

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction Among Coffee Shops in Dumaguete City, Philippines

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Abstract. In the competitive coffee industry, coffee shops serve as social hubs and places for relaxation and productivity. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial for operators who want to succeed in this bustling market. This research used descriptive-correlational design to elicit information from the customers visiting the selected coffee shops in Dumaguete City. A total of 120 respondents were customers, which comprised the sample size of this research. The findings reveal that customers perceive the service quality of coffee shops in Dumaguete City positively across various dimensions, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions contribute significantly to customer satisfaction and loyalty. The analysis of p-values shows a significant relationship between customer perceptions and service quality, highlighting the importance of mutual understanding and communication. The overall positive perception underscores the need for coffee shop owners and managers to understand customer needs and preferences and implement strategies to enhance service quality and loyalty. The research indicates that continuous assessment and improvement of service quality are crucial for sustaining customer satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty in the competitive coffee shop industry.

Keywords: Coffee industry; Service quality; Customer satisfaction; Dumaguete City.

1.0 Introduction

The coffee shop sector has seen substantial expansion. Globally, it is becoming an integral part of daily life for many individuals. As competition within this sector intensifies, the emphasis on service quality and customer satisfaction becomes most important for coffee shop owners and managers. Understanding the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage and ensuring long-term success in this dynamic market.

In evaluating service quality within the coffee shop sector, the SERVQUAL model's five dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—play a vital role in comprehending and improving customer satisfaction. Delivering high-quality services is essential for enhancing customer experiences in the coffee shop industry, highlighting the significance of service quality as a key factor in customer satisfaction (Dhisasmith & Kumar, 2020). Perceived service quality, perceived value, and service performance in chain coffee shops emphasize the need to understand the relationship between these variables to enhance service quality and behavioural intentions (Ge et al., 2021). Additionally, research has shown that marketing communication mix

elements, such as advertising spending, attitude toward advertisements, and promotional strategies, influence brand identification and service quality in coffee shop evaluations (Kim & Lee, 2020).

Coffee shops are widely popular worldwide because they serve various purposes, such as socializing, conducting meetings, dining, and offering a pleasant environment for studying (Hattox, 2014). In the Philippines, several distinctive elements influence customer satisfaction in coffee shops. The standard of service significantly influences customer satisfaction, making it an essential factor for reaching high satisfaction levels (Kaura et al., 2015). There are growing concerns among customers and business owners regarding the service quality and customer satisfaction in Dumaguete City's coffee shops. Despite the rapid growth of the coffee shop industry, several critical issues must be addressed to ensure a reliable and satisfying customer experience. Even with the thriving coffee shop market in Dumaguete City, there are marked challenges related to the service quality these establishments offer. Patrons frequently encounter long wait times, inconsistent product quality, untrained or unprofessional staff, and inadequate facilities. These challenges lead to customer dissatisfaction, negatively impacting coffee shops' reputation and profitability.

It is crucial to address service quality issues to enhance customer satisfaction, retain clients, and maintain the competitive advantage of coffee shops in the City. Therefore, this research evaluates the service quality and customer satisfaction levels of coffee houses in Dumaguete City. The standard of service significantly influences customer satisfaction, making it an essential factor for reaching high satisfaction levels (Kaura et al., 2015). There are growing concerns among customers and business owners regarding the service quality and customer satisfaction in Dumaguete City's coffee shops. Despite the rapid growth of the coffee shop industry, several critical issues must be addressed to ensure a reliable and satisfying customer experience. Even with the thriving coffee shop market in Dumaguete City, there are marked challenges related to the service quality these establishments offer. Patrons frequently encounter long wait times, inconsistent product quality, untrained or unprofessional staff, and inadequate facilities. These challenges lead to customer dissatisfaction, negatively impacting coffee shops' reputation and profitability. It is crucial to address service quality issues to enhance customer satisfaction, retain clients, and maintain the competitive advantage of coffee shops in the City. Therefore, this research evaluates the service quality and customer satisfaction levels of coffee houses in Dumaguete City.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research used a descriptive-correlational design to elicit information from customers visiting the selected coffee shops in Dumaguete City. The design was used to identify and analyze the relationships between service quality and customer satisfaction in coffee shops without manipulating any variables.

