Attributes of service quality – A report from Belgrade restaurants

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is analysis of the importance of service quality attributes in the Belgrade restaurants. The data were collected on a sample of 484 respondents, users of restaurant services in Belgrade and analyzed using the statistical package STATISTIKA 5.0. Three dimensions (Staff, Food, Restaurant facility) were formed based on factor analysis. It was found that the respondents' attitudes differ depending on their gender and level of education. The findings can contribute to improving the service quality of the Belgrade restaurants through improvement of the restaurant performances in accordance with the expectations of customers. The most important improvement is to provide food of excellent taste and quality which is better than in other restaurants.

Keywords: quality, service, restaurants, Belgrade
JEL classification: L83

Atributi kvaliteta usluge – Izveštaj iz beogradskih restorana

Sažetak: Cilj ovog rada je analiza značaja atributa kvaliteta usluge u beogradskim restoranima. Podaci su prikupljeni na uzorku od 484 ispitanika, korisnika usluga restorana u Beogradu i analizirani pomoću statističkog paketa STATISTIKA 5.0. Na osnovu faktorske analize formirane su tri dimenzije (osoblje, hrana, restoranski objekat). Utvrđeno je da se stavovi ispitanika razlikuju u zavisnosti od pola i nivoa obrazovanja. Nalazi mogu doprineti poboljšanju kvaliteta usluga u beogradskim restoranima kroz unapređenje performansi restorana u skladu sa očekivanjima kupaca. Od svih unapređenja, najvažnije je da se obezbedi hrana odličnog ukusa i boljeg kvaliteta nego u drugim restoranima.

Ključne reči: kvalitet, usluga, restorani, Beograd
JEL klasifikacija: L83

1. Introduction

Many factors are estimated as crucial for successful operation of the restaurants. Numerous studies indicate the existence of a large influence of different factors on the quality and long-term operation of restaurants from the aspect of restaurant success (Gadelrab_Ekiz, 2019;

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Sharma et al., 2021) such as staff-customer interaction, demographic characteristics of customers, mission, vision and business strategy, restaurant location, management, food quality, etc., while a significant number of authors observed the same factors from the aspect of their influence on the failure (Parsa et al., 2005; 2015; 2019; Self et al., 2015). In the past, such studies were mainly focused on financial factors (break-even point, cost of goods sold, overhead rate, prime cost, food cost percentage, gross profit), while other factors that influence business success were given less attention (Yoon & SooCheong, 2005). Parsa et al. (2005) classified those factors in two groups: internal (related to the company's competencies that directly affect its survival) and external (which are beyond the control of the individual and the company, such as the economic climate, market conditions, competition, etc.). Self et al. (2015) dealing with restaurant success/performance indicate that internal factors are more significant and have a greater importance for restaurant success than external. Later, Parsa et al. (2010) offered a classification on macro factors (economic factors, legislation, climate change, regional and urban planning, cultural and demographic changes, new forms of competition) and micro factors (capital, location, owner's quality of life, owner's entrepreneurial expertise, experience, owner's leadership skills, branding ability (restaurant name, restaurant design and layout), Taj Mahal syndrome, concept, cost control). Miksen (2019) highlighted four key factors, which have huge importance for a restaurant's success: environment, food, staff and customer service, and costs. The importance of these factors depends on characteristics of a restaurant and guests' demographics (Parsa et al., 2015).

Considering the trends in the development of tourism and hospitality and the increasingly better positioning of the Republic of Serbia on the tourist map of the world, it is necessary to create conditions for successful restaurant operations and achieving satisfactory competitiveness on the domestic and world markets. One of the essential prerequisites for business success is a high quality of service that meets the requirements of increasingly demanding users of restaurant services (Aftab et al., 2016). In order to reach the level of service that the modern market demands, it is necessary to determine the key attributes of the service quality, as well as which of those attributes have the greatest importance for achieving high service quality. The research of the service quality attributes is difficult because specific data can only be obtained indirectly by collecting data from users or experts and analyzing their perception of this problem. Different scales are used to measure the service quality, such as SERVQUAL, which is used to assess service quality in general (Parasuraman et al., 1988), while the DINESERV scale is adapted for restaurants (Stevens et al., 1995). In this study, a modified DINESERV instrument created by Kim et al. (2009) was used. Until now, attributes important for the service quality in Serbian restaurants were rarely studied. The aim of this study is to analyze the service quality attributes important for the Belgrade restaurants.

