Critical success factors for new dishes in gastronomic offer of Belgrade restaurants

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Abstract: The subject of the research of this paper is the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer of Belgrade restaurants, presented through critical success factors (CSFs) that can influence it. The aim was to analyze CSFs of new dishes in mentioned restaurants. The initial assumption was that the success of new dishes depends on various factors, which resulted in developing a general research question: What factors are important for the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer of a restaurant? To achieve a high level standards in the restaurant industry and boost competitiveness, businesses have to keep up with modern trends and introduce innovative business approaches. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: managers' profile, the restaurant profile and CSFs. The managers of Belgrade restaurants (N=64) were asked to rank ten different CSFs using the Likert scale. According to their opinions, seven CSFs were found to be very important for the success of new dishes.

Keywords: Belgrade restaurants, critical success factors, new dishes
JEL classification: L83

Kritični faktori uspešnosti novih jela u gastronomskoj ponudi beogradskih restorana

Sažetak: Predmet istraživanja ovog rada je uspešnost novih jela u gastronomskoj ponudi beogradskih restorana, prikazana kroz kritične faktore uspešnosti (KFU) koji na to mogu uticati. Cilj je bio da se analiziraju KFU novih jela u ovim restoranima. Polazna pretpostavka je bila da uspešnost novih jela zavisi od različitih faktora, iz čega je proizašlo i opšte istraživačko pitanje: Koji faktori su značajni za uspešnost novih jela u gastronomskoj ponudi restorana? Da bi se ostvario postavljeni cilj i dao odgovor na postavljeno istraživačko pitanje, bilo je neophodno identifikovati KFU i analizirati značajnost različitih faktora koji utiču na uspešnost novih jela u gastronomskoj ponudi restorana. Upitnik se sastojao od tri dela: profil menadžera, profil restorana i KFU. Za rangiranje KFU (deset stavki) menadžeri beogradskih restorana (N = 64) su koristili Likertovu skalu. Prema njihovom mišljenju, sedam KFU je veoma važno za uspešnost novih jela.

Ključne reči: beogradski restorani, kritični faktori uspešnosti, nova jela
JEL klasifikacija: L83

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1. Introduction

In order to achieve a high level standards in the field of restaurant business and boost the competitiveness of restaurants, this industry must adapt to modern trends and introduce an innovative business approach (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009). Such a business approach can be achieved in different ways by introducing: 1) culinary innovations (Gagić, 2016; Lee et al., 2016; Munjal et al, 2016), 2) innovative equipment (Albors-Garrigos et al., 2013), 3) innovative services (Chou et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016), 4) innovative food preparation and serving techniques (Albors-Garrigos et al., 2013), 5) marketing innovations (Iorgulescu & Sidonia Rvar, 2013; Lee et al., 2016), 6) innovative design and atmosphere (Horng et al., 2013; Ivkov et al., 2016), 7) innovative technologies (Shcherbak, 2016), 8) innovation in management (Lee et al. al., 2016; Schcherbak, 2016), 9) eco-innovation (Sharma et al., 2020) and etc. At present, the availability of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Foursquare, etc.) (Božić & Zubanov, 2018), offers great possibilities of their use for innovative marketing. Although all innovations are significant and can contribute to the success of a restaurant, the guests most frequently notice innovations related to the gastronomic offer, primarily the new dishes (culinary innovations) and new techniques of food preparation. Lee et al. (2016) indicate that top restaurants are expected to set standards for culinary innovations, which is crucial for building restaurant identity and long-term success. Harrington (2004) created a model for the development of culinary products, which includes the following steps: formulation of culinary innovations, implementation of culinary innovations, evaluation, control and introduction of innovations. Munjal et al. (2016) believe that nowadays innovations in culinary practice are mainly focused on sustainability, care for the environment and the value of tradition, as well as cultural heritage. Given the growing importance of sustainability, much attention is given to the revitalization of traditional diets and cuisines. Accordingly, the gastronomic offer is becoming increasingly important as a part of the cultural heritage. In this respect, Sharma (2012) recognizes the potential and demand for traditional dishes.