2.2 Research Locale

The research was conducted in Dumaguete City, a 2nd class component city and the capital of the province of Negros Oriental, Philippines. It is the most populous city, and the smallest city by land area, in Negros Oriental. The study was carried out in the different coffee shops in Dumaguete City.

2.3 Research Participants

The researchers used convenient sampling to identify the customers who acted as the study's respondents. There are 20 respondents from each selected coffee shop. A total of 120 respondents were customers, which comprised the sample size of this research. The selection of the coffee shop is based on the following criteria: 1) they started operating in 2020; 2) coffee shops with dining areas; 3) coffee shops operating from Mondays to Sundays; and 4) coffee shops that gave their full consent to serve as the locale of the study.

2.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was developed based on the established SERVQUAL model. The survey was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity, comprehensibility, and reliability before finalization. It incorporates questions that assess customer perceptions across the five key service quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Minor adjustments were made to represent the specific circumstances of the research accurately. The questionnaire also includes questions about overall satisfaction and frequency of visits. The questionnaire was composed of three parts. Part I concerns the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Part

II concerns service quality regarding tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Part III concerns customer satisfaction.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire served as the main instrument for collecting data. Data was collected through purposive sampling at coffee shops within the specified geographical area. The researchers approached potential participants to explain the study's objective, confidentiality protocols, and their option to decline participation. Informed consent was secured before participants began the survey. Completed surveys were collected anonymously to protect participant privacy. The information was obtained through the questionnaire, counted, and organized to aid in its presentation, analysis, and interpretation. The subsequent statistical methods were utilized.

Frequency is a calculation that establishes the number of individuals that belong to a particular group or the frequency of occurrence of a specific trait. A Percentage Distribution is a data graph that displays the proportion of the observations for each data point or group of data points. It is also a frequency distribution in which the individual class frequencies are expressed as a percentage of the total frequency equated to 100—also known as a relative frequency distribution or a relative frequency table. Weighted Mean by multiplying each data point in a collection by a value determined by a characteristic of whatever contributed to the data point. A weighted average considers some data values more critical than others, so we want them to contribute more to the final average. Moreover, to analyze the significant relationship, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient analysis and the Chi-square test were utilized to demonstrate the association between two variables, dependent and independent. The Spearman rho correlation is a nonparametric method that assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables measured on either an ordinal or continuous scale. Meanwhile, the Chi-square test is a statistical method employed to compare actual results against expected outcomes. The questionnaires from the relevant respondents were collected, and the findings were organized using the appropriate statistical methods. Subsequently, the data was represented through tables and graphs.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In carrying out this research, the investigators adhered to ethical standards, as required by the Data Privacy Act of 2012, to protect the participants and maintain the confidentiality of their data.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondents Personal Profile

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic and institutional profile of the respondents in the Coffee Shops in Dumaguete City. Regarding age, most coffee goers are in the 18-25 age bracket—72.8%. Most people between 18 and 25 are college students and young professionals who want leisure at the coffee shop. They may go to coffee shops frequently to study, socialize, and increase their energy. Coffee shops provide a comfortable setting for conversations, project collaboration, or simply enjoying each other's company.

Table 1 also shows more female customers (60%) than male (40%). This shows that women visit coffee shops more often than men. Compared to men, women visited coffee shops more often because this can be linked to several social, cultural, and psychological variables. Women frequently see coffee shops as friendly, comfortable spaces ideal for relaxing, networking, and socializing. These days, women have their own quality time and self-care. The study of Andriani (2021) supports these findings. She explains that young female adults go to coffee shops because they like to go to the coffee shops where they meet their friends.

For educational attainment, most respondents are within college level or 51.7%. Coffee shops offer a quiet atmosphere conducive to studying, often with reliable Wi-Fi. This makes them ideal for individual study sessions or group projects compared to potentially noisy dorm rooms or crowded apartments. This is supported by the study of Assaf (2023), which states that visiting coffee shops offers a degree of emancipation from the family and opens up a space of relative autonomy for the youth. Simultaneously, the consumerist space of the coffee shop fosters the emergence of new sets of norms and practices specific to this generation.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents (n=120)

