant is appropriate.		5.77	1.159
	Food Quality		5.94	1.120
B11	The food purchased in the quick-service restaurant is fresh.	(Huang et al., 2004;	6.00	1.118
B12	The food is consistent in quality.	Mohi, 2012;	6.07	1.036
B13	The food was served at the appropriate temperature.	Shaharudin et al., 2011)	6.01	.960
B14	The food is sufficient in portion.		5.97	1.072
	Restaurant Cleanliness			
B15	The surrounding of the dining area is clean.		5.82	1.213
B16	The toilet in the quick-service restaurant is clean.	(Kim & Bachman,	5.86	1.176
B17	The tables and chairs provided are free from food residue or stickiness.	2019; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002; Yoo,	5.87	1.145
B18	The floor of the quick-service restaurant is clean and does not have any food particles.	2012)		
	Waiting Time			
B19	The time taken to receive the food is reasonable.	(Clemes et al., 2018;	5.94	1.072
B20	There is a waiting area for customers to wait for their order.	Durrande-Moreau & Usunier, 1999; Mohi, 2012; Palawatta, 2015; Pruyn &	5.92	1.123
B21	The employee informs you of the predicted time to wait for your food order.	Smidts, 1998; Wu & Mohi, 2015; Xie & Or, 2017)	5.76	1.281
	Customer Online Review			
C1	I believe that online customer reviews are informative.		6.14	.857
C2	Customer online reviews can change my mind towards the quick-service restaurant.		6.21	.941
C3	Personal opinions are easy to understand in online customer reviews.		6.27	.883
C4	After reading the online customer review, I can recognise and remember the review.	(Somohardjo, 2017;	5.92	1.349
C5	I will search for information about the restaurant after reading online customer reviews.	Wei & Lu, 2013)	6.09	1.070
C6	Customer online reviews help me to compare restaurants.		6.28	.872
C7	I think the restaurant is worth trying after reading the online customer review.		6.24	.885
C8	The online review makes me confident in picking the quick-service restaurant.		6.25	.836

4.1 Relationship between QSR Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Online Review

The multiple regression analysis procedures were executed to analyse the relationship between the QSR Service Quality Dimensions i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time with the Customer Online Review. The breakdown of beta loading (β) and p-value are summarized in Table 3.

The beta loading and the p-value were less than 5% significant level for three QSR Service Quality Dimensions towards Customer Online Review, i.e., H_{1b} Restaurant Ambiance ($\beta = .410, P < 0.01$), H_{1d} Restaurant Cleanliness ($\beta = 0.197, P < .05$), and H_{1e} Waiting Time ($\beta = 0.194, P < .05$) were significant. Thus, indicating that the dimensions were significant in the QSR Service Quality. However, the beta loading and the p-value were greater than 10% significant level for two dimensions in the QSR Service Quality towards Customer Online Review, i.e., H_{1a} Employee Skills loading ($\beta = -.061, P > 0.10$) and H_{1c} Food Quality ($\beta = .006, P > 0.10$) were insignificant. Therefore, the results partially supported H1 and addressed the research objective.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the QSR Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Online Review

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Customers' online reviews in quick-service restaurants in Malaysia (Constant)	2.854	.196		14.553	.000
Employee Skill	-.048	.051	-.061	-.948	.344
Restaurant Ambiance	.322	.054	.410	5.921	.000
Food Quality	.005	.050	.006	.092	.927
Restaurant Cleanliness	.142	.049	.197	2.880	.004
Waiting Time	.144	.043	.194	3.341	.001

Note: ***Significant at 1% level, **Significant at 5% level, *Significant at 10% level

5 Conclusion

Previous studies suggested that service quality dimensions need to be formed to cater exclusively to various settings due to uncertainty of the actual dimensions set of service quality (Alotaibi, 2015; Brady & Cronin, 2001; Dabholkar et al., 1996; Mohi, 2012). Research objective 1 was achieved as the relationship between QSR Service Quality Dimensions (i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time) towards Customer Online Review.

5.1 Discussion Pertaining QSR Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Online Review

H1 was partially supported. The result rejects H_{1a} and H_{1c}, whereas H_{1b}, H_{1d}, and H_{1e} were accepted. The result indicated that the QSR Service Quality Dimensions significantly affected Customer Online Review. Several studies have proven the significance of service quality engaged by customers in determining the involvement with online customer review (Dixit et al., 2019; Gunden, 2017; Lee & Kim, 2020; Yan et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2010). This study identified that customer engagement towards service quality is a significant predictor of customer usage in online customer reviews.

5.1.1 Discussion Pertaining Relationship between Employee Skills and Customer Online Review

H_{1a} proposed a significant relationship between Employee Skills and Customer Online Review in QSR. However, this study rejected H_{1a}, indicating an insignificant relationship between Employee Skills and Customer Online reviews in QSR. The result implies that employee skills, such as being friendly, helpful**,** speedy service, knowledgeable on the product and service, and managing complaints, do not influence customers' online reviews in the QSR. Therefore, in the customer online review context, the result of this study does not support (Esmailpour et al., 2012; Hanafi, 2019; Javadi et al., 2012; Jeon & Choi, 2012; Titko & Lace, 2012). These studies indicated that employee skills directly affect the customers' online reviews. In line with the studies' claims, the result of this study implies that employee skill is not a critical dimension in measuring the influence on online customer review in a QSR.

