

Quality in Service Industry and
Customer Experience Management (CEM).
Case study: Restaurant Industry

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Abstract

Quality is the set of characteristics of a product that meets customer needs and therefore makes the product to be satisfactory. Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means compliance with customer expectations on a consistent basis.

Customer satisfaction is when the customer is satisfied with a product / service that meet customer needs, desires and expectations.

Consuming a service means a consumption of an experience, a process that extends over time. Thus, the consumer trip illustrates how the customer perceives and lives services interface along the time axis.

Service providers such as tourism, hospitality and leisure services set standards. Standards, however, are "the change reference as customer expectations grow and the organization respond to such changes".

Customer experience comes from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a corporation.

Customer experience includes three dimensions, namely sensory experience, emotional experience and social experience. Sensory experience refers to aesthetic and sensory perceptions about shopping environment, atmosphere, products and services. Emotional experience includes state and generating emotions during the shopping trip. Social experience emphasizes relationships with others and with society.

Customer satisfaction measurements essentially focus on understanding and managing customer expectations on what companies are already in place to determine what customers really want in reality. In the new experience economy, companies must realize that are producing memories, not goods setting the stage for generating higher economic value, not for delivering services.

Keywords: service quality, satisfaction, expectations of customers, customer satisfaction, service performance, Customer Experience Management (CEM)

1.1.Services

Knowledge about the quality of goods is insufficient to understand service quality. Three features of the service, well-documented - intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability - must be known to fully understand the quality of service.

First, services are intangible (Bateson, 1977, Berry 1980, Lovelock 1981, Shostak 1977). Most services cannot be counted, measured, inventoried, tested and checked before being sold, to be assured of their quality. Because of intangibility, the company may find it

difficult to understand consumer perceptions of its services and service quality evaluation (Zeithaml, 1981).

Secondly, the services, especially those with high labor content, are heterogeneous: their performance often varies from one manufacturer to another, from one customer to another and from one day to another. Consistency behavior of service personnel (uniform quality) is difficult to provide (Booms and Bitner, 1981), for which the company intends to deliver may be entirely different from what the consumer receives.

Thirdly, the production and consumption of many services are inseparable (Carmen and Langeard 1980, Grönroos 1978, Regan 1962 Upah 1980). The quality occurs during service delivery, usually in an interaction between the client and contact person at the firm (Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982). Also, the company may have a lower managerial control on the quality of services, where consumer participation is high (eg. doctor visits) as affecting the client. In these situations, the intervention of the consumer (description of symptoms) becomes critical to performance quality service.

1.2. Quality service

1.2.1. Quality concept

Efforts on defining and measuring quality have come largely from the goods sector. According to Japanese dominance psychology, quality means "zero defects - do right the first time". Crosby (1979) defines quality as "as required". Garvin (1983) measure quality by counting "internal" errors (those seen before the product leaves the factory) and "external" errors (those made on the ground, once a unit has been installed).

Quality is the set of characteristics of a product that meets customer needs and therefore make the product to be satisfactory (Juran, 1993). Research has demonstrated the strategic benefits of quality both in contributing to market share and return on investment (Anderson and Zeitham, 1984; Phillips, Chang and Buzzell, 1983) and in lowering costs and improving productivity (Garvin, 1983).

Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that determine its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs (Ionian, 2006).

1.2.2. Quality in services

Numerous attempts have been made to define the concept of service quality and customer satisfaction closely related (Oliver, 1980; Tse and Wilton, 1988). At the simplest level, the quality was defined as "as required" (Crosby, 1984). This implies that organizations

must establish requirements and specifications. Once established, the objective quality of the different functions of an organization is to comply strictly with these specifications. However, the question remains, whose requirements and specifications? (Palmer, O'Neill and Beggs, 1998).

Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means compliance with customer expectations on a consistent basis (Lewis and Booms, 1983). In line with this thinking, Grönroos (1982) developed a model where consumers compare the service they expect with perceptions of the service received, assessing its quality.

Another model described by Grönroos (1983), refers to the quality of experience for both functional and technical dimensions of service delivery:

- Technical quality refers to the result of technical quality of service;
- Functional quality, on the other hand, refers to the way in which the service has been delivered.

Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml (1988) supports this concept by arguing that the definition of quality of Crosby (1984) "as required" should be redrafted "in accordance with customer specifications." Thus, service quality can be defined as the difference between customer expectations and perceptions. If expectations are fulfilled, service quality is perceived as satisfactory; if not satisfied, less than satisfactory, if exceeded more than satisfactory.

Service quality can be used as a competitive advantage (Hamel and Prahalad, 1989). Companies have learned to create higher levels of services not easily duplicated. Service delivery is made in response to customer needs. It is important that the service provided to match customer needs.

Common relations between lists of Parasuraman's and Johnston quality attributes can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Comparative dimensions of service quality

Parasuraman (1986) – 5 dimensions	Parasuraman (1985) – 10 dimensions	Johnston (1990) – 12 dimensions	Johnston (1995) – 18 dimensions
Tangibility	Tangibility	Aesthetic	Estetic
		Cleanness	Cleanness
		Comfort	Comfort
			Functionality
Reliability	Reliability	Reliability	Reliability
Sensitivity	Sensitivity	Sensitivity	Sensitivity
			Flexibility
Insurance	Comunication	Comunication	Comunication
	Credibility		Commitment
			Integrity
	Security	Security	Security
	Competence	Competence	Competence
Empathy	Courtesy	Courtesy	Courtesy
	Understanding / knowing the customer	Kindness	Kindness
	Access	Access	Consideration
		Availability	Carefulness
			Acces
			Availability

Source: Berry, Parasuraman i Zeithaml, 1988

Smith and Houston (1982) have argued that satisfaction in services is related to expectations confirmation or discrepancy. They based their research on the gap paradigm, which maintains that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the gap, where they are related to the initial expectations of customers (Churchill and Suprenaut, 1982).

A set of key discrepancies or gaps regarding managers' perception of service quality and the tasks associated with service delivery to consumers (Figure 1.). These gaps can be major obstacles in trying to deliver a service perceived by consumers as having a high quality:

1. Gap between consumer expectations - perception management (Gap1) will have an impact on the evaluation of service quality by the consumer.

2. Gap between perception management - quality specified (Gap2) - where it can result in a variety of factors, such as resource constraints related to

resources, terms of marketing, management indifference.

3. Gap between service quality specifications - service delivery (Gap3) even when there is guidance to perform in the service and treat customers right, there is no certainty in obtaining a higher quality of service performance.