Particulars	f	%
Age		
36-45	3	3.30 %
26-35	22	23.9 %
18-25	67	72.8 %
Sex		
Male	48	40.0 %
Female	72	60.0 %
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	12	10.0 %
High School Diploma or Equivalent	43	35.8 %
Master's Degree	3	2.50 %
Some College or Associate Degree	62	51.7 %
Occupation		
Student	100	83.3 %
Entrepreneur	3	2.50 %
Service Industry	3	2.50 %
Online Job	1	0.80 %
Professional	5	4.20 %
Office Worker	4	3.30 %
Government Worker	1	0.80 %
Educator	3	2.50 %
Nationality		
Canadian	1	0.80 %
Filipino	119	99.2 %
Estimated Amount Spent Per Visit		
2,000 -2,999 pesos	3	2.50 %
1000-1999 pesos	11	9.20 %
101-999 pesos	87	72.5 %
100-below pesos	19	15.8 %
Frequency of Visit		
3x a week	1	0.8 %
daily	25	20.8 %
monthly	18	15.0 %
very seldom	1	0.80 %
weekly	75	62.5 %

As to the occupation of the respondents, many of the coffee-goers are students. As revealed in the age range, they are mostly 18-25 years old, and most of the respondents are within college level, which could better explain that they are students. Coffee shops offer a quiet atmosphere conducive to studying, often with reliable Wi-Fi. As a result, most students now go to coffee shops to connect to the Internet. As a result, the sight of a large group of students, each with their electronic device (for example, a laptop or a smartphone), has become increasingly common in the city's coffee shops (Zainuddin & Shujahat, 2022). They bring their laptops and other electronic devices and work countless hours, days, and even nights in coffee shops.

With regards to Nationality, it shows that the majority of the respondents were Filipinos. This means that most of the respondents are locals because of the coffee shops' proximity to Dumaguete City. Thus, convenience plays a vital role when visiting coffee shops. As gleaned from their occupations, most of the occupations are students; most of the students are Filipinos, and Dumaguete is a university town. Concerning the estimated amount spent per coffee shop visit. The table shows that most respondents spent ₱ 101-999 per coffee shop visit. This amount is worth the money the students pay in the coffee shop to be comfortable and secure, have free Wi-Fi, and enjoy the coffee shop's ambiance. Regarding the frequency of respondents' visits, It shows that most coffee goers visit the coffee shops regularly, 62.5%, followed by daily, 20.8%. Since most of the respondents it is expected to visit coffee shops during weekends only. This is a quick getaway for students from their busy schedules during school days. The data shows that the coffee shop business in Dumaguete City is sustaining.

3.2 Extent of the Service Quality Perceived by the Customers

Table 2 shows the extent of the service quality provided by coffee shops in Dumaguete City as perceived by the customers in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Table 2. *Extent of the Service Quality Perceived by the Customers*

Service Quality Dimensions	Mean	Description
Tangibility	4.75	Very Satisfied
The coffee shop has up-to-date equipment	4.68	Very Satisfied
The physical facilities are visually appealing	4.77	Very Satisfied
The crew are well dressed and appear neat	4.77	Very Satisfied
The appearance of the physical facilities is in keeping with the type of service provided	4.76	Very Satisfied
Reliability	4.74	Very Satisfied
Timeliness of the service	4.75	Very Satisfied
Willing to address customer complaints	4.79	Very Satisfied
The crew is dependable	4.68	Very Satisfied
The crew keeps their records accurately	4.73	Very Satisfied
Responsiveness	4.60	Very Satisfied
The crew is expected to tell customers exactly when services will be performed	4.65	Very Satisfied
It is realistic for the customers to expect prompt service from the crew	4.56	Very Satisfied
The crew are always expected to help the customers	4.68	Very Satisfied
The crew can handle pressure and multi-task	4.51	Very Satisfied
Assurance	4.74	Very Satisfied
The customers can trust the crew	4.77	Very Satisfied
The customers can feel safe in their transactions with the crew	4.83	Very Satisfied
The crew are polite	4.89	Very Satisfied
The crew should get adequate support from the service coffee shop management to do their job well	4.75	Very Satisfied
The crew is expected to give customers individual attention	4.48	Very Satisfied
Empathy	4.54	Very Satisfied
The crew gives customers personal attention	4.38	Very Satisfied
It is expected that the crew know what the needs of their customers are	4.55	Very Satisfied
It is expected that the crew have their customers' best interests at heart	4.68	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.67	Very Satisfied