The findings of this study are important for business success of current and future restaurant owners in Belgrade. The research will answer which aspects of the service should be given special attention to in order to meet the expectations of the guests. In addition, the study will show which items of service quality are more important to males and which to females, as well as whether the attitude of customers towards them differs depending on the level of education and age.

2. Background

Service quality became a subject of interest in the 1980s, when Gronroos (1984) distinguished three dimensions of quality: technical (related to the result of the service received), functional (related to the process of service provision) and image (related to the image of the facility that is the service provider). Zaibaf et al. (2012) concluded that

functional quality has a positive effect on image and quality perception. Defining service quality is very complex and significantly more complex than defining product quality, whereby service quality can be analyzed from the professional point of view or from the user point of view (Torres, 2014). Today's understanding of service quality implies that the user of the service has a positive perception of its quality. Similarly, Ali et al. (2021) give definition of quality as the level of satisfaction of the needs and demands of consumers, that is, compliance with their increasing requirements and expectations. Kotler et al. (2010) believe that service quality is a sum of attributes related to food, service, atmosphere, environment, etc., which are the result of possibility to meet the expectations and fulfill the needs of clients.

Service quality is highlighted as one of very important factors affecting success of restaurant business by many scholars (Chin & Tsai, 2013; Parsa et al., 2019; Rawal & Dani, 2017). Bichler et al. (2021) believe that the service quality is a very important factor for a successful operation of a restaurant. Service quality in the restaurant business does not only mean that the guest is satisfied with the service, but it should exceed the guest's expectations (Živadinović & Knežević, 2018). A quality service should have such characteristics that will meet the standards of both users and experts (Torres, 2014). Food and beverage service is a complex process, which involves much more (preparing, presenting, and serving food and beverages to customers) than simply taking the order, bringing the food and beverage to the guest, collecting the bill and clearing the table (Čačić, 2010). Several authors point to the advantages which high service quality ensure, including guest satisfaction, business image, customer loyalty, competitive advantage, repeat visits to the restaurant (guest behavior in the future) and positive recommendations (Al Ababneh, 2017; Bichler et al., 2021). Significant effect on business success Parsa et al. (2015) attributed to service style. Moreover, Aftab et al. (2016) analyzed the service quality in fast food restaurants and concluded service quality is the main success factor. Chin and Tsai (2013) found that when evaluating the quality of restaurant service, the leading place is taken by staff reliability, followed by staff empathy, innovation, tangibility, safety and sustainability. Wu Mohi (2015) concluded that understanding specific needs of individual guests imposes a need to analyze their thinking, feelings and behavior.

Service quality attributes were studied all around the world by many authors who consider service quality as multi-attribute construct (Bichler et al., 2021; Han & Ryu, 2009; Pakurár et al., 2019). The service quality attributes (e.g. value, service, atmosphere, food quality) enable restaurants to achieve competitive advantage in the market (Chin & Tsai, 2013). Unlike product quality, service quality cannot be tested or evaluated before use (Knežević et al., 2017). In various researches, various attributes of restaurants significant for service quality and customer satisfaction have been singled out. Sulek and Hensley (2004) consider food to be a key dimension of service quality, while Bichler et al. (2021) determined that food, service and atmospheric quality are of key importance for customer choice. Except for that, authenticity and price were highlighted as the most important factors influencing customer choice (Han & Ryu, 2009). Shahzadi et al. (2018) concluded that comfortable environment is necessary for the satisfaction of customers. Pakurár et al. (2019) identified several service quality attributes including tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, access, financial aspect, and employee competences, etc. Kim et al. (2009) examined the instrument for measuring service quality of restaurants and identified four dimensions of service quality in foodservice operations: Product/Service, Reliability, Greeter, and Physical Environment.