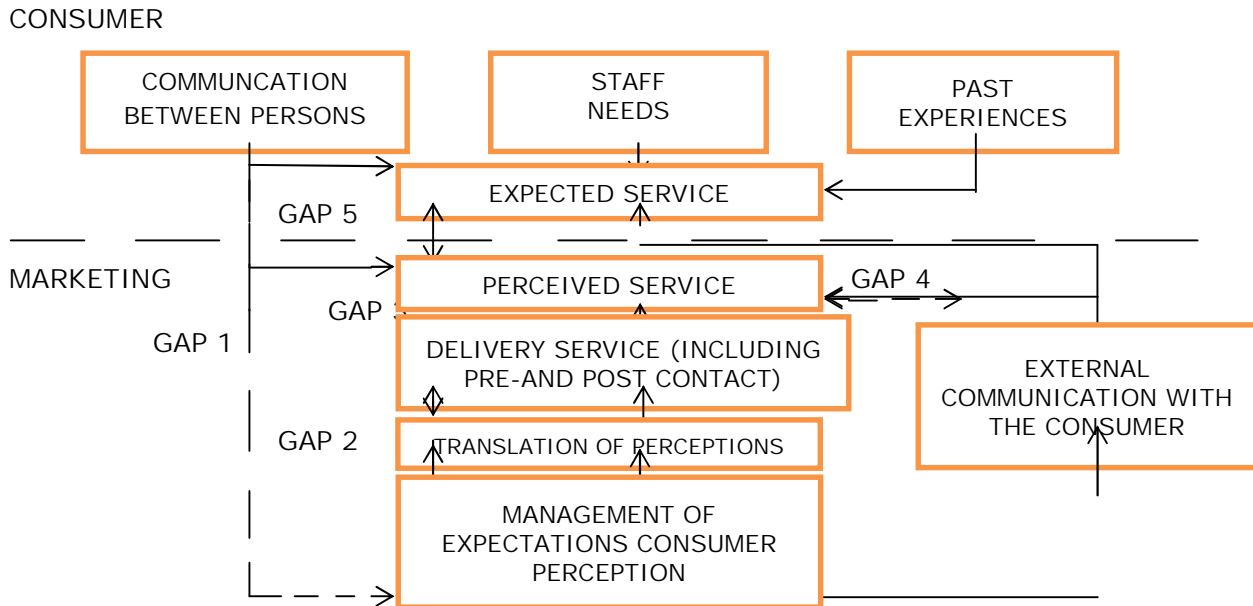
4. Gap between service delivery - external communications (Gap4) media advertising and other communications of a company can affect consumers' expectations. If expectations play a major role in consumer perceptions of service quality (as literature support services), the firm must not promise more than it can provide in reality. Promising more than can be offered initially expectations will rise, but perceptions of quality will decrease when promises are not fulfilled. External communications can affect both consumer expectations regarding service and consumer perceptions of service.

5. Gap between expected service - service charges (Gap5) key to ensuring a quality service is to meet or exceed

customer expectations on services. The criteria for determining the quality of a service as superior or poor depends on

how consumers perceive the actual service performance to what awaits.

Figure 1. The design of service quality



Source: A.Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml & Leonard Berry, 1980

Consumer satisfaction has been typically conceptualized either as an emotional response (Cadott, Woodruff, and Jenkins, 1987; Westbrook and Reilly, 1983) or cognitive (Bolton and Drew, 1991, Howard and Sheth, 1969; Tse and Wilton, 1988). In addition, there are several conceptual and operational definitions indicating that the response could be composed of both cognitive and affective dimensions (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Swan, Trawick, and Carroll, 1980; Westbrook, 1980). Recent definitions of satisfaction recognize an emotional response (Halstead, Hartman and Schmidt, 1994; Mano and Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1997; Oliver, 1992; Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky 1996). In some cases, operational definitions may even include a conative dimension such as a repeated purchase intention (Westbrook and Oliver, 1991).

Satisfaction can be determined at different points in time. It is generally accepted that customer satisfaction is a post-purchase phenomenon (Yi, 1990;

Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Fornell, 1992; Oliver, 1981; Tse and Wilton, 1988; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991), but there are some subtle differences in this respect. Purchase decision can be evaluated after the election but before the actual purchase of the product (Kourilsky and Murray, 1981).

However, consumer satisfaction may occur before or without purchase option or choice. For example, Westbrook and Reilly (1983) defines satisfaction as "an emotional response to the experiences offered by, or associated with specific products or services purchased, retail outlets, or patterns of behavior, such as shopping and buyer behavior, as well as global market." Thus, much of the literature suggests that satisfaction may occur before or after the election, purchase or consumption.

Cote, Foxman, and Cutler (1989) argue that satisfaction can vary greatly over time. They suggest that satisfaction is determined only at the time of evaluation. Therefore, satisfaction is a

changing phenomenon that reflects current response.

Customer satisfaction is when the customer is satisfied with a product / service that meet customer needs, desires and expectations.

Consuming a service means a consumption of an experience, a process that extends over time. Thus, the consumer trip illustrates how the customer perceives and lives services interface along the time axis. There are also considered before and after the actual interaction with the service phases. The first step in creating a customer journey is to decide the start and stop points. Customer journey serves as the umbrella under which the service is explored, and with different methods, systematized and viewed (Mager, 2009).

Work done by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, Leonard L (1985 and 1988) provides the basis for measuring customer satisfaction with a service by using the gap between customer expectations of performance and their perceived experience of performance.

SERVQUAL is a framework for service quality, which was built in customer satisfaction surveys to indicate the difference between customer expectations and experience. SERVQUAL has been extensively researched to validate the psychometric properties applied in a variety of sectors (Lewis, 1987; Lee, 1995; Ryan and Cliff, 1997; Lam, Wong and Yeung, 1997). It takes the form of a two-part survey with 22 items that aims both to assess customers' expectations before a service consumption and post-consumption perceptions of the actually received service.

1.2.3. Quality services in hospitality industry

In today's hospitality environment, the true measure of company success is the ability of an organization to continuously satisfy customers. Increasingly more customers are demanding value for money regarding both price / performance ratio and the actual quality of the offered product or

service. Therefore, much of the organization effort is now directed at "both getting and keeping customers" (Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne, 1991).

In an attempt to achieve a sustained competitive advantage, hospitality organizations invest heavily now in quite a number of initiatives to improve service quality. Most of these initiatives have found form through the British Standards Institute, European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Edward Deming Prize, or derivatives thereof (Oliver, 1996). In this context, customer satisfaction is considered to be a natural result of the optimal organizational design and instilling a proper organizational culture, staff training and customer responsiveness among employees. Briefly, it is believed that the achievement of satisfaction is improved in cases where these practices are followed by "(Oliver, 1996).

According to Van Der Wagen (1994), "individual clients have different perceptions, which are influenced by their education, growth, experience and many other factors." As stated Bank (1992) "The idea is to get ahead of the customer to anticipate his needs ... so that when he articulates the need (requirement) you've already planned for it and you're ready (to the competition), in order to meet ". Knowledge of customer perceptions of services undoubtedly help hospitality professionals in this process.

Continuous measurement is a way to distinguish long-term success of the quality improvement program, so it has become imperative for managers to provide its application in the hospitality context (Lewis, 1987; Getty and Thompson, 1994).

Visitors' perceptions of service quality varies greatly. Also, customer satisfaction, perceived eith the offerde services varies widely. Two distinct variables influence their perceptions: customer expectations and service standards. The difference between expectations and service standards /

performance is the primary indicator of overall service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Leonard, 1994).

Guests are judges of service quality (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991). Service expectations have a great influence on the outcome of their level of satisfaction. It is much easier to thank guests with lower expectations than those with higher expectations. Therefore, an understanding of customer expectations is critical. Lewison (1997) classifies the service expectations in three levels: essential and optional expected. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) includes three similar levels in their conceptual model of customer service expectations: predicted, suitable and desirable.

Service providers such as tourism, hospitality and leisure services set standards. Standards, however, are "the change reference as customer expectations grow and the organization respond to such changes" (Callan, 1994).

The extent to which expectations and service performance are similar or different to the extent that guests are satisfied or dissatisfied. Although different approaches have been taken to study these differences, the gap pattern between conceptual subjective was quoted as the most influential in determining customer satisfaction (Dion, DiLorenzo-Aiss and Javalgi, 1998; Oliver, 1993).