5.1.2 Discussion Pertaining Relationship between Restaurant Ambiance and Customer Online Review

H_{1b} proposed a significant relationship between Restaurant Ambience and Customer Online Review in QSR. The ambience comprises lighting, music, scent, and colour. The result from this study supported H_{1b}. The result does not support Perutkova (2009), and Njite et al. (2015) claim that restaurant ambience is not crucial in QSR. This study shows that Restaurant Ambience is an important dimension of QSR service quality in influencing online customer reviews supporting Kotler (1973) and Sudhagar (2018), stating that restaurant ambience produces specific emotional effects in buyers that enhance their purchase probability. Previous studies have suggested that ambience impacts customers' attitudes and behaviour (Wu & Mohi, 2015; Zamani et al., 2020).

5.1.3 Discussion Pertaining Relationship between Food Quality and Customer Online Review

H_{1c} proposed a significant relationship between Food Quality and Online Customer Review in QSR. However, this study rejected H_{1C}, indicating an insignificant relationship between food quality and online customer review in QSR. This study implies that the food quality, such as freshness, temperature, reasonable price, and sufficient portion, does not influence online customer reviews in a QSR. This study showed that food quality is not important in influencing online customer reviews in QSR. The finding of this study does not support the previous studies (e.g., Bujisic et al., 2014; Hanaysha, 2016; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Wu & Mohi, 2015; Zhong & Moon, 2020), although many studies found that the food quality influence WOM and eWOM positively.

5.1.4 Discussion Pertaining Relationship between Restaurant Cleanliness and Customer Online Review

H_{1d} proposed a significant relationship between Restaurant Cleanliness and Customer Online Review in QSR. This study supported H_{1d}, showing that Restaurant Cleanliness is an important dimension of QSR service quality in influencing online reviews. Besides, the result supports previous studies that claim that providing the customers with a clean dining area demonstrates that the QSR care about the customers and want them to enjoy themselves while dining (see: IntegrityServices, 2018; Kim & Bachman, 2019; Ryu & Jang, 2008; Vilnai-Yavetz & Gilboa, 2010; Wu & Mohi, 2015; Yoo, 2012). A clean facility also helps make a positive first impression on customers and increase loyalty. Besides, the result supports Barber and Scarcelli (2009), (Barber & Scarcelli, 2010) and IntegrityServices (2018), claiming cleanliness is an important factor that customers use to evaluate and assess food safety and will affect their satisfaction towards the restaurant.

5.1.5 Discussion Pertaining Relationship between Waiting Time and Customer Online Review

H_{1e} proposed a significant relationship between Waiting Time and Customer Online Review in QSR. The result from this study supported H_{1e}. This study shows that Waiting Time is an important dimension of QSR service quality in influencing online customer reviews. Besides, the results support Wu and Mohi (2015), stating that customers choose QSR due to their ready-to-eat food, which suggests that time is highly influential. Besides, the result supports previous studies (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Lee & Lambert, 2006; Palawatta, 2015) that customers prefer to go to QSR to have their food as soon as possible. Waiting time is seen as a negative process; hence minimizing the time customers need to wait for service affects the satisfaction level with the

restaurant (Bielen & Demoulin, 2007; Hui & Tse, 1996; Kumar et al., 1997; Pruyn & Smidts, 1998).

5.2   Conclusion

This study has shown a partially significant relationship between QSR Service Quality Dimensions (i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time) and Customer Online Review. To increase their satisfaction level, QSR needs to be more alert to the advancement of technology and the influence of eWOM, such as online customer reviews and the QSR service quality dimensions. Besides, QSR can also learn to manage the negative customer online reviews better to ensure customers have a better experience even after dining or purchasing from the restaurant.

This study's finding can help QSR managers provide better customer service since it helps managers have more insight into the QSR Service Quality, which affects customers' perception and their experience dining and purchasing from QSR. This study also enhanced the understanding of which QSR Service Quality (i.e., Employee Skills, Restaurant Ambiance, Food Quality, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time) influences customers' buying behaviour and intention to revisit QSR. Besides, QSR employees can pay more attention to QSR Service Quality dimensions which were found significant in influencing online customer reviews (i.e., Restaurant Ambiance, Restaurant Cleanliness, and Waiting Time).

5.3   Limitations of the Research

There are some constraints during the study development. The data was collected during the current situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The Waiting Time dimension is not accurate as the researchers hoped for since the QSR needs to consider the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the limit of the number of people allowed into the restaurant at one time, hence increasing the waiting time. Furthermore, the SOP of the Covid-19 pandemic affects the QSR service quality since there is no dine-in are allowed, where customers can only take away or use food delivery applications; hence these dimensions are not majorly impacting the customers' experience. Besides, this study limits the research because it focuses on more curated QSR restaurants such as 4Fingers, Taco Bell, and Fuel Shack. Hence this research is geographically limited, and the respondent for this study is not widely represented since these QSR restaurants are not available in most regions.

5.4   Direction for Future Study

There are many other potentials to improvise and adapt to this study in the future since the QSR industry is endlessly changing and adapting to current trends. Future study is nevertheless required to support and extend this study's results and limitations.

Future researchers could add more service quality dimensions of QSR into their study to obtain more accurate results pertaining to QSR Service Quality Dimensions' influence on Customer Online Reviews. Hence, improving the dimensions of QSR Service Quality towards another possible dependent variable in a future study. Furthermore, future studies are highly advised to include intangible aspects of service quality in online food delivery (i.e., Efficiency, Privacy, fulfilment, Responsiveness, and Contact) as Yusra and Agus (2018) proposed.

This is due to the restriction of customer movement to physically experience QSR service, where dine-ins are not allowed during this pandemic. Hence, proposing more dimensions that can be adapted to the current trend or situation might be helpful to obtain a more apparent study. Besides, future researchers can study other types of Food & Beverage establishments such as fine dining restaurants or cafes with service quality dimensions to study a different market share. The result can compare the significance of the dimensions between establishments.

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