Role of Servqual Dimensions in Evaluating the Service Quality of Fast-Food Restaurants in India

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ABSTRACT: *One of the most significant factors for a service firm's growth, success and decline is the quality of services provided. It is certainly a key element that ensures the survival of a service provider in the aura of stringent competition. Service quality as a research subject gained popularity due to its qualitative attributes. In reference to the fast-food restaurant industry, service quality manifests itself as the most significant factor responsible for the survival and prosperity of a fast-food restaurant. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in customer retention, which ultimately leads to brand loyalty and, thus, profitability. This study was intended to evaluate the quality of services offered by the fast-food restaurants operating in the rural parts of Kashmir. Furthermore, the course of this study was based on the Servqual model of service quality developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988). Simple random sampling was conducted through a self-administered questionnaire developed on the blueprint of the original Servqual research instrument provided with a five-point Likert-type scale. The research instrument was found to be internally consistent and reliable with the help of reliability analysis using SPSS. The sample size for the study was 250, but the responses of 218 respondents were considered for analysis. Data analysis was performed through a reliable statistical tool IBM SPSS. This study recorded comprehensive customer satisfaction, yet the quality remained below par in certain service quality dimensions. It was suggested that certain corrective measures would help increase the service quality equally on all the five dimensions of the Servqual model. Moreover, it was concluded that the Servqual model of service quality is the most reliable and suitable tool for measuring customer satisfaction.*

1. Introduction

Service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another, that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything (Kotler, 2000). Service is not just an action performed but it is a reciprocation of skills, abilities and knowledge against a fair remuneration. Put together, a service is a desirable action or effort discharged to gratify a need or to clinch a demand. Services are intangible and heterogeneous, and besides the intangibility, services present three other characteristics: inseparability, variability and perishability. Intangibility is characterized by the activities which cannot be seen, felt, heard or proven before they are acquired. The inseparability translates to the simultaneity in which services are produced and consumed. Perishability reinforces that services cannot be stored in advance, so it is essential that strategies are developed in order to stretch a balance between existing demand and provision of services(Pena, Silva, Tronchin & Melleiro, 2013).

Although service functions are the primary and significant components of every industry (Commun., 2000), the service sector is associated with the production of services only and not goods. In 2010, the share of services in the US $63 trillion world gross domestic product (GDP) was nearly 68 per cent as in 2001 (Economic Survey, 2010-12). The service industry, be it

travel, leisure, entertainment, or finance, embraces activities requiring interaction and involvement between humans and machines. The service sector is the prime driver in the growth of an economy both in developing and developed countries (Uwitonze & Heshmati, 2016). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) states that the service sector is the boulevard for economic transformation because of the fact that not all countries have a competitive privilege in the manufacturing sector (UNECA, 2015). The economic development in view of the service sector is the sole path of promoting economic structural adjustment and uplifting the transformation of economic growth (Zhou, 2015). Thus, it could be concluded that irrespective of a particular economy or any nation, the services sector in a global context acts as a bridge that connects economies with development and prosperity.

The service sector is the largest and fastest-growing sector in India and has the highest labour productivity (Mukherjee, 2013). India ranks among the top 10 World Trade Organization members in service exports and imports. In India, growth in the services sector has been linked to the liberalization and reforms of the 1990s. During the first three decades (1950-1970) after independence, there was a rise in the GDP at an average decadal growth rate of less than four per cent. Indian economy back then was largely based on agriculture. The share of the services sector was not much, and alarge number of services were government monopolies. The growth in the services sector was witnessed in the mid - 1980s but growth actually accelerated in the 1990s when India instigated a series of economic reforms as a measure to tackle the severe balance of payment crisis faced by the country. It was the early nineties when India was passing through an unprecedented economic crisis following political instability that was further aggravated by the impact of the Gulf War. The country was trapped in the galloping position of foreign exchange reserves and other micro-economic imbalances. The reforms paved the way for faster manufacturing growth, raising the demand for certain types of services. Moreover, the financial sector reforms resulted in a rapid growth of financial services. The reforms in certain infrastructure areas also contributed to growth in the services sector. Reforms in the services sector were a part of the overall reform process, which led to privatization, removal of FDI restrictions, etc. (Bandral, 2014).