1.3. The consumer / customer role

Searching for quality is undoubtedly the most important 80s consumer trend (Rabin, 1983), consumers now demanding more than ever a higher quality products (Leonard and Sasser 1982, Takeuchi and Quelch 1983).

In the absence of tangible cues upon which to evaluate the quality, consumers must depend on other reproach. The nature of these cues hasn't been investigated by researchers, although some authors have suggested that price becomes an indicator of basic quality in situations where other information is not available (McConnell, 1968; Olander 1970, Zeithaml, 1981). Due to the intangibility of services, a firm finds it difficult to

understand how consumers perceive their quality services.

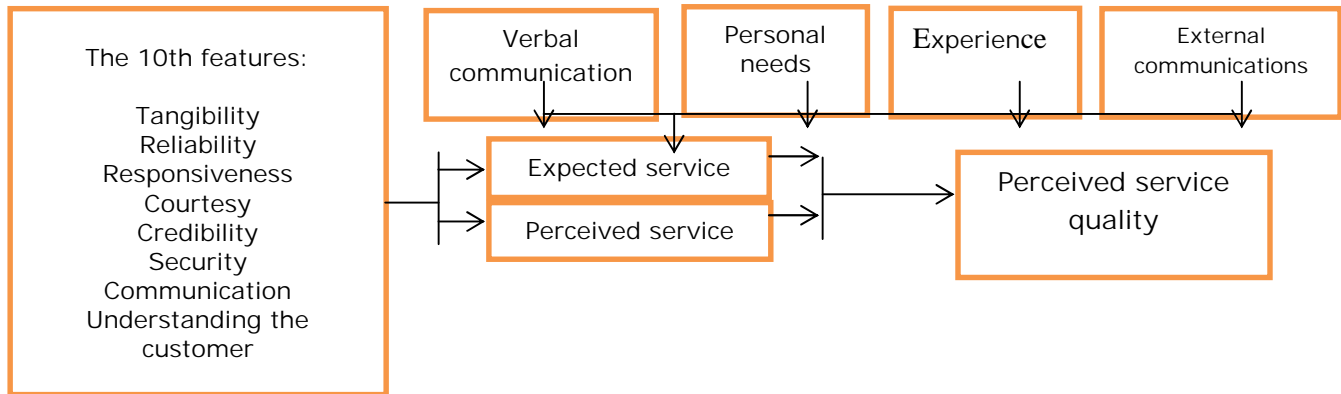
The customer becomes the center of activities and supplying processes and the relative satisfaction assessment to the product and organization is the main key that allows obtaining feedback and improvement (Dobrin, 2005).

Through their investigations, A. Parasuraman, V. A. Zeithaml and L. L. Berry tried to answer the following questions: "How exactly assess a customer the quality service ?", "makes an overall assessment or analyzes specific parts of the service to reach an overall assessment?". In this last case, "which are the different facets or dimensions that we use to evaluate a service?" "These dimensions vary according different services and different market segments." If customer expectations play a vital role in assessing the quality of a service, "which are the factors that shape and influence those expectations?".

1. Dimensions of service quality. It's about the criteria the costumers use when evaluating service quality. It thus identifies 10 general sizes (Figure 2) :

- Tangible elements, facilities, equipment, communication materials;
- Reliability: the ability to a correct and careful execution of the promised service;
- Responsiveness: the willingness to help customers and provide them fast;
- Professionalism: quality possession and service delivery required knowledge;
- Politeness: attention, consideration, respect, and kindness from the contact staff;
- Credibility: trustworthiness, trust, honesty about the delivered service;
- Security: no hazards, risks or uncertainties;
- Accessibility: Accessible and easy to contact;
- Communication: the transmission of information using language that clients can understand and listen;
- Understanding customer: effort in understanding customers and their needs.

Figure 2. Dimensions of service quality



Source: Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990

2. The second part of the investigation was to develop a system called SERVQUAL, which allows assessment of perceived quality in a specific organization based on quality characteristics previously reported.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry also made an analysis of the factors that influence the lack of service quality, noting the following:

1. Deficiency 1. Discrepancy between beneficiaries expectations and directives perceptions;

2. Deficiency 2. Discrepancy between directives perceptions and quality mentions or standards;

3. Deficiency 3. Discrepancy between service quality terms and the service delivery;

4. Deficiency 4. Discrepancy between the service delivery and quality characteristics or otherwise failing to fulfill promises;

5. Deficiency 5. Customers perception regarding service quality, as an addition to the other 3 previous weaknesses.

2. Customer Experience

2.1. The concept of customer experience

The concept of customer experience was first introduced in the mid-1980s when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) introduced a new approach to consumer behavior experience.

Customer experience comes from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a corporation. Or a part of its organization, causing a reaction. This is strictly personal and requires client involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, physical and spiritual sense) (Gentile et al., 2007). Moreover, Meyer and Schwager (2007) points out that customer experience is about internal and subjective customers response, any direct or indirect contact with a company. On the other hand, Schmitt (1999) suggests five experience factors: sense, feeling, belief, drive and reference. Sense experience includes estetica and sensory qualities; experience includes feeling states and emotions; faith experience includes thinking convergent / divergent analytical and divergent / imaginative. Experience refers to the act of action and the experience of motor behavior. Experience refers to a social experience, such as on a reference group. Sensory stimuli that accompany an experience should support and enhance this topic.

Customer experience includes three dimensions, namely sensory experience, emotional experience and social experience. Sensory experience refers to aesthetic and sensory perceptions about shopping environment, atmosphere, products and services. Emotional experience includes state and generating emotions during the shopping trip. Social

experience emphasizes relationships with others and with society.

An experience that takes over your senses more efficiently, will be the most memorable (Pine II, Gilmore, 2010).

Experience is the fourth economic offering, as different from services such as services from assets. Experiences have always existed, but consumers, businesses and economists have included them in the service sector, along with ordinary activities. When someone buys a service, acquires a set of intangible activities that are made for that person. But when someone buys an experience pays to spend time enjoying the memorable events that we put on a company, attended personally. Companies are staging experience when they conquer their customers in a memorably way (Pine II, Gilmore, 2010).

2.2. Customer Experience Management

Customer experience encompasses the total experience, including search, purchase, consumption and after-sales phases of experience, and may involve multiple retail channels.

Whenever a company and a customer interact, the company learns something about the client and the customer about the company. The premise of customer experience management is almost a mirror image. Depending on what is learned from each experience, customers can change their behavior in ways that affect their individual profitability. Thus, managing these experiences, companies can orchestrate more profitable relationships with their customers.

CEM versus CRM

Customer experience management and customer relationship management varies in scope, timing, monitoring, audience and purpose.

Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, stresses that the experience is not about entertaining customers, but their involvement. The main components are:

- Corporate culture translated by employees. People create experiences. Great experiences are made when employees interact with customers. A happy employee might make a customer happy. Therefore, companies need to understand the appropriate corporate culture and experiences suitable for its employees result in relationships that customers want.

- The service is a critical component of the experience, as well as providing good quality services requires many features, including empathy, sensitivity and care. It also requires appropriate - right information at the right time, the right products and the authority to do the right thing.

- Technology. Online access to a company as part of a multi-channel strategies and emerging technologies related to the consolidation of products and services and also facilitate greater experience.