The authors from the Republic of Serbia neighbouring countries studied service quality in restaurants from different aspects, but those studies only partially focused on the attributes of restaurants important for service quality (Djekic et al., 2016; Jovanović et al., 2014; Marinković et al., 2013). Authors from the other parts of the world pay a lot of attention to

staff characteristics, while other attributes are less studied. Therefore, the main gaps of those studies are concentration to selected the aspects of service quality. Due to that, our study applies a broader approach in order to provide as detailed as possible analysis of this segment of restaurant business. Djekic et al. (2016) analyzed "consumer perceptions of service quality in restaurants in four European cities (Belgrade, Manchester, Thessaloniki and Porto)" (p. 827). They found that servicing of food and taste of food are the most influential factors of service quality. Marinković et al. (2013) identified four key components of restaurants' service offers (serviceability, ambiance, price, and external visual elements) when analyzing service quality attributes in restaurants in Kragujevac. Jovanović et al. (2014) examine three restaurant attributes (food, service, and ambiance quality) on consumer behavioral intentions in both fine dining and quick service restaurants in the Republic of Serbia. They estimated that food quality has the greatest positive impact on consumer behavioral intentions. Both previous studies were done about 10 years ago. From then until today, there have been significant changes in the hospitality sector, as a result of which demands for improving the service quality have come to the fore. Accordingly, it can be expected that the attitudes of customers towards service quality attributes have changed. Marković et al. (2011) investigate different "aspects of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, price and satisfaction)" (p. 235) in Croatian city restaurant settings and identify five factors that best explain expected service quality and eight factors that best explain perceived service quality.

In general, it is considered that competences of the staff that are in direct contact with restaurant guests' play a crucial role in achieving service quality. Namely, in order for the staff to create a convincing and unforgettable hospitality for the guest, they must possess competencies that go beyond the necessary technical competencies for performing this type of work (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). Employees who are in contact with guests represent an operational resource (Shaw et al., 2011) that significantly affects guest satisfaction, and thus their loyalty, i.e. behavioral intentions after leaving the facility. As a result, service companies pay great attention to employee satisfaction (Chehab et al., 2021). The same authors indicated that although job satisfaction does not directly affect user satisfaction, there is a high probability that in the case when employees are satisfied with their work, users will positively evaluate the quality of the service and feel greater satisfaction. Leonard (2009) determined that satisfied employees work more productively and creatively, which positively affects guests' satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, the orientation of staff towards the guest, which implies the availability of staff to meet guests' needs (Donavan & Hocutt, 2002), can influence the success of a restaurant indirectly through its influence on guest satisfaction. Namely, the level of guest commitment to the facility and its satisfaction depends on employees with a high level of guest orientation (Kim & Ok, 2010). Staff who are ready to change their service in accordance with the needs of the guest are referred to as customer-friendly staff (Lee, 2015). These staff have the ability to recognize the guest's non-verbal cues and listen carefully to their needs, then perform the requested service correctly and connect with them on a personal level (Lee, 2015). Jung-Suk and SooBum (2017) found that with an increase in employee orientation towards guests, restaurant performance increases. On the other hand, it is not a rare case that restaurant employees are exposed to inconvenience and permanent stress, which causes them to be in a bad mood (Adams & Webster, 2013), psychological stress (Wilson & Holmvall, 2013) and emotional exhaustion (Bi et al., 2021). The uncivilized behavior of guests towards employees is perceived by employees similar to situations when guests ignore them or speak to them in an incorrect and offensive manner (Bi et al., 2021). All such circumstances lead to burnout of employees at work and increase their turnover (Park et al., 2020), which adversely affects the success of the restaurant.

Food quality stands out as one of the main, and often leading, factors that influence the choice of a restaurant by customers (Akbar & Alaudeen, 2012; Kafel & Sikora, 2013). Customer satisfaction with food and beverage has a significant impact on positive comments about a restaurant (Dandotiya et al., 2020). Kiatkawsin and Sutherland (2020) claim that the core product of a restaurant is the meal experience. Apart from a comfortable environment and pleasant memories, modern guests also request new tastes (Gagić et al., 2013). Johns and Pine (2002) believe that high food quality, which is evaluated based on food temperature, presentation, freshness and range of selection can be an important factor in the success of a restaurant. The most important characteristic of food that is taken into account when evaluating its quality is freshness of food (Jaja Iroegbu, 2019). Great importance is also attached to the temperature of the dish, because the sensory properties, namely aroma, smell and appearance, depend on it (Delwiche, 2004).