Undoubtedly, service quality is a substantial ingredient of competition in varied markets, be it conventional service industries or manufacturing sectors. Ample studies have emphasized the relationship between service quality and competition among service-providing firms, finding evidence that intensified competition generally leads to increased service quality levels (Mazzeo, 2003) (Olivares & Cachon, 2009). In the present global business scenario, with intense competition, high-quality service delivery has been reckoned to be critically important for the success of service organizations. Every sector of the economy is under enormous pressure to offer its customers high-quality services. Referring to this, the needs and expectations of the customers too are changing at a meteoric velocity, which as a consequence, urges the service providers to make certain that they have varied courses of action in place which are meant to ensure that the ever-changing needs and expectations of the customers are met effectively(Todd & Greig, 2007).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Service & Services Sector
The service sector is the prime driver of the growth of an economy in both developing and developed countries (Uwitonze & Heshmati, 2016). It is the swiftly growing sector in India with significant contributions to GDP, economic growth, trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, as is evident from the total share of this sector to India's GDP, around 65 per cent(Uwitonze & Heshmati, 2016). The rise in the service sector output resulted from the express development of skill-intensive services in the information technology and service segments (Iashmi & Kumar, 2012) (Das & Raut, 2014). Hotels and restaurants, banking, real estate, research and education, transport, electricity, medical and health, communications and many more comprise the services sector and a significant credit of the growth in this sector goes to the rapid urbanization. It is by the virtue of urbanization that a huge workforce is supplied to the services industry boosts its growth. Moreover, the rise in the demand for intermediate and final consumer services also adds to the growth of the services sector. Services are boundlessly used by different people in every sphere of life. From education to entertainment, finance to fast food, travel to telephone, advertisement to amusement parks, and market research to maintenance services. The tremendous growth of the services sector has increased its importance in the world economies (Singh & Kaur, 2014).

2.2. Service Quality
Service quality is the customer's perception after purchasing the service (Parasuraman et al., 1994). It is the level of discrepancy between a consumer's perception and his expectations along the quality dimensions (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) and the customer's overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of the organization and its services (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994). Service quality is a significant element in the services industry, with the help of which various services can be differentiated. The higher the quality of the service provided, the more satisfaction the customers derive (Gupta & Chen, 1995) (Getty & Getty, 2003) (Tsang & Qu, 2000). The high quality of service delivered to customers allows businesses to differentiate themselves in competitive markets (Yavas & Benkenstein, 2007).In the present global business scenario, the competition is intense, and therefore, high-quality service delivery has been reckoned to be critically important for the success of service organizations. Every single sector of the economy is under enormous pressure to offer its customers

high-quality services. The works of Juran & Deming predominantly proposed the concept that product planning and quality are the preconditions for customer satisfaction, which eventually led to the foundation of ISO 9000 standards. A substantial understanding of service quality and its distinction from product quality was, however, proffered by the literature published in the late 70's and early 80's. The expectations serve as standards with which subsequent experiences are compared, resulting in evaluations of satisfaction or quality (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). The belief that service quality is likely to be a powerful determinant of customer retention is by and large confirmed by the works (Cronin & Taylor, 1992),(Gundersen, 1996) (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000), Parasuraman et al. 1994,(Poon & Low, 2005). Hence, with service quality kept in sync, loyalty and customer retention ascend and, in turn, lead to business profitability.

2.3. Fast Food Restaurants & the Indian Food Service Industry

The fast-food restaurants, also known as fast-food restaurants, include casual fast-food restaurants and food trucks. Casual fast-food restaurants offer the customers proper seating provisions. These casual fast-food restaurants are a hybrid of classic counter-service fast food restaurants and traditional table service restaurants. On the other hand, the food trucks are fast food restaurants on the wheels. These fast-food outlets do not offer seating provisions. They are often parked outside the premises of various worksites be it a factory, an office, an institution and the like. A number of studies have been conduct over the realms of time which have often dealt with service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and likewise, in context of the fast food restaurants (Aaijaz & Ibrahim, 2011) (Wu, 2013) (Khan, Hussain, & Yaqoob, 2013) (Aftab, Sarwar, Sultan, & Qadeer, 2016) (Patabandige & Yapa, 2016). Indian economy today has a significant presence in the world economic platform. Globally, India ranks 7th in nominal GDP and 3rd in PPP terms. It is estimated that by FY 2020, India will be in the top 5 global economies and by FY 2050, it will be in the top 3 global economies(Dabas & Lunawat, 2017). Food services have emerged as a key segment of the Indian economy. The overall market size of the Indian food services industry is estimated to be INR 5.99 lakh crores by 2022-23, growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 9 per cent (National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), 2019).