Many culinary innovations are based on the use of specific, often very unusual ingredients in food preparation (algae, sprouts, microgreens, edible flowers, edible insects) (Choe et al., 2018; Dobermann et al., 2017; Ebert, 2012; Egebjerg et al., 2018; Ghosh et al., 2018; Mouritsen et al., 2018; Renna et al., 2017; Rioux et al., 2017) or eliminating some ingredients (meat, gluten-containing ingredients, ingredients containing lactose, energy-rich fatty ingredients, sugars, etc.) that are considered bad for consumers' health (Bellisle et al., 2018; Kozonova et al., 2019; Tas et al., 2019). Božić and Milošević (2020) found that in a large number of Belgrade restaurants, microgreens (edible young plants that are harvested 7-14 days after germination when they have developed only cotyledons or a pair of true developed leaves) are used to decorate dishes. Innovations of this type attach great importance to the health aspect, i.e., they are aimed at preparing food that has a positive effect on human health, disease prevention and contributes to improving the quality of life. According to certain studies, the perception of food as "healthy" is a basic attribute of quality that positively affects the attitudes of guests towards that food (Hur & Jang, 2015; Kim et al., 2013).

Although culinary innovations can significantly improve restaurant success, the contribution of different new dishes varies. Namely, the success of new dishes depends on several factors. Previous studies (Kawasaki & Shimomura, 2015; Kawasaki et al., 2015; Klosse et al., 2004) examined CSFs in the Netherlands and Japan, however, thus far, this topic has not been researched in Serbia and the southeastern region of Europe. In addition, previous studies did not analyze the hierarchy of identified CSFs, therefore, their importance for the success of new dishes which are part of the gastronomic offer is not known. The main research question of this study is: What are the most important critical success factors (CSFs) of new dishes in

restaurants? The aim of this study was to analyze the critical factors that are important for the success of new dishes included in the gastronomic offer of Belgrade restaurants.

2. Theoretical background

Although food is a basic physiological need, it also plays a role in the success of a restaurant's business. Namely, good food is the basic criterion for the guests' choice of a restaurant (Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Bernardo et al. (2018) point out that high cuisine, i.e., the offer of top-quality food, is a specific factor in the success of high-quality restaurants. Soriano (2002), as well as Josiam and Monteiro (2004), agree that the unique food taste and ingredients have an important role in the guests' choice of a particular restaurant. Also, Le and Needham (2019) researched the reviews posted on the websites of different restaurants, as well as comments on social media platforms, and found that as far as the guests were concerned, the taste and quality of food were decisive for the restaurant choice. Another research, conducted almost three decades ago (Auty, 1992), indicates that from that period until today, nothing has changed in the relation between the guests and the gastronomic offer. Namely, in that period, as well as today, food was one of the most important factors for the consumers' choice of restaurants.

In terms of the introduction of new dishes in restaurant gastronomic offer, it is important to ensure that they will be accepted by the guests. Also, important attributes of food, on which the choice by the guests depends, can be classified into six categories: 1) energy content, 2) nutrient content/health properties, 3) taste, 4) prestige status/properties, 5) ecological, political and ethical characteristics and 6) attributes of time/convenience (Jang et al., 2009).

The success of new dishes depends on several factors identified and analyzed by some authors (Kawasaki & Shimomura, 2015; Kawasaki et al., 2015; Klosse et al., 2004). Based on the interviews with 18 chefs and analysis of 63 dishes, six critical success factors (CSFs) were identified by Klosse et al. (2004). These CSFs are very significant for the development of new dishes or the improvement of existing ones. The main CSFs are: "(1) name and presentation befitting expectations, (2) appetizing smell suitable to the food, (3) good balance of flavor compounds in relation to the food, (4) presence of umami, (5) a mix of hard and soft textures apparent in the mouth, and (6) high flavor richness" (Klosse et al., 2004, p. 107). Other authors identified ten CSFs based on the analysis published in a culinary magazine for chefs and by application of laddering technique (Kawasaki et al., 2015). These CSFs are: "utilization of main ingredient texture, utilization of main ingredient flavor, utilization of main ingredient umami, featured main ingredient, good pairings (complements) between main and secondary ingredients, not too rich, good balance, cuisine more Japanese in style, elegance and surprise)" (Kawasaki et al., 2015. p. 3). Listed CSFs were used for the research of new dishes success factors presented in this paper.