Although food and service quality are important, scenery, interior design, above all the comfort of seating furniture, background music and other elements that determine the atmosphere are very important for guest satisfaction (Namkung & Jang, 2008). The physical environment of the restaurant is one of the important factors that influences the choice of the restaurant by the customers. Lee and Jeong (2012) define it as the environment of a restaurant that includes the complete appearance, ambience, design, lighting, decoration and aesthetics. Hanaysha (2016) found that the physical environment has a significant positive impact on restaurant image and customer loyalty. In addition, the physical environment of a restaurant exerts a significant influence on customers' perceptions and intentions (Hanaysha, 2016; Ryu et al., 2012). Thus, improving interior decoration, cleanliness, lighting, and colors can provide restaurant customers with pleasant experiences and increase satisfaction levels (Hanaysha, 2016). In addition, the physical environment plays a key role in differentiating a facility from competitors and building an image (Ryu et al., 2012).

Based on the defined aim of the research and literature review, the hypotheses of this study are:

H1a: Food quality is at a satisfactory level and represents an important segment of the restaurant offer in Belgrade.

H1b: The quality of the employed staff is at a satisfactory level and represents an important segment of the restaurant offer in Belgrade.

H1c: The quality of the restaurant facility is at a satisfactory level and represents an important segment of the restaurant offer in Belgrade.

H2a: There are statistically significant differences in the perception of restaurant service quality in relation to the gender structure of the respondents.

H2b: There are statistically significant differences in the perception of the quality of restaurant service in relation to the educational structure of the respondents.

From the listed hypotheses, a key research question arises: Which of the quality attributes are rated as the best, and as such can influence the long-term profitable operation of restaurants in Belgrade.

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the set aim and give an answer to the research question a survey was conducted in August and September 2022. The sample was taken from customers who visited the Belgrade restaurants in the study period. Restaurant managers were asked for permission to include their customers in the study. Customers who visited 12 randomly selected restaurants located in the city center were randomly selected for participation in the

study. No precise record was kept as to whether the respondents were domestic or foreign customers, but both were represented. Although questionnaires were offered in Serbian and English, foreign customers from countries in the region filled out the questionnaire in Serbian. This study included volunteer participants and the respondents can be considered as valid. The questionnaires were distributed to 500 customers (who accepted to participate). From that number 484 questionnaires were completely filled out and were included in statistical analysis, while 16 were eliminated due to incompleteness. Response rate was 96.8%. The instrument was created based on the instrument used by Kim et al. (2009) in a similar study. The instrument was made of two sections. The first section contained demographic questions (age, gender, level of education), while the second section consists of 30 items, based on which service quality was measured. All items, except for demographic information, were estimated using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 signifying strong disagreement and 5 signifying strong agreement.

The statistical package STATISTIKA 5.0 was used for data analysis based on models: One-way ANOVA, t-test and Factor Analysis. The reliability was tested based on calculation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. T-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the significance of differences between average ratings for derived factors. Factor analysis was used to evaluate instrument validity. Considering that the category "Others" related to educational level encompass less than 10% of customers, that category was eliminated from the analysis. Therefore, for gender and level of education (variables with two nominal values), the Independent-Samples T test was applied, while for age (variable with three nominal values), One-Way ANOVA was used. The statistical conclusions were made with a significance level of 0.05 ($p<0.05$).

4. Results and discussion

The demographic characteristics of respondents (age, gender, level of education) in this study are presented in Table 1. Out of the 500 questionnaires that were collected, 484 were used for statistical analysis as incomplete questionnaires were discarded. The respondents were mainly aged between 30 and 50 years (51.24%). The dominant gender was female (63.84%), while dominant education level was university education (64.46%).

Table 1: Demography of participants in the study

Variable		Frequency (n=484)	Percent (%)
Age	<30	32	6.61
	30-50	248	51.24
	>50	204	42.15
Gender	Male	175	36.16
	Female	309	63.84
Level of education	High school	168	34.71
	University education	312	64.46
	Others	4	0.83

Source: Authors' research

The customers of Belgrade restaurants evaluated 30 items important for service quality in restaurants. Based on their responses, items were ranked according to importance (Table 2). Based on descriptive parameters analysis, the customers of Belgrade restaurants singled out 16 items whose Means (average rating) were between 4.01 and 4.74. That means customers evaluated these items as key for service quality. The item "The food quality was better than in other restaurants" has average score of 4.74 and takes the first position on the list of 30

items. Then follow the items (position 2 to 16) with slightly lower average values. Seven items (positions 17 to 23) had values between 3 and 4, which means that customers of Belgrade restaurants rate these items as less important that the first 16. However, these items are classified as more important than remaining seven items whose means are below 3.