2.4. SERVQUAL Model of Service Quality

Servqual is a service quality model developed by eminent researchers Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1988). Since its inception it has been widely put in use for various researches across the globe. According to the authors, service quality is a multidimensional concept, assessed and perceived by consumers according to a set of essential components, originally grouped in ten categories (1985) and then in five levels (1988). These five dimensions of *Servqual* model are: *(i) Tangibles (ii) Reliability (iii) Responsiveness (iv) Assurance (v) Empathy*. *Servqual* is popularly used by varied studies aiming to determine service quality and is a multiple item scale developed to measure service quality by analyzing the differences between consumers' desired expectations and their perceptions of a firm's performance. *Servqual* has actually been applied as a basis for evaluating the service quality in multiple contexts, such as retail apparel speciality stores (Gagliano & Hathcote, 1994), higher education(Galloway, 1998), hospital services (Hwang, Eves, & Desombre, 2003), and health club services (Walker & Baker, 2000). Various researchers and practitioners have used modified versions of the *Servqual* scale to measure service quality in their studies such as(Atilgan, Akinci, & Aksoy, 2003) (Devi & Ross, 2003). As argued by (Lewis & Booms, 1983), *Servqual* is the most widely used instrument for measuring service quality. Similarly, (Bojanic & Rosen, 1994)have referred to *Servqual* as an unmatched tool for managerial actions. Many researchers, such as (Akbaba, 2006), researched to measure the service quality in the hotel industry in Turkey using the *Servqual* model of service quality. His study validated the usefulness of *Servqual* scale in service quality measurement. According to the literature, service quality is important because of its affirmative correlation with customer satisfaction, customer retention and business patronage, costs, profitability and competitive advantage, and the *Servqual* model significantly contributes to assessing the same.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Objectives of the Study

The fundamental purpose of this study is to examine the role of *Servqual* dimensions of service quality in assessing the service quality in the fast-food restaurants in the rural parts of Kashmir. Furthermore, this study aims at analyzing the aspects where the service quality could be enhanced further to achieve the maximum profit for the fast-food restaurants. Moreover, this study will emphasize the differences between the expectations and the perceptions of the customers in context of these fast-food restaurants. Detailed outlines of the objectives of this study are as follows:

A1. Perform an assessment of the perceptions and the expectations of customers in the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir.

A2. Perform a GAP analysis to identify the differences between customer perceptions and expectations.

A3. Determine the significance of service quality dimensions to find out which dimension influences service quality the most.

3.2. Sample Design& Data Analysis Techniques

The sampling technique used in this study is Snowball sampling technique which ensured that each member of the stratified

sample had an equal chance of being selected. Responses from a total of 200 customers were collected from selected fast-food restaurants through the questionnaire developed in consonance with the *Servqual* scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988). After a thorough revision, 218 questionnaires were finalized to be included in the research analysis of this study.

The data analysis techniques incorporated in the study were Cronbach's coefficient popularly known as Cronbach's á (alpha), Factor analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, statistical mean, gap analysis and *t*-test(2-tailed). As a part of the research analysis, a frequency analysis was done for the purpose of examining the distribution of varied variables, which are based on the demographic elements of the respondents, such as gender, age, annual household income, and occupation.

