THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL AND FUNCTIONAL FACTORS OF THE ATTENDANCE TEAM IN THE SATISFACTION OF CONSUMERS OF CASUAL DINING RESTAURANTS

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Abstract

Service quality is seen as one of the main attributes in the satisfaction of restaurant consumers, with the menu and the environment, especially where the behavior of waiters and waitresses directly impacts the experience and customers' evaluation. Also considering the scarcity of research related to the topic, this study seeks to understand in more depth the importance and the impact that the behavior of the service team has on the satisfaction of consumers of casual-dining restaurants in the city of São Paulo, with focus on evaluation of the functional and personal aspects of employees' behavior. The research objectives are to evaluate if personal or functional aspects are more important in this experience, and which of the two have more influence on satisfaction.

In addition to in-depth interviews having been conducted to explore aspects of service that is considered important to consumers, a survey was conducted with a sample of 359 respondents whose frequented casual-dining restaurants at least once a month. The results of the data analysis showed that the functional and personal aspects of the service team are important in consumer satisfaction, however, the personal aspects were more relevant than functional aspects.

Keywords: consumer satisfaction, functional aspects, personal aspects, service quality, casual-dining restaurants.

1. Introduction

A consolidated concept (Giese, Cote, 2000; Finaritra, Benjamin, 2021) in the literature over the last decades is that consumer satisfaction is one of the main aims of marketing decisions. Satisfaction is a complex concept (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020; Giese, Cote, 2000), an affective response, of positive or negative valency, that results from the evaluation (Oliver, 2014) of the real experience with the expectative built over the previous stages in the decision process.

The management of consumer satisfaction has evolved with many techniques that were eventually integrated into services marketing (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) as one of the 10 service Ps, Productivity. The others are Positioning, Persona, Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People, Processes and Panorama.

Productivity includes the discussion of the quality of the service, the degree of satisfaction that is generated, and how efficient the resources are being used to achieve these results (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020).

Productivity encompasses CX, or Consumer Experience (Lowdermilk, 2013), with consumer satisfaction research and the design of the experience, UX, or User Experience (Garrett, 2010), the specific design of the digital interfaces in the experience, and CRM, or Consumer Relationship Management (Sheth, Parvatlyar, 1995; Vavra, 1993; Peppers, Rogers, 1999), the management of satisfaction after the experience, in order to reduce insatisfaction and maintain satisfaction over time, aiming for fidelity and loyalty, with contributions from Marketing One to One (Peppers, Rogers, 1999), Database Marketing (Bretzke, 1992), Data Science (Silva, 2018) and others.

In a restaurant, several "moments of truth" happen (Yüksel, Yüksel, 2002; Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020), between the customer and the service attendant – which corresponds to the time and place in which the opportunity arises to demonstrate to the consumer the quality of the services. A tripod of the main aspects of the restaurant experience satisfaction (Ryu, Lee,

Kim, 2012; Haghighi, 2012; Gawuna, 2019) are the menu (Oozdemir, Caliskan, 2015), the environment (Hanaysha, 2016) and the attendance service (Qin, Prybutok, 2009).

This study focusses on the attendance service aspects of the experience and how they affect satisfaction.

Employee behavior (Alhelalat, Habiballah Twaissi, 2017) in the service environment affects customers' perception of the quality of the service, so the success or failure to offer satisfactory service depend on the attitudes and behaviors of contact employees. Employee behavior in any interface of contact between brand and consumer (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) is an essential part of the experience, as employees are perceived by consumers (Kotler, 2016) to represent the service company, to be the brand, to have direct effect on sales, and to determine productivity. Therefore, understanding them is essential to have more assertiveness in the relationship with the client, and higher probability of satisfaction.

Given that consumer satisfaction is a theme that has been and continues to be widely addressed in national and international literature, because, among other reasons, it is considered as one of the factors that are most important to determine the success of an organization, as well as to increase its efficiency (Namin, 2016), this study seeks to explore the importance of the attendance service team in restaurants of the type "*casual dining*" – which comprise a restaurant format that offers table service and menus with moderate prices, with a casual appeal, a model, which has been gaining the Brazilian market in recent decades (Rossi, 2018). Many other formats are also present in the restaurant sector, like fast foods, buffets, a la carte, fine dining and others.