- Architecture, design, space. Architecture is a critical component of the customer experience in retail. When designing a space is consistent with the type of experience the company wants to provide store can help to build customer engagement.

- Marketing, brand promotions. Retail experience is part of the brand, as well as packaging, advertising and promotions. It also plays an important role merchandising, color, lighting, signage.

- The critical intangible: trust. Most of the factors that matter most are intangible, and the first is trust.

An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. The goods are fungible, goods tangible, services are intangible, and the experience is unforgettable.

Major factors influencing the purchase decision process:

- Experience the brand. Customer comes in a retail environment, with the perceptions of two types of marks: brand retail and manufacturer's brand or service that is sold in retail stores.

- Experience price. When retailers set a high price for a product or service, consumers will see this as a low value and will not buy. Also, a price too low can be low quality, poor performance of a product or service.

- Experience promotions. Consumer promotions take many forms, including price promotions, discounts and leaders display.

- Supply chain management experience. Supply chain issues from both the managerial partnership and from operations with higher degree of technicality, proved to be important sources of competitive advantage for many retailers.

- Experience site. Site decision has major ramifications for pricing decisions, promotion and merchandising.

- Experience Advertising. During the growth process, marketers have recognized that the Internet was a medium to reach millions of potential customers.

- Experience packaging and labeling - Packaging plays an important role when products are purchased. It is the first thing seen before making purchase choices and is thought to cause 50% of purchase decisions.

- Experience mix of services. Consumer services is the ability of an organization to give the customer what he wants and he needs constantly.

- Experience the atmosphere. Consumer spending behavior can be significantly influenced by the atmosphere and mood of the client.

2.3. Measuring the Customer Experience

Consumers today want an experience similar to the neighborhood corner store, where they were greeted by saying their name, with a warm smile. Employees knew customer references, purchase history, current and future needs, and welcomed input and feedback.

Measuring satisfaction means measuring the difference between what a customer is waiting and what he perceives

it receives, according to Dave Power III at JDPower & Associates.

Customer satisfaction measurements essentially focus on understanding and managing customer expectations on what companies are already in place to determine what customers really want in reality. In order to efficiently implement mass customization, comparisons must do more than achieve measurements that have perception as landmark. Need to understand the nature of customer sacrifice, which is the distance between the thing with which the client is satisfied, and what he wants exactly (Pine II, Gilmore, 2010).

Once the customer sacrifice is understood, it can be done the difference between what a customer accepts and the real need of it, even if the client does not know or can not articulate the need.

Customers no longer have to settle for standardized goods and services because companies can deliver efficiently through mass customization techniques, exactly what each wants and nothing else. Reducing customers sacrifice via mass customization requires knowledge of individual customer needs and behavior which they influence. This allows companies to deliberately and systematically make next step towards more experiential offers cultivating customer astonishment that perhaps it is the single most important aspect that any manufacturer or service provider needs to begin to stage memorable experiences.

In contrast to both satisfaction and customer sacrifice when staging surprises, companies are exploiting the difference between what the customer perceives and what he expects to receive.

Instead of rising up to expectations (providing satisfaction) or establishing new ones (reducing sacrifice), companies are deliberately trying to transcend them, headed for directions completely unique, unexpected.

To truly differentiate, companies must first focus on increasing customer satisfaction, and on eliminating customer sacrifice, and, finally, on surprising

customers. After a company is successfully staging the surprise, customers will begin to expect to be surprised, therefore the company needs to stage a suspense for the client. Built on the surprise platform, customer suspense is the distance between what the customer remembers from the past surprises and what does not yet know about upcoming events.

When they are taken in unison, satisfaction, sacrifice, surprise and suspense helps companies encourage buyers to purchase goods and services in new and different fundamental reasons. Customers do not buy goods only for their functional utility, but also for experiences made during the acquisition and use. Also, customers do not buy services only for someone else to perform a function, but because services are surrounded by memorable events.

In the new experience economy, companies must realize that are producing memories, not goods setting the stage for generating higher economic value, not for delivering services.

3. Case study

Analysis of services offered by restaurants Belvedere, Continental and San Marco restaurants

The purpose of this case study is to evaluate the gap between the quality of services delivered to restaurants clients, and quality of service received, perceived by restaurants customers. Assuming that the San Marco restaurant has a competitive advantage over Belvedere and Belvedere against Continental thanks to the quality of its service, I decided to conduct a research to identify and analyze what restaurants managers believe they offer and what the customers are actually receiving regarding the tangibility, reliability, safety, empathy, availability, competence, staff and affordability.

Methodology

Survey method used for Belvedere and Continental restaurants consists in applying SERVQUAL Instrument both for restaurant staff and their customers. The questionnaire contains 42 statements

about the characteristics of services: tangibility, availability, empathy, competence and security, divided as follows: 21 in Part A claims which includes expectations from a restaurant in general, and 21 in Part B claims which includes restaurant perceptions.

Respondents were asked to complete part A, indicating their general expectations of the restaurant, then complete Part B indicating perceptions of the restaurant especially those relating to quality, on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); with the specification that if they feel the features mentioned in each statement as being essential in their decision relating to the restaurant are asked to circle 7, and if they feel the features listed as being of less important they are asked to circle number 1.

The sample for Continental and Belvedere restaurants was completed by 15 people who visit the restaurant and 9 people from the staff restaurant. The data collected were analyzed and compared using Benchmarking the method of quality measuring, SERVQUAL instrument and through graphics and radar to determine the existing gap between Belvedere and Continental restaurant regarding the quality customer service.

Based on SERVQUAL instrument I developed a second questionnaire for Belvedere and San Marco restaurants, consisting in 92 attributes, 56 positive and 36 negative aspects, divided into 7 groups: food, drink, price / value, service, staff, atmosphere / environment and location. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire indicating their perceptions of the restaurant respectively about the quality of received services, on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The sample of the second questionnaire includes 15 people who visited the restaurant. The data collected were analyzed and compared using Benchmarking the method of quality measuring and through graphics and radar to determine the existing gap between

Belvedere and San Marco restaurant, regarding the quality of customer service.

I also designed a questionnaire for the 3 restaurants: Belvedere, Continental and San Marco, composed of seven criteria: food, drink, price / value, service, staff, atmosphere / environment and location, respondents were asked to write down the criteria for why they choose to frequent that specific restaurant from 1 (least important criterion) to 10 (most important criterion).

The sample includes 15 respondents for each restaurant, and the data collected are analyzed and compared to determine the reasons why customers choose a restaurant service to the detriment of the other.

I also analyzed the 3 restaurants respondents data, Belvedere, Continental and San Marco, in terms of age, sex and level of attendance of the restaurant that, in order to identify the customer profile for each restaurant separately.

3.1. Comparative analysis between Belvedere and Continental restaurant – customer expectations

In the analysis, it is clear that the gap between customer expectations of Belvedere and Continental is -0.17 points, the lowest difference being -0.04 points regarding the staff availability, and the largest difference being -0.36 points for staff empathy (Table 2.).