Table 1. Showing the gender distribution in the sample size
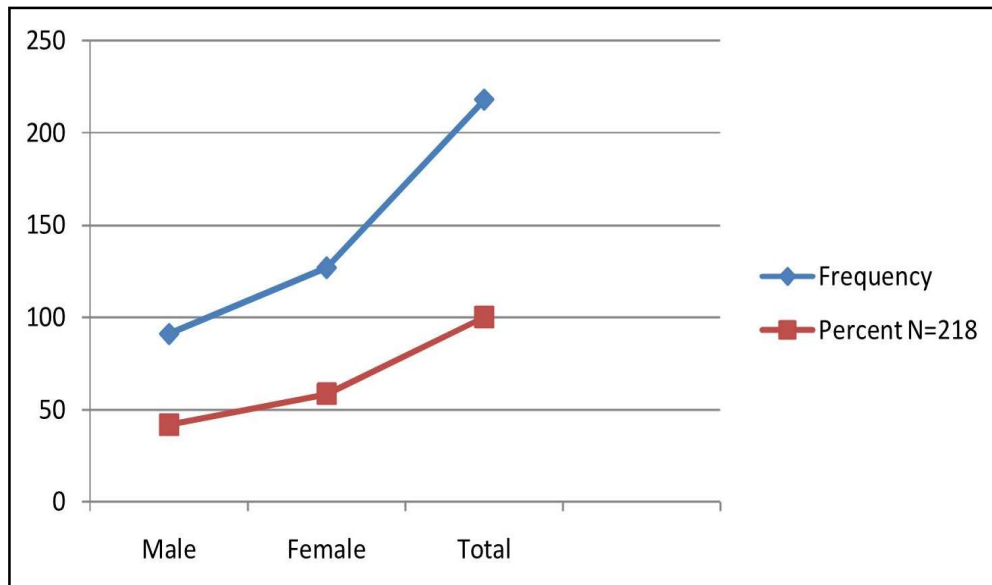
The above table 1 shows that 91 respondents were male forming approximately 42% of the sample size and 127 respondents were females forming approximately 58% of the sample size.

Table 2. Showing the age of the respondents
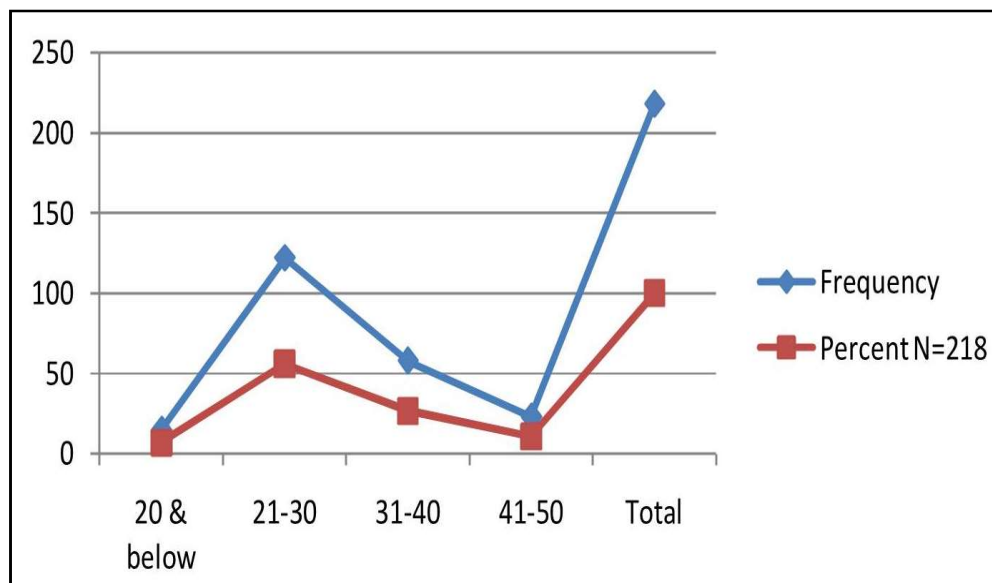
The above table 2 shows that 15 respondents were of the age group of 20 and below, 122 respondents were of the age group of 21-30, 58 were in the third category and 23 in the fourth category respectively.