3. Research methodology

A questionnaire was developed to estimate critical factors for the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer of restaurants. This questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section includes questions regarding the profile of managers (age, education, and work experience), the second focuses on the restaurants' profile, while the third refers to culinary success factors. The factors used in the questionnaire were taken from the study conducted by Kawasaki et al. (2015): "*Cognitive structures based on culinary success factors in the development of new dishes by Japanese chefs at fine dining restaurants*". Therefore, the third part of the questionnaire consisted of ten closed-ended Likert-type questions rating the factors and one open-ended question. The CSF8 (Dish in the style of Serbian cuisine) was adapted to the local situation. The research was conducted in November 2020. The analyzed

Belgrade restaurants were selected using Tripadvisor – the world's largest internet travel platform. When entering keywords "restaurant" and "Belgrade", the portal singles out a wide range of hospitality facilities (1701) on the territory of Belgrade, as well as in suburban municipalities. After eliminating the facilities located in suburban municipalities, 1052 facilities were identified. After another elimination of service restaurants operating under institutions, clubs or cafeterias, fast-food restaurants, temporarily closed facilities, some bakeries and other non-typical facilities, 424 facilities were classified as a classical restaurant. The questionnaire was sent to 200 managers of randomly selected restaurants by e-mail on the e-mail addresses published on the Tripadvisor site, asking them to fill it out and return it to the sender. In order to improve responses, e-mails were followed up with phone calls. All participants were asked the same questions in the same order. The participants ranked each factor with respect to its importance for the success of a dish using a Likert scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Managers were also asked to identify any other important factors not included in the provided list. The final response sample size was 66, however, due to incomplete questionnaires, 2 were discarded from further analyses. Therefore, the final size of the used sample was 64 and the response rate was 32%, which is in accordance with similar studies (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015; Mandabach et al., 2011).

All data analyses were done using the One-way ANOVA, t-test and Factor Analysis (using statistical package STATISTIKA 5.0). In addition, the scale reliability was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha statistics.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Profile of respondents

Table 1 profiles the respondents, presenting the basic data about their age, education and professional experience. The average age of respondents was 44, while the highest percentage of respondents was between 41 and 50 (43.8%) years of age. Also, a high percentage of respondents (34.3%) were between 31 and 40. More than half (59.3%) of respondents completed some high school, significant number of respondents (37.5%) had bachelor's degree, while only 3.2% had master's degrees. Most of them (70.3%) had professional education in hospitality. Generally, respondents are well experienced in hospitality. Namely, most of them (64.0%) have more than 10 year's experience in hospitality.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

|		Number of respondents	Percent of respondents %
Age (year)	< 30	2	3.2
	31-40	22	34.3
	41-50	28	43.8
	>50	12	18.7
Education	High school	38	59.3
	Bachelor degree	24	37.5
	Master degree	2	3.2
Experience in hospitality (year)	1-5	3	4.7
	6-10	20	31.3
	>10	41	64.0
Professional education in hospitality	Yes	45	70.3
	No	19	29.7

Source: Author's research

4.2. Restaurant profile

The restaurant profile is defined based on several criteria, including the type of cuisine, size and how long the restaurant has stayed in business. Depending on the type of cuisine, the restaurants are classified into eight groups (Figure 1). Most restaurants belong to the type of international (36%) or national (31) cuisine. Then, there are restaurants with European (9%), Italian (8%), Asian (6%) and Mediterranean (5%) cuisine, followed by fish restaurants (3%). The remaining 2 % include restaurants offering some other type of cuisine, which is not indicated in the questionnaire.