Throughout the study, a theoretical review is be presented that addresses the purchasing behavior of consumers in services; understanding of the classifications of the types of restaurants in the market, focusing on casual dining and its respective scenario in São Paulo, Brazil; as well as the main factors in casual dining restaurants and their importance, and their influence on consumer satisfaction.

2. Justification

Understanding the importance that aspects in employee attendance behavior generate in consumer satisfaction is fundamental, based on the premise that interactions with the service team in high contact services causes a strong impact on the consumers experience and, consequently, their satisfaction.

In addition, in view of the expressiveness that the casual dining restaurant segment has in the Brazilian market – which according to data from the retail consultancy GS&MD published in EXAME magazine (Rossi, 2018), casual dining chains have grown, since 2010, 20% per year in Brazil, and by 2020 the segment will have a projected growth of 25% per year, corresponding to more than double the average rate of the restaurant sector - an opportunity was identified to understand the dynamics of the segment with such relevance in the current market.

Academically, the contribution of this study consists in enriching the literature from an in-depth analysis of the variables of the attendance team that are most evaluated as more important in influencing consumer satisfaction, in a segment of restaurants still little explored in the literature: casual dining restaurants.

As contributions to executives who manage food services, it is this study provide greater reflection and attention to the impact that the functional and personal aspects of the attendance team have on the perception of consumers, since there is evidence (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) that the level of customer satisfaction influences the overall good performance of a company. For every 1% increase in customer satisfaction (Anderson; Mittal, 2000), there is a 2.37% increase in the ROI of a company.

For marketing practitioners in general, it contributes to insights on how brands can positively strengthen the relationship with the consumer, developing strategies with greater potential to become effective.

For society, better quality and satisfaction in service experiences contribute to the general well being and better value for money.

3. Bibliographic Review

3.1. Buying behavior in services

There are three main behavior stages (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) that involve the process of service consumption: pre-purchase, service meeting and post-meeting.

The first stage is the awareness of the need for the service, followed by the search for information and evaluation of alternatives. In this stage, it is fundamental to do thorough research on consumer behavior of the target persona, in order to fully understand needs and expectations. When the consumer is faced with existing service alternatives, he tends to compare and evaluate each of the options. For this, there are some types of attributes that are considered depending on the ease or difficulty of evaluating the service before the acquisition occurs, which are the search attributes, experience attributes and credibility attributes (Zeithaml, 1981; Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020). Search attributes refer to tangible attributes that allow customers to evaluate the product or service before purchasing, helping them to evaluate what they will receive in return for the money invested, minimizing the uncertainty or risk associated with the purchase. In the case of consumer goods, there is a high degree in search attributes. However, it is also possible for tangible attributes to be found in services. It is possible in restaurants (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) to evaluate the type of food, the location, the environment (which can be more casual, familiar, sophisticated, etc.), in addition to the price that is charged. As for experience attributes, these cannot be evaluated before the time of purchase. Using the same example as before, it is not be possible to evaluate whether the food is good, whether the waiter's service is satisfactory or if the atmosphere is pleasant, if the service is not consumed. The credibility attributes are those that are characterized as difficult to evaluate, even after the purchase and consumption of the service. Therefore, the customer must trust that the promised benefits will be delivered with the promised quality in the purchase. In restaurants, some examples that could be given refer to the hygiene of the kitchen or the validity of the products are within due date (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020). In credibility services, perceived risk is an important factor. Consumer perceived risk has (Stone, Grønhaug, 1993), mainly, a focus on possible negative results that may be occur in the most varied purchasing situations.

Consumers have a minimum risk acceptance degree (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020; Kotler, 2016), and if the perceived risk is above it, he will probably postpone the decision and search for more information. When evaluating similar options, the service chosen will be the one with the lowest perceived risk. Compared to physical goods, services usually have a higher perceived risk because they have a higher proportion of attributes of experience and credibility.

After evaluating all options and selecting the preferred, consumers build an expectation of the possible performance.

Expectations (Zeithaml, Berry, Parasuraman, 1993) are subjective standards that consumers compare with experiences, with an effective response (Giese, Cote, 2000) related to the satisfaction and quality assessments of that result. They propose a model composed of the desired service, adequate service, provided service and a tolerance zone existing between the desired service and the appropriate service.

The desired service is the ideal level expected by the consumer, however, as consumers recognize that the company is not always able to deliver what was idealized, the minimum

acceptable level of service is termed as the appropriate service; the tolerance zone, in turn, corresponds to the range zone between the ideal and expected level of acceptable service; the planned service is the level of service they expect to most probably receive, based on past experiences, information from different sources, etc.