Table 3. Showing the annual household income of the respondents. (amt in lacs)
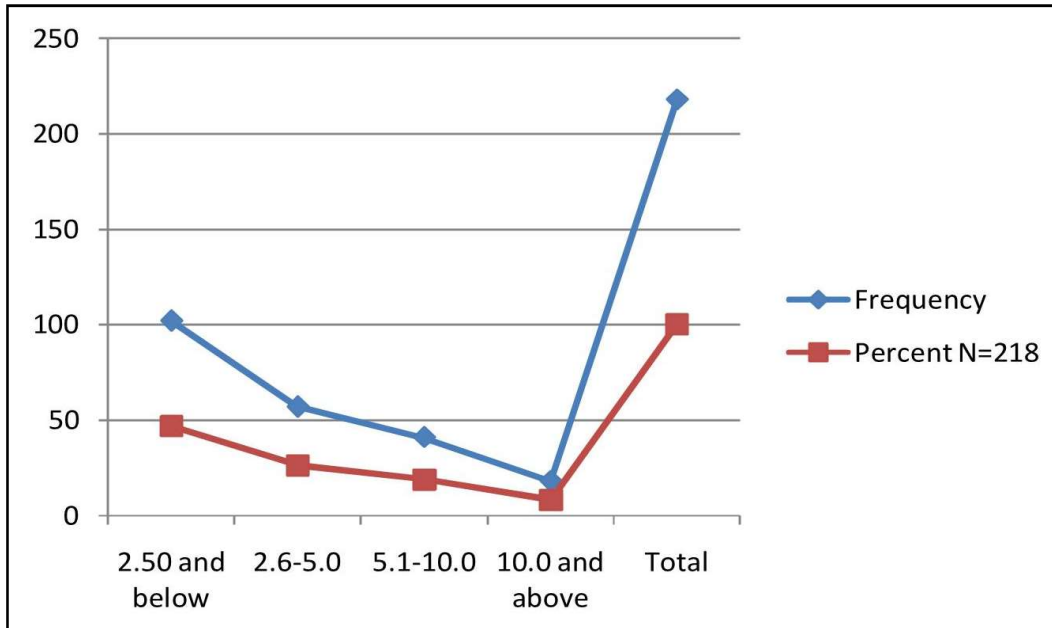
The table 3 above shows the annual income distribution of the respondents where approx. 47 percent of the respondents belonged to the income category of 2.5lacs and below. 26 percent of respondents belonged to the income category of 2.6lacs – 5.0lacs. 19 percent respondents belonged to the category of 5.1lacs – 10.0lacs and approximately 8 percent of the respondents were from the income level of more than 10.0lacs.

Table 4. Showing the occupation of the respondents
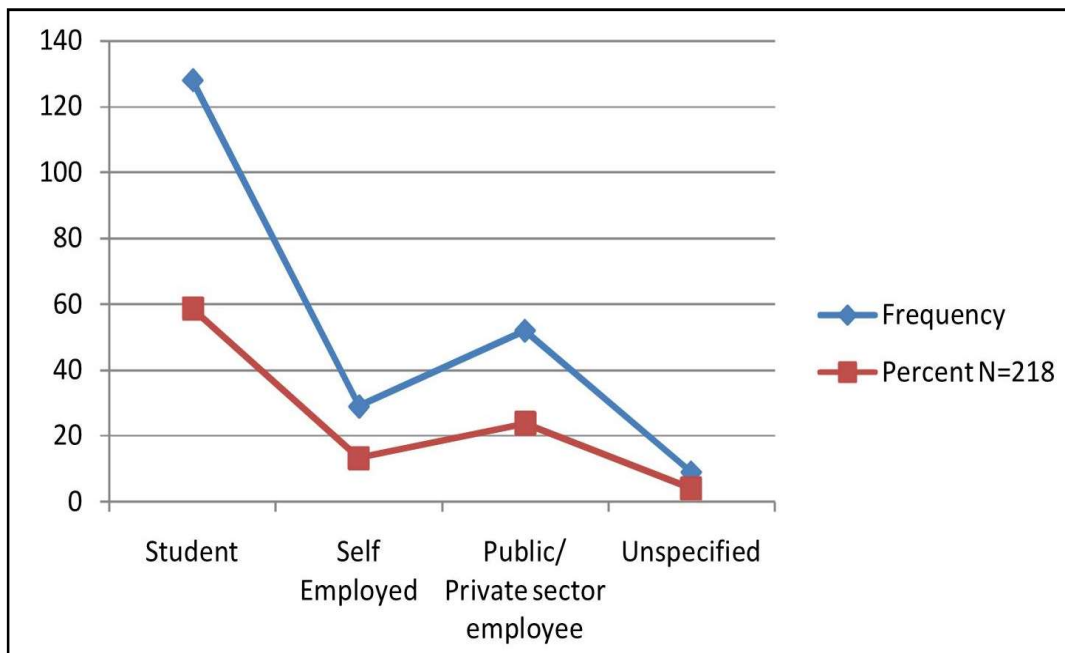
The table 4 above shows the profession of the respondents where 128 respondents were students, 29 respondents were self-employed, 52 respondents were employees and 9 respondents chose not to share their profession forming approximately 59, 13, 24 and 4 percent of the sample size respectively.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Test of Validity and Reliability

An internal consistency analysis known as Cronbach's – α was performed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research instrument (questionnaire). The Cronbach's αreliability analysis was performed through statistical application software known as IBM SPSS (version 20). The value of the Cronbach's coefficient came out to be 0.928 for *N* of items 44.