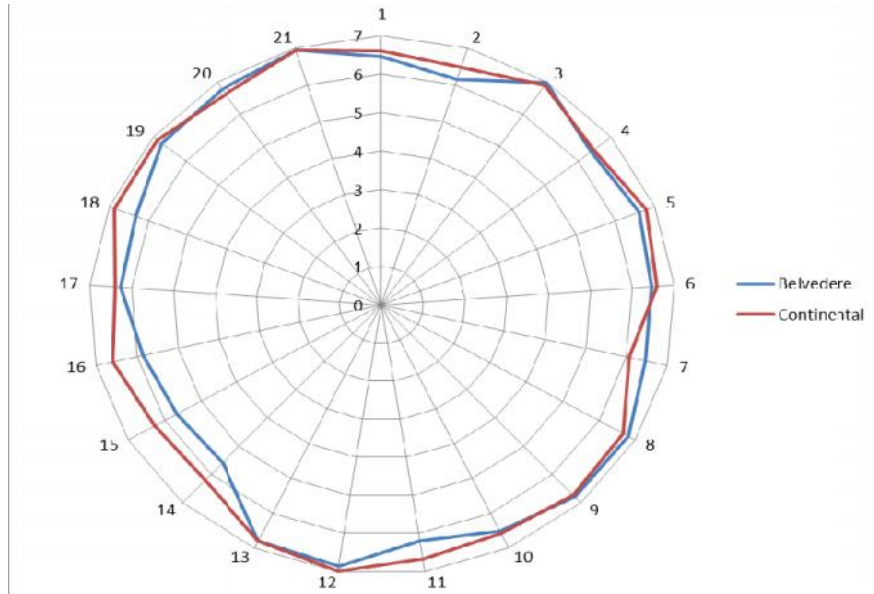
Table 2. Comparative analysis between customer expectations - Belvedere and Continental

Features	Belvedere (—) X	Continental (—) O	GAP	Graphics							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Expectations from a restaurant in general											
1. Tangibility											
1.1. An excellent restaurant will have modern equipment	6,47	6,60	-0,13						X	O	
1.2. An excellent restaurant will have physical facilities extremely appealing	6,30	6,47	-0,34						XO		
1.3. Staff at an excellent restaurant will appear neat	7,00	6,93	0,07							XO	
1.4. In an excellent restaurant service related materials will be attractive	6,40	6,47	-0,07						XO		
Subsum	6,50	6,62	-0,12								
2. Availability											
2.1. An excellent restaurant would keep his promise	6,60	6,80	-0,20							XO	
2.2. An excellent restaurant will perform the services without error	6,47	6,60	-0,13						X	O	
2.3. The staff will inform the customers precisely	6,47	6,07	0,40						XO		
2.4. The staff will provide prompt service to customers	6,80	6,67	0,13							XO	
2.5. The staff will always be willing to help customers	6,80	6,73	0,07							XO	
2.6. The staff will never be too busy to respond	6,53	6,60	-0,07							XO	
2.7. An excellent restaurant will have a convenient program	6,20	6,67	-0,47						X	O	
Subsum	6,55	6,59	-4,00								
3. Empathy											
3.1. An excellent restaurant will show a genuine interest in solving the issue	6,87	7,00	-0,13							XO	
3.2. Staff will be consistently polite with customers	6,80	6,80	0,00							XO	
3.3. The staff will provide individualized attention to customers	5,60	6,20	-0,60						XO		
3.4. The staff will provide personal attention to to customers	5,67	6,27	-0,60						XO		
3.5. An excellent restaurant will have in first place the interests of its costumers	5,87	6,60	-0,73						X	O	
3.6. Staff will understand the specific needs of their customers	6,27	6,40	-0,13						XO		
Subsum	6,18	6,55	-0,36								
4. Competence											
4.1. An excellent restaurant will insist on error-free service	6,33	6,87	-0,54						X	O	
4.2. The staff will have the required knowledge	6,73	6,87	-0,14							XO	
Subsum	6,53	6,87	-0,34								
5. Security											
5.1. Staff behavior will instill trust to customers	6,80	6,63	0,17							XO	
5.2. Customers will feel safe regarding their transactions	6,93	6,93	0,00							XO	
Subsum	6,87	6,78	0,09								
Sum	6,46	6,63	-0,17								

Also, it can be seen that customer expectations of Belvedere and Continental overlap on the following aspects: the restaurant staff and appearance, keeping promises, availability, efficiency, courtesy,

attention and staff competence, understanding customer needs, reliability and safety of the transactions (Figure 3.).

Figure 3. Comparative analysis between customer expectations - Belvedere and Continental



3.2. Comparative analysis between Belvedere and Continental restaurant - customers perceptions

In the analysis, it is clear that the gap between to customers perceptions of Belvedere and Continental is 0.56 points, the lowest difference being 0.28 points on the availability of restaurants staff and the biggest difference being 1.05 points in the case of tangible for staff (Table 3.).

Also, it may be noted that to customers perceptions of the Belvedere restaurant is equal to the customer from the Continental restaurant, regarding the staff competence.

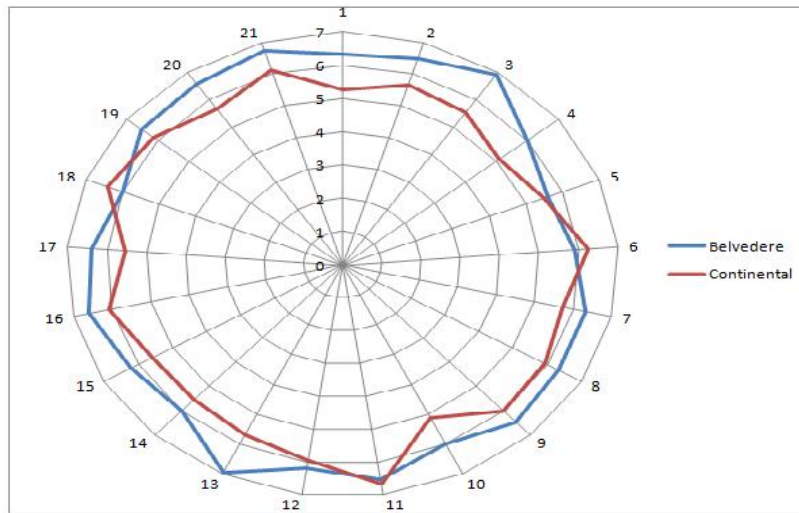
Table 3. Comparative analysis between customers perceptions - Belvedere and Continental

Features	Belvedere (→) X	Continental (←) O	GAP	Graphics						
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Perceptions from a restaurant										
1. Tangibility										
1.1. An excellent restaurant has a modern equipment	6,33	5,27	1,06					O	X	
1.2. An excellent restaurant has physical facilities extremely appealing	6,47	5,67	0,80					X	O	
1.3. Staff at an excellent restaurant has a neat appearance	6,93	5,53	1,40					O	X	
1.4. In an excellent restaurant service related materials are attractive	6,00	5,07	0,93					O	X	
Subsum	6,43	5,39	1,05							
2. Availability										
2.1. An excellent restaurant keeps his promise	5,60	5,47	0,13					O	X	
2.2. An excellent restaurant performs the services without error	5,93	6,27	-0,34					X	O	
2.3. The staff informs the customers precisely	6,33	5,73	0,60					X	O	
2.4. The staff provides prompt services to customers	6,33	5,93	0,40					X	O	
2.5. The staff is always willing to help customers	6,47	6,00	0,47					X	O	
2.6. The staff is never too busy to respond	6,00	5,13	0,87					O	X	
2.7. An excellent restaurant has a convenient program	6,53	6,67	-0,14					X	O	
Subsum	6,17	5,89	0,28							
3. Empathy										
3.1. An excellent restaurant is showing a genuine interest in solving the issue	6,20	5,93	0,27					X	O	
3.2. Staff is consistently polite with customers	6,93	5,67	1,26					O	X	
3.3. The staff provides individualized attention to customers	6,00	5,53	0,47					X	O	
3.4. The staff provides personal attention to to customers	6,20	5,60	0,60					X	O	
3.5. An excellent restaurant has in first place the interests of its costumers	6,60	6,07	0,53					O	X	
3.6. Staff is understanding the specific needs of their customers	6,40	5,53	0,87					X	O	
Subsum	6,39	5,72	0,67							
4. Competence										
4.1. An excellent restaurant insists on error-free service	6,00	6,40	-0,40					X	O	
4.2. The staff has the required knowledge	6,53	6,13	0,40					O	X	
Subsum	6,27	6,27	0,00							
5. Security										
5.1. Staff behavior instills trust to customers	6,60	5,67	0,93					O	X	
5.2. Customers are feeling safe regarding their transactions	6,73	6,13	0,60					O	X	
Subsum	6,67	5,90	0,77							
Sum	6,34	5,78	0,56							