Table 2: Restaurant attributes important for service quality in Belgrade restaurants

Position	Restaurant attribute	Mean	SD	SE
1.	The food quality was better than in other restaurants.	4.74	0.744	0.053
2.	The taste of my food was excellent.	4.71	0.730	0.049
3.	The restrooms were thoroughly cleaned.	4.58	0.800	0.056
4.	The staff provided a prompt and quick service.	4.55	0.963	0.068
5.	My server quickly corrected anything that was wrong.	4.53	0.971	0.069
6.	The seats in the dining room are comfortable.	4.41	1.026	0.072
7.	The food was attractively presented.	4.39	0.800	0.056
8.	My server served me in the time promised.	4.33	0.778	0.055
9.	The meal was served at an ideal temperature.	4.28	0.936	0.068
10.	The staff seemed well trained, competent and experienced.	4.21	0.857	0.600
11.	The greeter welcomed me to the restaurant with a friendly smile.	4.19	1.003	0.074
12.	The portions were larger than in other restaurants.	4.14	0.921	0.065
13.	The staff made me feels special.	4.11	0.924	0.056
14.	The greeter seated me within the time promised.	4.07	0.903	0.064
15.	The staff members are clean, neat and appropriately groomed.	4.04	0.778	0.055
16.	The staff gave extra effort to handle my special request.	4.01	0.806	0.057
17.	My server was dependable and consistent.	3.93	1.020	0.066
18.	My server was able and willing to provide me information about menu items, their ingredients and methods of preparation.	3.86	0.956	0.066
19.	My server served my food exactly as I ordered it.	3.78	1.022	0.071
20.	The dining areas were thoroughly cleaned.	3.66	0.997	0.069
21.	The staff was sensitive to my individual needs and wants.	3.24	1.342	0.095
22.	The staff could answer my questions promptly and satisfactorily.	3.11	1.003	0.064
23.	The staff members were sympathetic and react if something was wrong.	3.00	1.223	0.086
24.	The dining area is comfortable and attractive.	2.77	1.214	0.088
25.	The portions were ample.	2.74	1.314	0.092
26.	The greeter answered my reservation telephone call with a nice and friendly tone.	2.48	1.008	0.062
27.	The menu is visually attractive and reflects the image of the restaurant.	2.43	1.122	0.074
28.	The menu is easy to read.	2.14	1.131	0.081
29.	During busy times, staff helped each other to maintain the speed and quality of service.	2.12	1.230	0.088
30.	Parking areas and building exteriors are visually attractive.	1.86	0.946	0.067

Notes: 1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree; SD – standard deviation; SE – standard error
Source: Authors' research

Scale Reliability analysis was conducted on the data collected for the 30 initial items. The reliability levels (Cronbach's Alpha) for each item were above the recommended theoretical value of 0.7 (De Vellis, 2003) and indicated a high Scale Reliability of all items from which the instrument was formed. Therefore, the Cronbach's test did not recommend the elimination of any item in order to achieve a higher Scale Reliability.

Table 3: Findings of factor analysis

Factors	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cronbach's alpha
Staff (17 items)		3.623	44.31	0.902
My server served me in the time promised.	0.820			
The staff made me feel special.	0.752			
The greeter answered my reservation telephone call with a nice and friendly tone.	0.743			
The staff provided a prompt and quick service.	0.721			
The greeter welcomed me to the restaurant with a friendly smile.	0.714			
The staff was sensitive to my individual needs and wants.	0.706			
The staff members were sympathetic and react if something was wrong.	0.701			
My server was able and willing to provide me information about menu items, their ingredients and methods of preparation.	0.693			
The staff members are clean, neat and appropriately groomed.	0.678			
The staff seemed well trained, competent and experienced.	0.661			
During busy times, staff helped each other to maintain the speed and quality of service.	0.622			
The staff gave extra effort to handle my special request.	0.614			
My server was dependable and consistent.	0.604			
The greeter seated me within the time promised.	0.582			
My server served my food exactly as I ordered it.	0.577			
The staff could answer my questions promptly and satisfactorily.	0.573			
My server quickly corrected anything that was wrong.	0.564			
	0.412			
Food (6 items)		1.107	13.72	0.891
The food quality was better than in other restaurants.	0.854			
The taste of my food was excellent.	0.832			
The portions were larger than in other restaurants.	0.761			
The meal was served at an ideal temperature.	0.694			
The food was attractively presented.	0.612			
The portions were ample.	0.396			
Restaurant facility (7 items)		0.906	11.31	0.874
The dining area is comfortable and attractive.	0.766			
The menu is visually attractive and reflects the image of the restaurant.	0.758			
The seats in the dining room are comfortable.	0.721			
The dining areas were thoroughly cleaned.	0.624			
The restrooms were thoroughly cleaned.	0.609			
The menu is easy to read.	0.531			
Parking areas and building exteriors are visually attractive.	0.487			