Table 5. Showing the Cronbach's coefficient for the overall questionnaire

Cronbach's – α	No of items
.928	44

The Cronbach's coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. The accepted threshold for Cronbach's α is 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), however, even lower values (in the 0.60's) are common(Peterson, 1994).

Table 6. Showing the Cronbach's coefficient for the overall questionnaire

Dimension	N of items	Cronbach's – α
Expectation		
Tangibles	5	.808
Reliability	4	.792
Responsiveness	4	.746
Assurance	5	.836
Empathy	4	.751
Perception		
Tangibles	5	.812
Reliability	4	.798
Responsiveness	4	.745
Assurance	5	.841
Empathy	4	.757

Cronbach's – á was performed on each dimension individually and it was found that the values of Cronbach's coefficient in all the dimensions were more than the accepted threshold therefore validating the reliability and validity of the research instrument.

In order to evaluate if the data was significant and viable enough to be considered for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy along with Bartlett's test of sphericity was performed.

The values above 0.60 in the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test are considered adequate for factor analysis whereas in this study the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test came out to be 0.699 which was quite more than the basic criterion. Alongside of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, the Bartlett's test of sphericity returned the results of 0.000 which is below the level of 0.01

considering the data significant enough for factor analysis.

Table 7. showing KMO and Bartlett's test for factor analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.699
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	571.230
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

The first objective of this study was to assess the perceptions and the expectations of the customers in the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir with respect to the customer satisfaction they derived from the quality of the services provided. In the same context, statistical means of the perceived and expected service quality was calculated and through the calculated statistical means, the service quality gap analysis was performed on each variable individually so as to address the second objective of the study which was aimed at performing a gap analysis to observe the differences between the customer perceptions and the customer expectations in regard of the service quality provided by the fast-food restaurants. A detailed analysis of each dimension along with a detailed explanation follows as here under:

Table 8. Showing means of perception and expectation in tangibility with GAP score

Tangibility			
Variables	**Values**		
	Perceived Mean	**Expected Mean**	**GAP**
1. The restaurant will be appealing in terms of its appearance and ambience. 1. The restaurant was appealing in terms of its appearance and ambience.	4.05	3.94	.11
2. All machines and equipment used would be of modern technology. 2. All machines and equipment used were of modern technology.	3.78	3.66	.12
3. The staff must be neatly dressed and following a professional dress code. 3. The staff was neatly dressed and followed a professional dress code.	4.02	3.89	.14
4. The restaurant will have neat and tidy washroom(s). 4. The restaurant had neat and tidy washroom(s).	4.14	3.95	.18
5. The restaurant will have an adequate and convenient parking facility. 5. The restaurant had adequate and convenient parking facility.	3.66	3.39	.28
AVERAGE TOTAL	**3.93**	**3.77**	**.16**

From the data analysis, it was observed as in the table above, that the perceived mean of every variable is on the higher side since the scale used had 1 as the lowest value and 5 as the highest. As was evident from the results above, variable one and variable four have the highest mean value in the perceptions and the expectations with values 4.05 and 3.95 respectively showing the high customer satisfaction. Further, variable five in both the perceptions and expectations shows a low mean representing a relatively lower customer satisfaction.

The gap analysis found out that there is a positive gap between all the variables of the tangibility dimension representing customer satisfaction. Since the more the gap score, higher will be the customer satisfaction, variable five showing the highest gap score at 0.28 whereas variable one with relatively lesser gap score at 0.11. It was thus found that the customers were satisfied with the overall tangibility dimension of the service quality.

In other words, it could be inferred that the customers were satisfied with the appearance and ambience, use of modern equipment, aesthetic arrangement of the staff, cleanliness of washrooms and, of course, the convenience of the parking facility of the fast-food restaurants.