Also, it can be seen that customers perceptions of Belvedere and Continental overlap regarding the: physical facilities of the restaurant, staff availability, efficiency, service performance without error,

accuracy, convenient schedule, problem solving, attention and understanding customer needs (Figure 4.).

Figure 4. Comparative analysis between customers perceptions - Belvedere and Continental



3.3. Analysis and interpretation of service quality using the tool: comparison of the positive and negative aspects

3.3.1. Belvedere data analysis and interpretation

3.3.1.1. Belvedere data analysis and interpretation - positive aspects

In the analysis, it is clear that Belvedere most services aspects were perceived by customers as positive.

It also notes that the prevailing positive aspects were perceived by customers as following: restaurant cleanliness and attractiveness, efficient and polite staff serving, achievement of promises and safety in transactions.

3.3.1.2. Belvedere data analysis and interpretation - negative aspects

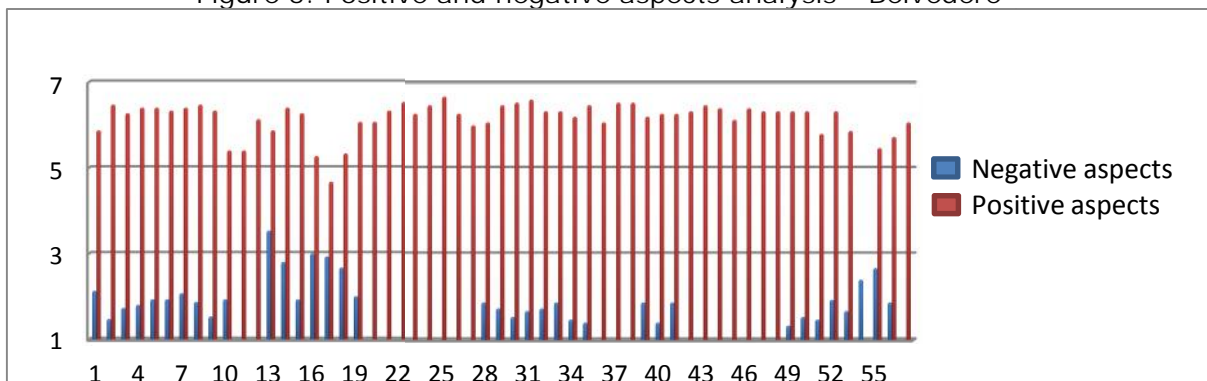
From the analysis it can be seen that customers perceived fewer negative aspects about the services offered by Belvedere restaurant.

Also, it may be noted that the prevailing negative aspects were perceived by customers of Belvedere restaurant on expensive drinks, high prices, inefficient use of time and difficult access.

3.3.1.3. Comparative analysis between the positive and negative aspects – Belvedere

From the analysis it can be seen that the positive aspects perceived by customers about the services offered by Belvedere restaurant prevail against perceived negative aspects, with a difference of 4.21 points. The biggest difference is 4.72 points on service, and the lowest deviation is 4.35 points on the price / value from Belvedere (Figure 5.).

Figure 5. Positive and negative aspects analysis - Belvedere –



It also notes that the prevailing negative aspects perceived are on expensive drinks

Table 4. Comparative analysis between the positive and negative aspects – Belvedere

Features		Negative	Positive	GAP	Graphics						
		(-) X	(+) O		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Food											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
1.1. Limited choice of the menu	1.11. Varied food	2,13	5,87	3,47	X					O	
1.2. Bland food	1.12. Tasty food	1,47	6,47	5	X					O	
1.3. Lower variability in of food	1.13. Traditional/authentic food	1,73	6,27	4,54	X					O	
1.4. Inadequate food temperature	1.14. Hot meal	1,8	6,4	4,6	X					O	
1.5. Common food	1.15. Appropriate servings	1,93	6,4	4,47	X					O	
1.6. Unattractive food	1.16. Well presented food	1,93	6,33	4,4	X					O	
1.7. Small servings	1.17. Well cooked food	2,07	6,4	4,33	X					O	
1.8. Poor food consistency	1.18. Fresh food	1,87	6,47	4,6	X					O	
1.9. Excessively greasy food	1.19. Fresh, varied salad	1,53	6,33	4,8	X					O	
1.10. Deserts not so good	1.20. Varied vegetarian menu	1,93	5,4	3,47	X				O		
	1.21. Varied kids menu		5,4	3,56					O		
	1.22. Food accessible to everyone		6,13	6,13						O	
Subsum		1,84	6,16	4,32							
2. Drinks											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
2.1. Expensive drinks	2.4. Varied drinks	3,53	5,87	2,34			X			O	
2.2. Limited choice	2.5. High quality drinks	2,8	6,4	3,6		X				O	
2.3. Slow serving	2.6. Varied wine	1,93	6,27	4,34	X					O	
Subsum		2,75	6,18	3,43							
3. Price/value											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
3.1. High prices	3.5. Right price/quality ratio	3	5,27	2,27		X			O		
3.2. No discount for parties	3.6. Discounts (special offers)	2,93	4,67	1,74		X			O		
3.3. Inefficient use of time	3.7. Affordable price	2,67	5,33	2,66		X			O		
3.4. Delayed response to requests	3.8. Short waiting time	2	6,07	4,07	X					O	
	3.9. Receptivity		6,07							O	
	3.10. Friendly environment		6,33							O	
	3.11. Attractive design		6,53							O	
	3.12. Good music		6,27							O	
	3.13. Clean environment		6,47							O	
	3.14. Clean tables		6,67							O	
	3.15. Attractive furniture		6,27							O	
	3.16. Attractive plants/flowers		6							O	
Subsum		2,65	6	3,35							
4. Serving											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
4.1. Slow serving	4.9. Friendly staff	1,87	6,07	4,2	X					O	
4.2. Rushed serving	4.10. Fast serving	1,73	6,47	4,74	X					O	
4.3. Careless serving	4.11. Efficient serving	1,53	6,53	5	X					O	
4.4. Impersonal serving	4.12. Polite staff	1,67	6,6	4,93	X					O	
4.5. Wrong serving	4.13. Carefully staff	1,73	6,33	4,6	X					O	
4.6. Unresponsiveness staff	4.14. Relaxed staff	1,87	6,33	4,46	X					O	
4.7. Impolite towards customers	4.15. Children friendly staff	1,47	6,2	4,73	X					O	
4.8. Disregard for customer needs	4.16. Accurate invoicing	1,4	6,47	5,07	X					O	
	4.17. Fulfilling promises		6,07							O	
	4.18. Confidentiality		6,53							O	
	4.19. Safety in transactions		6,53							O	
Subsum		1,66	6,38	4,72							
5. Staff											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
5.1. Unqualified staff	5.4. Neat appearance	1,87	6,2	4,33	X					O	
5.2. Unkempt appearance	5.5. Easy to identify staff	1,4	6,27	4,87	X					O	
5.3. Inexperienced young staff	5.6. Competent staff	1,87	6,27	4,4	X					O	
	5.7. Honest staff		6,33							O	
	5.8. Professional staff		6,47							O	
	5.9. Carefully, polite staff		6,4							O	
	5.10. Flexible staff		6,13							O	
	5.11. Efficient, prompt staff		6,4							O	
	5.12. Understand customer needs		6,33							O	
	5.13. Welcoming staff		6,33							O	
Subsum		1,71	6,31	4,6							
6. Atmosphere/ environment											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
6.1. Tense atmosphere	6.7. Relaxed atmosphere	1,33	6,33	5	X					O	
6.2. Crowded environment	6.8. Informal atmosphere	1,53	6,33	4,8	X					O	
6.3. Noise/loud music	6.9. Romantic atmosphere	1,47	5,8	4,33	X					O	
6.4. Lack of privacy	6.10. Friendly/happy atmosphere	1,93	6,33	4,4	X					O	
6.5. Uncleaned tables	6.11. Modern equipment	1,67	5,87	4,2	X					O	
6.6. Smoking area not separated		2,4			X					O	
Subsum		1,72	6,13	4,41							
7. Location											
Negative aspects	Positive aspects										
7.1. Difficult access	7.3. Convenient	2,67	5,47	2,8		X				O	
7.2. Unattractive	7.4. Roomy	1,87	5,73	3,86	X					O	
	7.5. Attractive		6,07							O	
Subsum		2,27	5,76	3,49							
Sum		1,96	6,17	4,21							