The size of the restaurant is defined based on the number of available seats (chairs). According to these criteria, all restaurants are divided into three groups (Figure 2). Almost half of the restaurants (47%) belong to the medium size restaurants (50-100 available chairs), while the other half consists of the restaurants that belong to two other groups, which have almost equal share (28% in the category of big restaurants with more than 100 chairs and 25% in the category of small restaurants with less than 50 chairs).
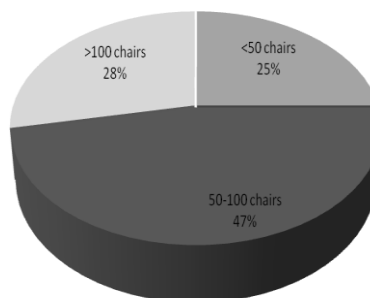
In relation to how long the restaurant has stayed in business, restaurants are divided into three groups (Figure 3). The restaurants that have stayed in business for more than 10 years have the highest share in this respect – 48% and are followed by the restaurants (33%) which have been in business between 3 and 10 years, and finally younger restaurants (19%) which have been operating for less than 3 years.
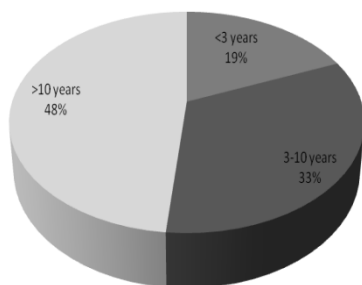
Figure 1: Type of cuisine
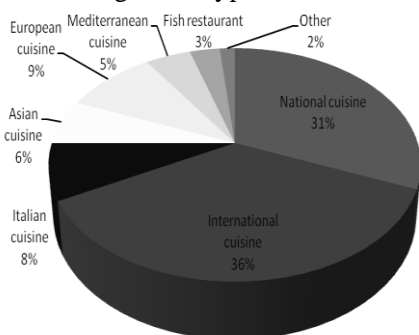
Source: Author's research

Figure 2: Size of restaurant

Source: Author's research

Figure 3: How long the restaurant has stayed in business

Source: Author's research

4.3. Critical success factors

In order to evaluate the importance of critical success factors for new dishes included in the gastronomic offer of Belgrade restaurants, the estimation of the importance of 10 offered CSFs was done by the restaurant managers. Based on the responses provided by the respondents, 10 CSFs were ranked according to their importance. Therefore, based on the analysis of descriptive parameters of all variables used to collect data on factors (10 items) influencing the new dishes success in 64 surveyed Belgrade restaurants (Table 2), it was determined to what extent (based on the assessment of the surveyed managers), individual items are recognized as significant factors of new dishes success.

According to the analysis of descriptive parameters, out of 10 offered success factors of new dishes, Belgrade restaurant managers singled out 7 factors whose scalar averages (Mean) range from 4.00 to 4.78, which means that restaurant managers recognized these factors as crucial for the success of new dishes. On the list of 10 success factors, "Main ingredient umami" occupies the first position with an average score of 4.78. Slightly lower values of scalar averages were determined for the following CSFs: "Main ingredient flavor" - 4.66; "Good balance between taste and texture of ingredients" - 4.56; "Elegance, sophisticated impression" - 4.13; "Good pairings between main and secondary ingredients" - 4.11; "Suprise (unusual food experience)" - 4.04 and Main ingredient texture - 4.00. For two CSFs ("Main ingredient" and "Not too heavy, neither too strong in taste nor too much fat"), the scalar averages had a value between 3 and 4, which means that restaurant managers rate these CSFs as less significant compared to the first 7, however, they are classified as important indicators. The only CSF whose scalar average is below 3 is "Dish in style of Serbian cuisine", which is rated as the least significant CSF.

Table 2: Importance of critical success factors for new dishes in the gastronomic offer of Belgrade restaurants

Position	CSFs	Mean	SD	SE
01.	Main ingredient umami	**4.78**	0.744	0.052
02.	Main ingredient flavor	**4.66**	0.720	0.088
03.	Good balance between taste and texture of ingredients	**4.56**	0.641	0.048
04.	Elegance, sophisticated impression	**4.13**	0.906	0.060
05.	Good pairings between main and secondary ingredients	**4.11**	0.936	0.067
06.	Surprise (unusual food experience)	**4.04**	0.852	0.055
07.	Main ingredient texture	**4.00**	0.778	0.056
08.	Main ingredient	**3.66**	1.022	0.085
09.	Not too heavy, neither too strong in taste nor too much fat	**3.33**	1.197	0.078
10.	Dish in style of Serbian cuisine	**2.00**	0.055	0.085

Notes: 1= not important; 5= extremely important; SD – standard deviation; SE – standard error
Source: Author's research

Factor analysis (Table 3) of 10 CFSs found that five variables related to food ingredients (main ingredient umami; main ingredient flavor; good balance between taste and texture of ingredients; good pairings between main and secondary ingredients; main ingredient) participate in the formation of the first component, which is named as Characteristics of ingredients. The remaining three CFSs (elegance, sophisticated impression; surprise (unusual

food experience); not too heavy, neither too strong in taster nor too much fat) create second component entitled Impression about dish.