The second stage consists in the realization itself of the purchased service, where it is very important that the actual experience follows the planning actions defined on insights and information from research.

The third stage is also very important, as it is when the evaluation of the performance of the service provided happens, with the resulting satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

3.2. Consumer satisfaction

Satisfying consumer needs is one of the main marketing objectives of organizations. In this way, it is essential to recognize and monitor customer satisfaction so that it contributes to an overall evaluation of the performance of organizations (Marchetti, Prado, 2001).

There are different theories and definitions of Consumer Satisfaction in the literature, such as the Theory of disconfirmation of expectation (Oliver, 1981), Theory of assimilation or cognitive dissonance (Anderson, 1973), theory of equity (Oliver, Swan, 1989) and Perceived value theory (Westbrook; Reily, 1983). The Theory of the disconfirmation of the expectation (Oliver, 1981) has shown over time broader acceptance among researchers. According to this theory, consumer satisfaction is the result of the evaluation of the fit between customer expectations and the performance perceived over the experience. If the performance meets the initial expectations, the consumer will be satisfied, since the expectation has been positively unconfirmed. However, if the opposite occurs, the consumer will be dissatisfied, considering that the perceived performance was lower than the initial expectation, which is negatively disconfirmed (Oliver, 1981; Liu; Jang, 2009).

3.3. Customer perceived quality in services

Quality is recognized as a strategic tool in achieving operational efficiency and improvement in business performance, and this applies to both consumer goods and the service sector (Jain; Gupta, 2004).

PARASURAMAN, ZEITHALM and BERRY (1988) proposed a 44-item service quality measurement scale called SERVQUAL, which is considered one of the major milestones in the literature regarding the quality of services and has been applied to most service segments (Jain; Gupta, 2004).

An improvement to SERVQUAL, proposed by CRONIN and TAYLOR (1992), denominated SERVPERF, has been considered as one of its main adaptations (Jain; Gupta, 2004), and empirically superior to SERVQUAL "[...] *for being able to explain a greater variation in the overall quality of the service measured through the use of the single item scale*" (Jain; Gupta, 2004, p. 28).

For restaurants (Liu, Jang, 2009), the perceived quality in the restaurants is basically tied the tripod: the quality of food, quality of service and quality of the atmosphere of the service environment. In general, food quality is considered the main influencing aspect in consumer satisfaction (Liu, Jang, 2009), since food plays a key role in the restaurant experience.

However, there is also some evidence that the quality of employee service may be more significant to the customer than the quality of food when it comes to consumer satisfaction in restaurants (Liu; Jang, 2009). In another study (Kukanja, Omerzel, Kodrič, 2016), the dimensions that contributed to the perception of restaurant quality were people, location and product (food), in which the dimension related to people was the only one that significantly influenced the post-purchase behavior of consumers. In another study (Yüksel, Yüksel, 2002)

showed that compared to the other attributes, the quality of the service obtained greater significance for the satisfaction of consumers in restaurants at an aggregate level of marketing, that is, even if the restaurant has impeccable communication, for example, everything will be in vain if customer service is flawed, because it will directly affect the experience and satisfaction. The quality of service offered by employees is particularly more important (Yüksel, Yüksel, 2002) in satisfying consumers considered "adventurous" and "healthy" in the study.

Based on the peculiarities that restaurants have, a range of service quality scales have been adapted to this segment. DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, Patton, 1995), a 29-item scale adapted from SERVQUAL and LODGSERV (Knutson, Stevens, 1990) focusing on the housing industry), in which the same dimensions proposed by PARASURAMAN, ZEITHALM and BERRY (1988) were used: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. DIVESERV (Stevens, Knutson, Patton, 1995) was developed in a study regarding fine-dining, casual-dining and fast-food restaurants, in order to have an overview on quality in these segments.

3.4. Attendance personnel

The attendance personnel in the service experience are fundamental in both the cognitive and affective processes while delivering the experience. Professionals (Wirtz, Hemzo, Lovelock, 2020) who perform customer service functions, known as "front line", working on interfaces between brand and client, are those who cross the barrier between the internal and external part of the organization. Therefore, a proper service, efficient in operational tasks, as well as courteous and helpful to customers, is very important for the excellence of the service provided and for competitive advantage in the market. This is due, among other factors, to a greater difficulty for competitors in reproducing high-performance human assets than other corporate resources.