and tricky access to the location and the prevailing positive aspects perceived by customers are about the cleanliness and attractiveness of the

restaurant, the efficient and courteous service staff, achievement of promises and safety in transactions (Table 4.)

3.4. Analysis of Customer Experience in two restaurants

3.4.1. Analysis of Customer Experience in Solarino and Belvedere restaurant

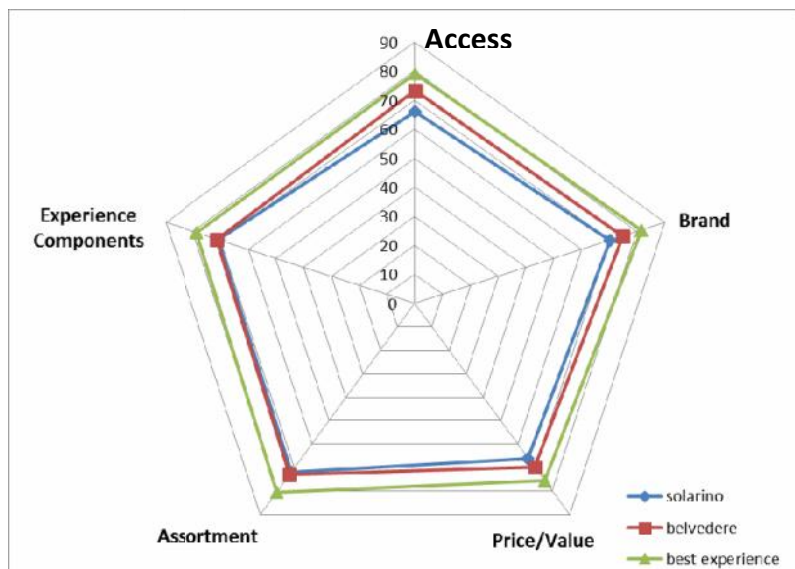
From the analysis it can be seen that between Solarino and Belvedere is a fairly low gap of 0.84, and towards the best customer experience, the difference is 8.22 points to Solarino, and 7.38 points from Belvedere (Table 5.).

Table 5. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 1 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere

Criteria	SOLARINO	BELVEDERE	BEST EXPERIENCE
1. Acces	66.11	73.20	79.03
2. Brand (product) / service	70.37	74.99	81.47
3. Price / value	66.01	69.78	75.69
4. Variety (assortment)/choice	71,94	73,09	80,59
5. Experience Components	70,79	71,31	78,57
Sum	71,36	72,20	79,58

Also, it can be seen that Belvedere restaurant is close to the best experience in terms of quality of services (Figure 6.).

Figure 6. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 1 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere



3.4.2. Analysis of Customer Experience - Level 2 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere

According to the analysis, the quality level of access to Belvedere restaurant is higher than that of Solarino restaurant with a difference of 5.09 points, the fact that Belvedere is located in the city center and Solarino outside (Table 6.).

It is also noted that the difference in service quality is not very high, but

towards the best experience there is a high difference: 11.1 points towards Solarino and 6.48 points towards Belvedere.

Regarding the price, the difference between the two restaurants is 3.78 points, and compared to the best experience 8.97 points towards Solarino, and 5.19 towards Belvedere.

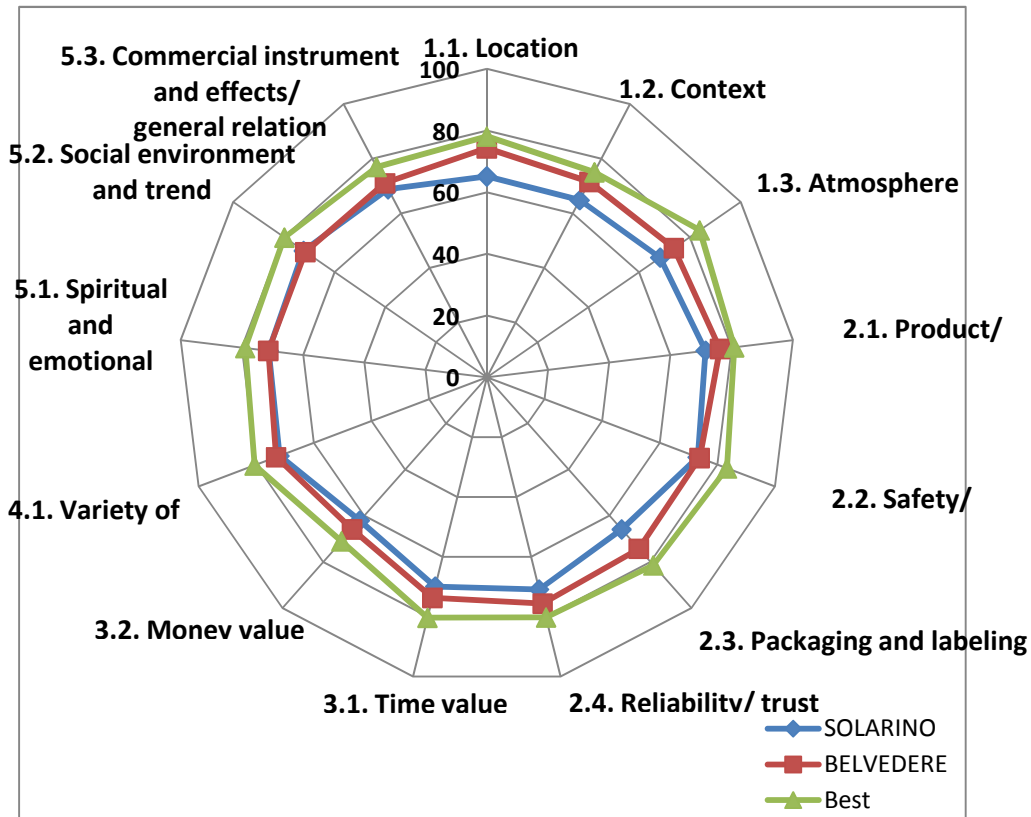
Table 6. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 2 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere

CRITERIA	SOLARINO	BELVEDERE	BEST EXPERIENCE
Criterion 1: ACCESS	66.11	73.20	79.03
1.1. Location	65.17	74.28	78.11
1.2. Context	64.84	71.59	75.09
1.3. Atmosphere	68.33	73.72	83.89
Criterion 2: BRAND	70.37	74.99	81.47
2.1. Product/ Service	71.50	76.17	80.83
2.2. Safety/ Security	73.17	73.83	83.33
2.3. Packaging and labeling	65.95	74.33	81.50
2.4. Reliability/ trust	70.86	75.63	80.23
Criterion 3: PRICE/ VALUE	66.01	69.78	75.69
3.1. Time value	69.90	73.67	80.30
3.2. Money value	62.11	65.89	71.08
Criterion 4: ASSORTMENT	71.94	73.09	80.59
4.1. Variety of great offers/ category	71.94	73.09	80.59
Criterion 5: EXPERIENCE COMPONENTS	70.79	71.31	78.57
5.1. Spiritual and emotional element	71.28	71.39	78.94
5.2. Social environment and trend	72.19	71.48	79.79
5.3. Commercial instrument and effects/ general relation	68.90	71.06	77.00

Also, it may be noted that Belvedere is closest to the best customer

experience regarding to service quality offered by the restaurant (Figure 7.).

Figure 7. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 2 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere



3.4.3. Comparative analysis in terms of experience - Solarino and Belvedere

In the analysis, it is clear that the gap between Solarino and Belvedere is low

on spiritual and emotional elements being 0.11 points and compared to the best experience gap is significant for 7.55 points (Table 7.).

Table 7. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 3 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere

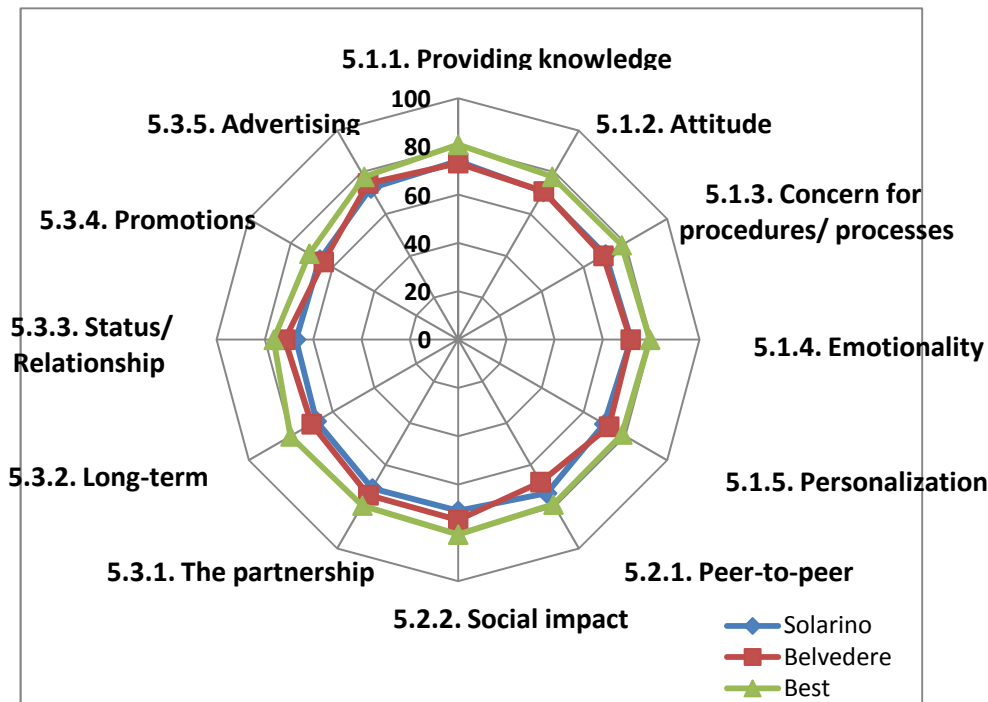
Criterion 5 : COMPONENTS EXPERIENCE	SOLARINO	BELVEDERE	BEST EXPERIENCE
5.1. Spiritual and emotional element	71,28	71,39	78,94
5.1.1. Providing knowledge	73,94	73,07	80,67
5.1.2. Attitude	70,58	70,88	77,86
5.1.3. Concern for procedures / processes	70,46	69,46	78,25
5.1.4. Emotionality	71,56	71,44	79,44
5.1.5. Personalization	69,88	72,09	78,46
5.2. Social environment and trend	72,19	71,48	79,79
5.2.1. Peer-to-peer	73,50	68,17	78,83
5.2.2. Social impact	70,88	74,79	80,74
5.3. Commercial instrument and effects/ general relation	68,90	71,06	77,00
5.3.1. The partnership	71,17	74,41	79,40

5.3.2. Long-term results	67,67	70,09	80,17
5.3.3. Status/ Relationship with suppliers (SCM)	67,17	71,83	76,42
5.3.4. Promotions	66,17	64,33	71,17
5.3.5. Advertising (the client is aware of the company / product exposure in the media)	72,33	74,67	77,83

Also, it can be seen that the greatest difference between the two restaurants is on partnership relations, promotions and advertising, being 2.16

points and compared to the best experience the gap is 8.1 points from Solarino, and 5.94 points from Belvedere (Figure 8.).

Figure 8. Customer Experience Analysis - Level 3 criteria - Solarino and Belvedere



CONCLUSIONS

Most of the service quality research is based on expectation theory invalidation, which argues that all customers perceive service quality as the difference between the conduct of the service and their expectations. The invalidation is positive when serving exceeds expectations, and vice versa. Parasuraman measured service quality, separately assessing customers' expectations and perceptions of service deployment and making the difference between the two. (expectations - ongoing). Using factor analysis, he showed five empirical components, usually called

tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, which are distinctly described as dimensions and determinants of service quality.

Waiting-denial theory assumes that customer expectations about a service to resemble qualitatively enough with their perceptions towards the service itself to allow direct measurement of the difference between the two.

According to the two restaurants analysis, Solarino and Belvedere, regarding the main criteria reported to the best lived experience, for customers that choose one restaurant over another, it may be noted that Belvedere is preferred mainly for services and easy access

compared with Solarino, the experience lived at Belvedere, through the received services quality, being closest to the best customer experience.

In conclusion, it can be seen that most people choose to frequent a specific restaurant primarily for the food quality offered by that restaurant, secondly to service quality, staff competence, accessibility and attractiveness of the location and atmosphere, and the main restaurant remains Belvedere.

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