Table 3: Results of factor analysis

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained	Cronbach's alpha
F1: Characteristics of ingredients Main ingredient flavor Main ingredient Main ingredient umami Good pairings between main and secondary ingredients Good balance between taste and texture of ingredients	**0.821** **0.745** **0.705** **0.630** **0.581**	3.010	25.112	0.897
F2: Impression about the dish Surprise (unusual food experience) Not too heavy, neither too strong in taste nor too much fat Elegance, sophisticated impression	**0.722** **0.614** **0.570**	1.705	14.134	0.812

Source: Author's research

Differences between managers' viewpoints on the importance of Characteristics of ingredients and Impression about the dish for the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer, depending on their education (level and area) and the experience and type of cuisine, were analyzed using the t-test. In this respect, in some categories (education level and experience) a smaller number of managers (less than 10% of the total sample) were included; the analysis encompasses only those groups of managers who participate with more than 10% in the total sample (education level: high school and bachelor degree; experience: 6-10 years and more than 10 years; type of cuisine: national and international). The obtained results show that there are significant differences between managers who finished high school and their colleagues with bachelor's level of education regarding the Impression about the dish (Table 4). These results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the managers' viewpoints according to their level of education for the CSFs "Suprise (unusual food experience)" and "Elegance, sophisticated impression" at significance level $p<0.05$. Both CSFs are rated higher by managers with high school degrees (Table 4). Differences between the two groups of manages were not confirmed for Characteristics of ingredients.

Table 4: Results of the t-test according to the education level

Impression about the dish	Mean value		t-test
	High school	**Bachelor**	
Surprise (unusual food experience)	4.36	3.78	0.024*
Not too heavy, neither too strong in taste nor too much fat	3,29	3.43	0.589
Elegance, sophisticated impression	4.43	3.76	0.009*

Source: Author's research

Between managers with education in hospitality and managers with education in some other areas, there were no significant differences relating to the Impression about dish. T-test shows significant differences between these two groups of managers concerning the Characteristics of ingredients (Table 5). Namely, there are statistically significant differences

in the managers' viewpoints according to their education field for CSFs "Main ingredient flavor" and "Main ingredient umami" at significance level p<0.05. These CSFs are rated higher by the managers whose education is hospitality related (Table 5).

Table 5: Results of the t-test according to the education field

Characteristics of ingredients	Mean value		t-test
	Education in hospitality	Education out of hospitality	
Main ingredient flavor	4. 89	3.96	0.007*
Main ingredient	3.74	3.58	0.118
Main ingredient umami	4.88	4.23	0.041*
Good pairings between main and secondary ingredients	4.18	3.93	0.428
Good balance between taste and texture of ingredients	4.43	4.81	0.312

Source: Author's research

Managers' viewpoints about importance of Characteristics of ingredients and Impression about the dish for the success of new dishes are not dependent on their experience in hospitality and type of cuisine. T-test has not identified differences between managers with six to ten years of experience and managers with more than 10 years of experience. Also, results of the t-test according to the type of cuisine show that there are no differences in restaurant managers' viewpoints about the importance of Characteristics of ingredients and Impression about the dish for the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer depending on the type of cuisine (national or international).