3.5. A restaurant taxonomy

A classification scheme of restaurants is important (Bowen, 1990), as this segment is fragmented and consumers look for variety of offers. Several approaches are possible, but the main typology divides restaurants as fast foods, buffets, a la carte, fine dining and others.

Fast-food (or fast-service) restaurants, objects of this study, are characterized (Ryu, Jang, 2008) by fast service, little or no table service, plus limited-variety menus. The physical environment in this type of restaurant ends up having a lower impact on the perception of consumers, for example, because they tend to be more concerned with the responsiveness in which food will be served, for example.

On the other hand, luxury restaurants (also known as fine-dining) have a completely different appeal. The consumer who frequents this type of restaurant usually stays for hours on site, so that the service environment is fundamental for a satisfactory experience, being more important to take into account the hedonic nature that luxury restaurants experience bring (RYU; JANG, 2008).

The casual-dining restaurants, in turn, are an intermediate option, seeking to serve consumers by offering quality food, with moderate prices, in a pleasant environment for the most diverse occasions. In study conducted in India (Ponnam, Balaji, 2014), to identify the significance that the attributes of this type of restaurant have in determining the consumer experience, the responsiveness of the service team as well as the "*gourmet flavor*" were the most important attributes for the customer in their restaurant experience, although the motivations for the consumer to go to a restaurant of this type were quite varied, requiring focus and special services of the attendance team for each of them.

3.6. Customer satisfaction in restaurants

For PARASURAMAN, ZEITHALM and BERRY (1988) the distinction between perceived quality of service and customer satisfaction lies in: quality of service is a global judgment or attitude, which relates to the superiority of the service, while satisfaction is tied to the specific situation. Consumer satisfaction (Liu and Jang, 2009), in turn, influences recommendation, customer loyalty, and the propensity to pay more for the service provided.

Other affecting factors (Yüksel, Yüksel, 2002) - that could be fitted in the tripod - like hygiene, convenience and location, also contribute to the assessment of consumer satisfaction in restaurants.

3.7. Service team and consumer satisfaction

There is evidence of high correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Schneider; Bowen, 1993). The model of the profit chain of the service (Heskett et al, 1994) shows how satisfaction, retention and productivity of employees are fundamental to perceived service value customer satisfaction and loyalty, and to the company's revenue growth and profitability.

The service team is also influential to the perception of service quality (Mei et al, 1999) is represented by three dimensions, essentially: employee behavior, tangibility and reliability. The quality of restaurant service (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2002), is explained by standards of service efficiency, consistency and employee competence.

Profit and consumer satisfaction (Emery, Frendall, 2002) are correlated to the structure of the working group, suggesting that a service team that works holistically and integrated tends to deliver better results to the organization, both in the financial aspect and in levels of consumer satisfaction.

The evaluation of the soft-skills of employees that meet the satisfaction of customer needs, tied to successful communication, are fundamental. Interpersonal skills (Weber et al, 2009; (Alhelalat, Habiballah Twaissi, 2017; Madanoglu, 2006) refer to the employee's ability to communicate and understand others at interpersonal and emotional levels. In addition, the social skills of the attendance team should also be considered, so that the social roles of these and clients can be established.

Personal aspects of the service staff (Alhelalat, Habiballah, Twaissi, 2017) that were evaluated include: personal hygiene, cordiality, appearance of clean and tidy staff, humor, politeness, friendliness, language skills and good conduct. As for the functional aspects, they included: knowledge of the menu offered, accuracy and speed of service, availability and attention to customers in an individualized way, respect for privacy, behavior of employees in situations involving the treatment of complaints and hygiene. In their study, the personal aspects of the attendance team were of greater significance in consumer satisfaction than functional aspects.

4. Research Problem

The findings of these previous studies show the great importance that the quality of the service provided by the employees of a restaurant has in the evaluation of consumer satisfaction (in addition to other aspects related to the quality of food and the environment).

The focus of the research problem of this study seeks to respond in greater depth to the following question:

What is the importance of the aspects of the service team in restaurants classified as casual-dining and how they affect consumer satisfaction, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil?

This research problem resulted in two hypotheses to be tested in this study.

4.1. Hypothesis 1

H$_0$: The personal aspects of the attendance team are more important than the functional aspects of the attendance team.