Table 9. Showing means of perception and expectation in reliability with GAP score

Reliability			
Variables	**Values**		
	Perceived Mean	**Expected Mean**	**GAP**
1. The requests of the customers would be honoured within a short time. 1. The requests of the customers were honoured within a short time.	3.93	3.77	.16
2. The staff would be readily available for any assistance of the customers. 2. The staff was readily available for any assistance of the customers.	4.20	3.93	.27
3. The services would be delivered within the exact time as committed. 3. The services were delivered within the exact time as committed.	3.68	3.55	.13
4. The staff would be dependable in terms of resolving problems if any. 4. The staff was dependable in terms of resolving problems if any.	3.74	3.68	.06
AVERAGE TOTAL	**3.89**	**3.73**	**.24**

Data analysis in the table above represents the output results regarding the reliability dimension of service quality. Likewise, the tangibility, the reliability too displayed a positive correlation between the service quality and the customer satisfaction. From the results, it was inferred that the customers were satisfied the most with the assistance handling by the staff with the highest perceived service quality mean of 4.20 followed by the time taken to honour the customer requests with a perceived value of 3.93, then the dependency on the staff in case of problems with a mean value of 3.74 and lastly with the exactness of time in which service was delivered to the customer with the perceived mean value of 3.68.

The gap analysis represented that with positive gaps throughout all the variables of the reliability dimension of service quality, it was inferred that the customers were satisfied with the overall reliability of the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir.

Table 10. Showing means of perception and expectation in responsiveness with GAP score

Responsiveness			
Variables	**Values**		
	Perceived Mean	**Expected Mean**	**GAP**
1. The restaurant must be having a prompt service delivery. 1. The restaurant had a prompt service delivery.	3.98	3.65	0.34
2. All the customer requests would be instantly honoured by the staff. 2. All the customer requests were instantly honoured by the staff.	3.82	3.66	0.16
3. Every staff member would be willing to offer any help. 3. Every staff member was willing to offer any help.	4.02	3.85	0.17
4. The staff will be quite helpful in redressing any grievance. 4. The staff was quite helpful in redressing any grievance.	3.99	3.70	0.30
AVERAGE TOTAL	**3.96**	**3.71**	**0.24**

From the above table exhibiting the data analysis results of the responsiveness dimension of the service quality, it was inferred that the customers were satisfied at the highest level with staffs' willingness to offer any help to the customers displaying a mean score of perceived service quality at 4.02 which was followed by grievance redressal system bearing a mean value of 3.99. Furthermore, the data showed that the customers were satisfied with the prompt service delivery of the

fast-food restaurants, with a mean value of 3.98 and the instant request handling by the staff, with a mean value of 3.82.

The gap analysis revealed that all the variables exhibited a positive gap, with variables one and four displaying the highest gap scores of .34 and .30, respectively, and variables two and three with gap scores of .16 and .17, respectively. With an overall all-gap score of .24, it was inferred that the customers were satisfied with the overall responsiveness of the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir.

Table 11. Showing means of perception and expectation in assurance with GAP score

Assurance			
Variables	**Values**		
	Perceived Mean	**Expected Mean**	**GAP**
1. The interaction with the staff would be decent and satisfactory. 1. The interaction with the staff was decent and satisfactory.	4.04	3.94	0.10
2. The staff will have proper and adequate knowledge of their jobs. 2. The staff had proper and adequate knowledge of their jobs.	4.09	3.94	0.15
3. The staff members will be supported by their superiors. 3. The staff members were supported by their superiors.	3.74	3.58	0.16
4. Every staff member will work towards making customers feel safe and comfortable. 4. Every staff member worked towards making customers feel safe and comfortable.	3.99	3.81	0.18
5. The restaurant managers will assure the safety of customer's transactions. 5. The restaurant managers assured the safety of customer's transactions.	4.09	3.99	0.10
AVERAGE TOTAL	**3.99**	**3.85**	**0.14**

The data in the above table, as extracted after data analysis, made several inferences regarding the assurance offered by the fast-food restaurants of rural Kashmir. It was observed that customers were most satisfied by the knowledge of the staff in the context of their jobs and the safety assurance offered by the restaurant managers to their customers for the transactions they made, with a mean value of 4.09 each. It was further revealed that the customers were also satisfied by the decency in the