One-way ANOVA was used to analyze differences in restaurant managers' viewpoints about the importance of Characteristics of ingredients and Impression about the dish for the success of new dishes in the gastronomic offer depending on their age, size of the restaurant and how long has the restaurant stayed in business. In this regard, in the category "less than 30 years" pertaining to the age of managers, a smaller number of respondents (less than 10% of the total sample) were included; the analysis included only those groups of respondents who participated with more than 10% in the total sample (31-40, 41-50 and over 50 years). A statistically significant difference at the level of p <0.05 concerning the managers belonging to different age groups was found only for Characteristics of ingredients (Table 6), while there were no significant differences for Impression about the dish. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey test indicated significant differences in viewpoints between the managers aged 31-40 and the managers aged 41-50 for the following CSFs: "main ingredient flavor" (p=0.021<0.05) and "main ingredient" (p=0.032<0.05). Also, the Tukey test pointed to significant differences between managers aged 31-40 and those over 50 years of age for the following CSFs: "main ingredient flavor" (p=0.034<0.05) and "good balance between taste and texture of ingredients" (p=0.019<0.05).

Table 6: Results of ANOVA according to the age of managers

Characteristics of ingredients	Mean value			F	p
	31-40	41-50	>50		
Main ingredient flavor	4.21	4.89	4.78	6.312	0.006*
Main ingredient	3.63	3.45	4.21	3.687	0.023*
Main ingredient umami	4.73	4.84	4.69	1.759	0.152
Good pairings between main and secondary ingredients	3.98	4.19	4.09	0.321	0.723
Good balance between taste and texture of ingredients	4.78	4.46	4.01	5.468	0.009*

Source: Author's research

According to the results of ANOVA, there are statistically significant differences in the managers' viewpoints according to the size of a restaurant in terms of the Impression about the dish and only for one CSF (Table 7), while there are no significant differences for Characteristics of ingredients. The results of the Tukey post-hoc test indicated that there are significant differences in viewpoints between the managers employed in restaurants with less than 50 chairs and those working in restaurants with more than 100 chairs concerning the CSF "Suprise (unusual food experience)" (p=0.027<0.05).

Table 7: Results of ANOVA according to the size of a restaurant

Impression about the dish	Mean value			F	p
	< 50 chairs	50-100 chairs	>100 chairs		
Surprise (unusual food experience)	4.69	4.01	3.79	3.521	0.031*
Not too heavy, neither too strong in taste nor too much fat	3.32	3.25	3.48	1.153	0.328
Elegance, sophisticated impression	4.02	4.16	4.12	1.947	0.152

Source: Author's research

The application of ANOVA for the analysis of statistically significant differences in the managers' viewpoints according to how long has the restaurant stayed in business showed that there are no differences between viewpoints of managers employed in the restaurants which have been in business for different periods of time concerning any of the given CSFs.

5. Conclusion

This research presents the findings of the study focusing on critical success factors for new dishes in gastronomic offers of restaurants from the perspective of managers of Belgrade restaurants. It provides the answer to the main research question. Based on the results of the study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the majority of analyzed CSFs (7/10) were estimated by the managers of Belgrade restaurants as crucial for new dishes success. Many of these CSFs are related to the ingredients of new dishes, and primarily to the main ingredient. Although the "main ingredient" had a low ranking (08) in the CSFs hierarchy, some parameters (main ingredient umami, main ingredient flavor, main ingredient texture) related to the main ingredient are better positioned, and the "main ingredient umami" was selected as the most important. Factor Analysis showed that six variables related to food ingredients support the first component entitled Characteristics of ingredients, while the remaining variables support the second component entitled Impression about the dish. The influence of seven independent variables on the first and second components were different. Namely, the attitude of managers of different ages, levels and fields of education and working in restaurants of different sizes varied, while significant differences were not identified between the managers depending on their experience, the restaurant's type of cuisine and the restaurant's duration.

Our study contributes to previous research of CSFs of new dishes, since the latter did not analyze the effect of managers' and restaurants' profiles on their attitudes about new dishes success. Also, previous studies were focused on the identification of the CSFs, while this study estimated the importance of already identified CSFs. The obtained results contribute to the science of restaurant business in our country which has not examined the CSFs of new dishes thus far. The practical implications of the research are reflected in the fact that the results of this study might prove valuable to current and future owners of restaurant

businesses. Business owners can improve their business performance by applying knowledge from this study.

The limitations of the research conducted in this paper are related to very scarce literature on the given subject, which is necessary for the design of the research instrument. Also, in terms of future studies, the comparison of the results relating to assessing the significance of different CSFs from different perspectives (guest perspectives and managerial ones) would provide greater reliability of the obtained results.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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