H$_1$: The personal aspects of the attendance team are no more important than the functional aspects of the attendance team.

4.2. Hypothesis 2

H$_0$: The personal aspects of the attendance team influence consumer satisfaction more than functional aspects.

H$_1$: The personal aspects of the attendance team do not influence consumer satisfaction more than functional aspects.

5. Methodology

5.1. Qualitative research

5.1.1. Qualitative research methodology

The qualitative method (Malhotra, 2012) is important to establish the problem and develop the approach in research, thus assisting in the future construction of hypotheses and discover variables that should be inserted in the research. In order to assist in better understanding the variables involved in the two proposed hypotheses, eleven face-to-face individual in-depth interviews were conducted.

The in-depth interview (Malhotra, 2012), is an unstructured and direct model, to achieve content and performed individually. The interviewer works with one person at a time, in order to obtain information, motivations, feelings and beliefs of the respondent in relation to a given topic. In this way, qualitative research (McDaniel, Gates, 2003) can understand in a deep and exploratory way the motivations of consumers, thus obtaining information in subjective and comprehensive ways.

For the number of participants, it was adopted the criteria of theoretical saturation of qualitative research (Guest, Bunce, Johnson, 2006), that was reached after the seventh interview.

The choice of the interviewees occurred intentionally, with preference for those knowledgeable with casual-dining restaurants and with minimum attendance of a last visit in less two months. The interviews were conducted with the help of a script, based on the variables identified in the bibliographical review, with open questions that stimulated the respondent to answer freely, with the objective of discussing consumer perceptions of casual dining and attendance team service quality. All interviews were conducted personally, and were recorded and transcripted. The interviewees were instructed on the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of the answers, and were encouraged to deal with the subject unpretentiously. As soon as there was a semantic saturation in the interviews, these were closed. All conversations were recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

5.1.2. Qualitative research results

For the analysis of qualitative data (Malhotra, 2012), it is necessary that three general steps are taken: (1) data reduction; (2) data display; and (3) completion and verification. With them, it is possible to explore some personal and functional aspects of the service team in casual-dining restaurants, especially, which are important to consumers. In all the interviews conducted, the respondents indicated the importance that a good service has in the perception of quality of service and subsequent satisfaction, being an aspect mentioned by all.

It was possible to group the aspects considered important of the attendance team into two different types of practices: functional and personal, similar to that found by ALHELALAT, HABIBALLAH and TWAISSI (2017).

It is also possible to understand what are the factors considered important by the respondents as a satisfying restaurant experience: fair service, good service, quality food and a warm and clean environment, were the most relevant aspects in the perception that respondents have of satisfaction in casual-dining restaurants.

It was also indicated by the interviewees that usually going to casual-dining restaurants is related to different occasions, such as birthday celebrations, with work colleagues or friends, as well as to special moments with the family.

The warm and comfortable atmosphere was also mentioned in the interviews.

However, some reported aspects of unsatisfactory service, as long waiting time in line, especially at peak times, which can make them change to another place to eat.

To ease this discomfort, the offer of appetizers and drinks in the waiting room was indicated as a positive point to be followed by the restaurants.

5.2. Quantitative research

5.2.1. Quantitative research methodology

In a first moment, an exploratory research was carried out in search of primary data with respondents who had the habit of attending casual-dining restaurants, based on an adaptation of the variables of theoretical model proposed by ALHELALAT, HABIBALLAH and TWAISSI (2017).

Next, a questionnaire was elaborated with the objective of validating the proposed hypotheses. For this, a single cross-sectional descriptive research (Malhotra, 2012) was carried out, being conclusive in nature.

The sample was collected by convenience, with filters that only included respondents of at least 18 years old, residents of the city of São Paulo, with a minimum casual-dining restaurants frequency of at least once a month.

The questionnaire was made available online and remained open for answering for twenty days (between December 2019 and January 2020).

5.2.2. Quantitative research results

Initially 359 questionnaires were answered and after applying the filter questions, 329 valid answers remained.

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-one variables that addressed questions about the speed of service, attention and availability of the waiter, communication skills, knowledge about the menu, hygiene, respect for the client's space, customer assistance with the requests to be made, personal presentation, cleaning of uniforms, attention to special needs that customers may have, cordiality and good manners, empathy and sympathy. Seven-point Likert scales (not important - very important) were used to evaluate the level of importance given, in their opinion, for each of the statements.