Table 12. Showing means of perception and expectation in empathy with GAP score

Empathy			
Variables	**Values**		
	Perceived Mean	**Expected Mean**	**GAP**
1. Customers will get individual attention by the staff. 1. Customers received individual attention by the staff.	3.64	3.57	0.07
2. The restaurant staff will understand the needs of the customers. 2. The restaurant staff understood the needs of the customers.	3.85	3.71	0.14
3. The hours of operation would be very convenient. 3. The hours of operation were very convenient.	3.81	3.70	0.11
4. The staff and the managers will act in the best interest of the customer. 4. The staff and the managers acted in the best interest of the customer.	3.83	3.74	0.09
AVERAGE TOTAL	**3.78**	**3.68**	**0.10**

interaction with the staff, the staff's initiatives towards making their customers feel safe and the support provided by the managers to their subordinates with mean values of 4.04, 3.99 and 3.77,respectively.

The gap analysis revealed that like all the preceding dimensions of service quality assurance also had positive gaps in all the five variables representing the customer satisfaction. The overall gap score of .14 exhibits that the customers are well satisfied with the overall assurance provided by the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir.

The data analysis shows that even though the gap scores of some variables in the empathy dimension of service quality are low showing less customer satisfaction the overall perceived mean value at 3.78 represents a significant level of customer satisfaction with empathy provided by the fast-food restaurants to their customers. The customers, as exhibited by the data above were satisfied by the restaurants' way of understanding the needs of the customers at a mean value of 3.85 followed by the managers' actions in the best interest of the customers at 3.83, the convenience in the hours of operation at 3.81 and lastly the individual attention given by the staff to their customers with mean value 3.64.

The gap analysis puts forth that the overall gap score being positive represents that the customers were satisfied by the empathy provided by the fast-food restaurants of rural Kashmir.

Furthermore, this study performed a *t-test* for each dimension to reveal the most significant dimensions that satisfied the customers the most.

Table 13. Showing paired sample t-test outcomes

Variables	t-statistic	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived Tangibility & Expected Tangibility	3.323	.00
Perceived Reliability & Expected Reliability	2.871	.00
Perceived Responsiveness & Expected Responsiveness	6.733	.00
Perceived Assurance & Expected Assurance	1.626	.106
Perceived Empathy & Expected Empathy	.683	.496

It was found that there was an overall significance in the model with most of the dimensions below the p-value of Ã0.05. Furthermore, it was found that the customers were most satisfied by the Tangibility, Reliability and Responsiveness as given by the p-value of < 0.05 and relatively least satisfied by Empathy with p-value >0.05.

In order to examine the nature and strength of the correlation between the service quality and the customer satisfaction in the fast-food restaurants of rural Kashmir, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated. The value of Pearson's correlation coefficient varies between

Table 14. Showing Pearson's correlation coefficient

		Service Quality	Customer Satisfaction
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.813
	Sig. (2-tailed)	218	.000
	N	.813	218
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	218	218
	N		

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

+1 and -1 representing a positive and negative correlation respectively. The significance is calculated at 0.01 level. As is evident from the data in the table above, it is quite clear that there is a highly positive relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality with the value of Pearson's coefficient at .813. As regards the significance, which was calculated at 0.01 level, the significance values at .000 are less than the value of 0.01, which represents that the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality is significant.

5. Future Scope

This study further suggests that there is enough scope where the service quality could be made better so as to achieve higher customer satisfaction. The dimensions, such as assurance and empathy, need to be worked upon. The fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir need to keep customers informed, make them more comfortable, and take care of their needs. Prioritizing their customers and making them feel they are unique and special would definitely raise customer satisfaction in both the assurance and empathy dimension and, therefore, the overall service quality.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of data laid out that there is an overall correlation between the service quality offered by the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir and customer satisfaction. The individual mean and gap score analysis exhibited that the customers were satisfied with the tangibles of the fast-food restaurants as well as with their reliability. Moreover, the fast-food restaurants were successful in satisfying their customers in responsiveness too. Although the gap analysis represented that there is overall customer satisfaction in the fast-food restaurants in rural Kashmir yet, there were a few dimensions which could not play fairly enough to satisfy the customers relatively more, namely the assurance and empathy with p-values greater than 0.05 as analyzed by the *t-test*.

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