Source: Authors' research

According to the factor analysis of 30 items (Table 3), the first dimension was formed by 17 items. The name of the first component can be derived by analyzing the content of these items, especially those with the highest factor weights. They are dominated by the statements relating to the employees' behavior, appearance and treatment. Therefore, the first component on which the restaurant service quality depends can be called Staff. The second dimension was formed by 6 items, the contents of which unambiguously indicate food and meals characteristics. Based on this, the second dimension is named as Food. The third dimension was formed by 7 items from the content of which logically derives the name of the third component Restaurant facility. Similar to that, Miksen (2019) concluded that food, staff and environment, together with customer service and costs have huge importance for a restaurant's success. Although Kim et al. (2009) used almost the same instrument for measuring service quality of restaurants, they found four dimensions: Product/Service, Reliability, Greeter and Physical Environment.

The differences between customers' viewpoints on the importance of Staff, Food and Restaurant facility for service quality, depending on their gender and level of education, were confirmed by t-test. Contrary to that, in the study conducted by Kim et al. (2009), significant differences were not found between genders, age and educational levels. On the other hand, significant differences were not detected by One-Way ANOVA between customers from different age group relating to any dimension.

Significant differences between males and females regarding Staff were confirmed by t-test (Table 4), which indicate that staff should adjust behavior depending on customer gender. For example, males more appreciate serving in the time promised and reacting if something was wrong, while females more appreciate that staff make them feel special. Contrary to that, male and female customers had similar viewpoints regarding Food and Restaurant facility. The results obtained for Staff indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the customers' viewpoints according to their gender for 7 items (marked with * in table 4) at significance level $p < 0.05$.

Table 4: Differences between customers according to the gender (Staff)

Staff	Mean value		t-test
	Male	Female	
My server served me in the time promised.	4.88	4.01	0.024*
The staff made me feels special.	2.96	4.76	0.008*
The greeter answered my reservation telephone call with a nice and friendly tone.	2.63	2.39	0.326
The staff provided a prompt and quick service.	4.59	4.53	0.116
The greeter welcomed me to the restaurant with a friendly smile.	4.15	4.21	0.248
The staff was sensitive to my individual needs and wants.	3.27	3.22	0.311
The staff members were sympathetic and react if something was wrong.	3.04	1.72	0.011*
My server was able and willing to provide me information about menu items, their ingredients and methods of preparation.	3.89	3.84	0.502
The staff members are clean, neat and appropriately groomed.	4.01	4.06	0.273
The staff seemed well trained, competent and experienced.	4.24	4.19	0.332
During busy times, staff helped each other to maintain the speed and quality of service.	2.38	1.98	0.013*
The staff gave extra effort to handle my special request.	3.30	4.41	0.007*
My server was dependable and consistent.	3.98	3.90	0.344
The greeter seated me within the time promised.	3.87	4.18	0.021*
My server served my food exactly as I ordered it.	3.73	3.80	0.302
The staff could answer my questions promptly and satisfactorily.	3.13	3.10	0.433
My server quickly corrected anything that was wrong.	4.28	4.67	0.048*

Source: Authors' research

Significant differences related to the Staff (Table 5) and Food (Table 6) between customers with high school and university education were confirmed by T-test. The customers' viewpoints related to Staff statistically significant ($p<0.05$) differ between groups with different level of education for the 5 items (marked with * in Table 5). The customers with high school education rated all those items higher than the customers with university education (Table 5). Those findings indicate that customer expectations increase with the level of education.