The resulting database was analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 21. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis and multiple regression were used to analyze the hypotheses. Cronbach's α was also used to test the reliability of the used scales.

The interviewees in their majority (41%) frequent restaurant in general from one to three times a month.

For the specific frequency of casual-dining restaurants, 54% attend one to three times a month. This higher frequency suggests that going to casual-dining restaurants have different motivations.

Functional and personal aspects of the service team (Alhelalat, Habiballah,Twaissi, 2017) have direct impact on the consumer perception of quality of service. Thus, a factor analysis was performed in order to classify the twenty-one variables into two distinct groups (functional and personal aspects). The KMO test (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin), a statistical procedure that allows to measure the quality of correlations between the variables. resulted equal to 0.925, what can be considered "very good" (Pestana, Gageiro, 2003).

The extraction method Principal Component analysis was used, stipulating that the 21 variables to be distributed into two factors, in order to adapt to this previous reference (Alhelalat, Habiballah, Twaissi, 2017). The two resulting factors explained 60.3% of the total data variation.

Only 3 rotations were required in the factor matrix, in order to have the variables associated with each factor. Varimax orthogonal rotation was used, which minimizes the number of variables with high loads in one factor, facilitating the interpretation of factors (HAIR, 2014). The lower the number of rotations, the better the adequacy of the data to the model. It can be considered that the adequacy of the model in the analysis, is good.

The anti-image correlation showed that it was not necessary to eliminate any variable, since there were no coefficients lower than 0.5 in the main diagonal.

To assess the internal consistency of the factors, Cronbach's α test was performed. The α for the "Functional" factor (10 items) was 0.93 and the one for the "Personal" factor (11 items) was 0.91, which shows an excellent internal consistency due to the coefficients being very close to 1.0.

In order to test Hypothesis 1, proposing to "the personal aspects of the attendance team are more important than the functional aspects of the attendance team", the descriptive statistics of the variables were analyzed.

The overall average of the "Functional" factor was 5.80, above the scale average of the 7-point scale of importance. The variable V10 (hygiene of the waiter at the time of serving the dishes) was considered the most important with 6.35 average, followed by V8 (the waiter is organized with the orders taken from the customer) with 6.29 and the V3 (the waiter knows how to ask the questions about the menu).

On the other hand, the variables considered less important for the respondents are, respectively, V4 (the waiter makes recommendations of dishes according to the customer's taste) with an average of 5.12, the variable V5 (the waiter knows how to adapt the service according to the occasion of lunch/dinner) with 5.19 and, finally, the variable V2 (the waiter is attentive to the customer's needs, without needing to be called) with 5.46.

The overall average of the "Personal" factor was 5.98. The variable V13 (the attitude of the waiter is cordial and hospitable) was considered the most important for respondents with an average of 6.37, followed by V15 (the waiter respects the privacy of the customer) with an average 6.35.

Referring to the variables considered less important, V19 (the waiter addresses the customer by name) with an average of 4.29, followed by V16 (the waiter welcomes the customer and presents himself by name) with 5.70.

In summary, the personal aspects were slightly more important than the functional aspects of the respondents, since the average 5.98 is higher than 5.80. In this way, it is possible to confirm Hypothesis 1.

Based on the qualitative and bibliographical research (Alhelalat, Habiballah, Twaissi, 2017), the construct "Satisfaction" had four questions using a seven-point Likert scale (I totally disagree - "I totally agree".

The descriptive statistics of the factor "Satisfaction", showed that the overall average of the factor was 6.50, where S1 ("I am satisfied when the prices of the restaurant are fair with what I consumed") had an average of 6.64, the highest among the other variables. On the other hand, the variable S2 ("A good service is essential for my satisfaction in a restaurant") had an average of 6.33, the lowest among the four variables.

The α Cronbach factor resulted in 0.76, which can be considered reasonable and allows use the analysis. It was evaluated whether by excluding any of the items there would be an increase in α, but this did not occur.

To test Hypothesis 2, proposing that "the personal aspects of the attendance team influence more consumer satisfaction than functional aspects", Multiple Regression was used, in order to identify the level of influence that the importance of independent variables ("Functional" from V1 to V10 and "Personal" from V11 to V21) has on the perception of consumer satisfaction in casual-dining restaurants.

The regression model resulted in the adjusted R^2 of 16.9%, indicating that this is the percentage of variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables. This relatively small value suggests that the rest of the percentage of variation is explained by other factors that are not related to the ("Functional" and "Personal") behavior of the attendance team. Other aspects, as discussed before (Ryu, Lee, Kim, 2012; Haghighi, 2012; Gawuna, 2019), such as food quality and the menu (Oozdemir, Caliskan, 2015), the quality of the service environment (Hanaysha, 2016) and the service provided by the attendance team (Qin, Prybutok, 2009), might also be responsible for the remaining percentage.

The Durbin-Watson test shows no autocorrelation between the independent variables, as the value found is close to 2.

Analyzing the ANOVA, it is possible to infer that consumer satisfaction can be explained by the model, since $p<0.05$ and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Finally, to evaluate Hypothesis 2, the resulting coefficients were analyzed. The independent variable "Functional" has $\beta = 0.157$ and $p = 0.012$, while the variable "Personal" has $\beta = 0.316$ and $p = 0.000$. Thus, considering that the standardized coefficient of the variable "Personal" is higher than that of the variable "Functional", it is possible to infer that the personal aspects of the behavior of the attendance team are a more important forecaster in the perception of consumer satisfaction in casual-dining restaurants than the functional aspects.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Main results

The literature shows the importance that the quality of attendance service has in the satisfaction of the consumer of restaurants, especially, in addition to other aspects such as food quality and quality of the service environment. The study is another indication that this premise is true. When analyzing the importance that the personal and functional aspects of behavior of the casual-dining restaurant service team has to consumers in isolation, it was possible to conclude that both aspects are considered important to satisfactory experience, but personal factors have more influence in consumer satisfaction in relation to functional aspects. Thus, cordiality and hospitality, respect for customer privacy, ability to communicate, friendliness, attendance to special requests from the client, in addition to clean and tidy uniforms, are the aspects most appreciated by consumers. It is worth mentioning that there are several aspects of a restaurant are considered in a customer satisfaction assessment, such as quality of food and the environment.

6.2. Academic implications

In the Brazilian literature there are not many studies that aim to analyze consumer satisfaction in casual-dining restaurants, in particular the aspects related to influence of the attendance team factors on consumer satisfaction. When it comes to an analysis that focuses on the importance that the behavior of the service team has in consumer satisfaction in this type of restaurant, there is still a greater scarcity of studies with this theme. Thus, by subdividing into two large groups of aspects of the behavior of the attendance team (functional and personal) the analysis became more specific, contributing to further deepening into the theme.

6.3. Executive implications

The study reinforces the importance that a good attendance service has for the consumer in its evaluation and, later, in satisfaction with the restaurant. As the main point of the analysis, it is important to recognize that the personal aspects of the attendance team are considered more relevant to the consumer than other behavioral aspects in this segment, although both are important. Considering that the personal aspects are, for the most part, something that is part of the employee's profile, it is essential that in the recruitment and selection of new employees, the hiring process gives preference to people who have a personality that is consistent with what is expected by the customer and that is aligned with the restaurant culture. Waiters should be friendly, respectful, polite and communicate well to generate good levels of satisfaction in a casual-dining restaurant. For employees who are already part of the team, it is suggested that training and motivational programs be offered, based on the importance that their behavior reflects on a good consumer experience (such as being friendly, pleasant and attentive to customer needs).

6.4. Limitations and future studies

The focus of the study was on consumers of casual-dining restaurants in the city of São Paulo, therefore, the sample used is limited to the opinion of the profile of the interviewed "*paulistanos*". Because the sample was obtained by convenience, not allowing a possible generalization of the study results, it is recommended that more robust techniques of random sampling be used. As the study was conducted only with consumers of casual-dining restaurants in the city of São Paulo, there is the possibility of replicating it in other scenarios as well and evaluating the similarities and differences between other groups.

In addition, the study was based on the importance that the behavioral aspects of the attendance team (functional and personal) have in consumer satisfaction, in isolation. For a more complete analysis it is suggested that other aspects related to consumer satisfaction (such as food quality and quality of the environment, for instance) be evaluated, so that a more holistic view of the perception of consumers of this particular type of restaurant is evaluated. In future studies it is also interesting to analyze how motivation to go to the restaurant influences the perception of importance of the aspects of attendance, as well as their quality. The study could also be applied to other different formats of restaurants.

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