Table 5: Differences between customers according to the educational level (Staff)

Staff	Mean value		t-test
	High school	University	
My server served me in the time promised.	4.21	4.39	0.324
The staff made me feels special.	4.23	4.04	0.154
The greeter answered my reservation telephone call with a nice and friendly tone.	2.32	2.57	0.109
The staff provided a prompt and quick service.	4.41	4.62	0.556
The greeter welcomed me to the restaurant with a friendly smile.	4.57	3.98	0.042*
The staff was sensitive to my individual needs and wants.	3.25	3.23	0.812
The staff members were sympathetic and react if something was wrong.	3.50	2.73	0.023*
My server was able and willing to provide me information about menu items, their ingredients and methods of preparation.	4.09	3.74	0.045*
The staff members are clean, neat and appropriately groomed.	4.06	4.03	0.531
The staff seemed well trained, competent and experienced.	4.11	4.26	0.176
During busy times, staff helped each other to maintain the speed and quality of service.	3.01	1.64	0.008*
The staff gave extra effort to handle my special request.	4.03	3.99	0.472
My server was dependable and consistent.	4.34	3.71	0.044*
The greeter seated me within the time promised.	4.09	4.06	0.328
My server served my food exactly as I ordered it.	3.84	3.75	0.241
The staff could answer my questions promptly and satisfactorily.	3.08	3.13	0.116
My server quickly corrected anything that was wrong.	4. 58	4.50	0.093

Source: Authors' research

A significant difference ($p<0.05$) between customers with different level of education was found only for one item regarding Food (The portions were ample), which was rated higher by customers with high school degree. Differences between customers regarding Restaurant facility were not detected.

Table 6: Differences between customers according to the education level (Food)

Food	Mean value		t-test
	High school	University	
The food quality was better than in other restaurants.	4.78	4.71	0.541
The taste of my food was excellent.	4.77	4.68	0.111
The portions were larger than in other restaurants.	4.16	4.13	0.231
The meal was served at an ideal temperature.	4.35	4.24	0.417
The food was attractively presented.	4.21	4.49	0.092
The portions were ample.	2.99	2.60	0.041*

Source: Authors' research

5. Conclusion

Service quality has a very important role in success of restaurant business, through enabling meeting the customers' expectations and fulfilling their needs. It ensures many advantages, including guest satisfaction, business image, customer loyalty, competitive advantage, guest behavior in the future and positive recommendations.

The service quality in the Belgrade restaurants was analyzed with the aim to estimate the service quality attributes important for the Belgrade restaurants. Based on literature review we came to several hypotheses. The general research question is: Which of the quality attributes are rated as the best, and as such can influence the long-term profitable operation of restaurants in Belgrade. Questionnaires consisting of 30 items were used for data collection and statistical analysis confirmed high Scale Reliability of all items included in the questionnaire. Among the list of 30 items, "The food quality was better than in other restaurants" occupies the first position (Mean - 4.74). Factor analysis showed that 30 items formed three dimensions: 1) Staff (formed by 17 items), 2) Food (formed by 6 items) and 3) Restaurant facility (formed by 7 items). Kim et al. (2009) used similar items to examine the reliability and validity of an instrument for measuring service quality of restaurants and identified four similar dimensions (Product/Service, Reliability, Greeter and Physical environment). Customers' viewpoints on the importance of Staff, Food and Restaurant facility for service quality depended on the respondents' gender and level of education. Significant differences between male and female respondents regarding Staff were confirmed, while these two groups of customers had similar viewpoints regarding Food and Restaurant facility. Moreover, differences in viewpoints regarding the Staff and Food were detected between customers with different levels of education.

The findings of this study can contribute to both academy and practice. It can be of great importance for both the current and future restaurant owners in Belgrade, who can use these findings to improve the business performance of their restaurants. Restaurateurs should pay special attention to staff characteristics, food quality and appearance and comfortability of restaurant facility. The most important for them is to provide better quality food with excellent taste compared to other restaurants. Moreover, it is very important that they take care of the cleanliness of the toilets, etc. Furthermore, staff should adjust behavior depending on customer gender, because males more appreciate serving in the time promised and reacting if something was wrong, while females more appreciate that staff make them feel special. As customer expectations increase with the level of education, restaurateurs should adapt service quality to the requirements of customers with different levels of education.

This study has several shortcomings. The sample of respondents included customers without defined criteria for including restaurant customers in the study, which calls into question the representativeness of the sample. In future studies, it is necessary to improve the research methodology and apply the appropriate sample validity model. Secondly, the study did not include all attributes important for service quality, so future research should also take into account service innovation and service responsiveness. The survey included only customers of restaurants in the city center, so future research should be conducted in different locations in Belgrade. Moreover, future studies can incorporate comparative studies from other hospitality sectors and for domestic and foreign visitors.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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