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 Very Satisfied (VS), 3.41 – 4.20 Satisfied (S), 2.61 – 3.40 Neutral, 1.81 – 2.60 Less Satisfied (LS), 1.00 – 1.80 Not Satisfied (NS)

Regarding tangibility, the findings show that the customer is delighted (4.75) with the overall service performance towards tangibility. The coffee shop has physical facilities that are visually appealing, and the crew are well dressed and appear neat. This would translate into the fact that if coffee shops invest in their physical facilities and human resources, customers would be delighted with their stay. In addition, it would be very appealing if the resort had visually appealing facilities and used modern technological means to serve the customers. These tangible elements impact customer perceptions and encourage repeat visits, thus becoming a key aspect of the service quality evaluation (Akpan & Etuk, 2019).

Regarding reliability, it shows that the customer is delighted (4.74) on the overall customer satisfaction towards the reliability dimension. The coffee shop keeps the promise of its willingness to address customer complaints and do things on time, receiving the highest scores of 4.79 and 4.75 respectively. This is because the coffee shop staff provides the service accurately and keeps their promises to customers. In addition, the customers feel satisfied with the reliability of the service of the coffee shop crew. This finding aligns with the research of Poku, Zakari, and Soali (2013), who investigated service quality in hotels and resorts in the Middle East and identified reliability as the key factor in ensuring customer satisfaction.

As to responsiveness, the table shows that the customer is delighted (4.60) with the overall customer satisfaction towards the responsiveness dimension. The coffee shop employees are always willing to help customers and to tell customers exactly when services will be performed. This means that the crew is always willing to help with their needs and are happy to serve. A study by Dhisasmito & Kumar (2020), explains that service quality is a crucial driver of service performance in the coffee shop industry, underscoring the importance of delivering high-quality services to improve customer experiences.

Regarding assurance, it shows that the customer is delighted (4.74) on the overall customer satisfaction towards the assurance dimension. Most customers experienced that the coffee shop crew is polite and makes them feel safe when staying there. In addition, the coffee shop crew is credible and responsible when handling the customer's needs. The coffee shop crew must have broad and deep knowledge, be highly efficient in performing their duties, and be expected to give customers individual attention. Genove and Tayco (2024) found that assurance was the most critical factor in customer satisfaction, as evidenced by respondent feedback. Thus, the ability of the baristas and other staff to exhibit assurance through their interactions is a determinant of positive service quality.

Lastly, for empathy, the customer is delighted (4.54) in terms of overall customer satisfaction with the empathy dimension. The coffee shop crew has their customers' best interests at heart and was considered the most important 4.68, followed by the crew knowing what the needs of their customers are (4.55) and the crew giving their customers' attention (4.38). This importance is further emphasized in a study by Kim et al. (2021), confirming the importance of atmosphere, novelty, and consumer return on investment as factors influencing satisfaction and behavior intention.

3.3 Relationship between Profile of the Respondents and Service Quality

Table 3 delineates the correlational analysis results between the customer respondents' profile and service performance. For a significant relationship to exist, the p-value must be equal to or lesser than the alpha/margin of error, which in this study is set at 0.05. The following are predictors or influences on the customer respondents' perception towards the coffee shops' services in Dumaguete City.

Table 3. Correlation between Profile of the Respondents and Service Quality

Respondents Profile	Tangible	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Age					
(26-35) -(36-45)	0.043*	0.591	0.687	0.439	0.953
(18-25) -(36-45)	0.036*	0.313	0.975	0.517	0.936
Sex					
Female-Male	0.004*	0.015*	0.265	0.139	0.302
Educational Attainment					
High School or Equivalent	0.13	0.122	0.133	0.1082	0.194
Master's Degree	0.257	0.24	0.262	0.2139	0.384
Some College or Associate	0.125	0.117	0.128	0.1045	0.187
Occupation					
Entrepreneur - Student	0.897	0.135	0.042*	0.038*	0.094
Service Industry-Student	0.147	0.278	0.642	0.801	0.763
Online Job-Student	0.94	0.526	0.404	0.463	0.877
Professional-Student	0.238	0.551	0.725	0.847	0.76
Office Worker-Student	0.117	0.054	0.178	0.563	0.368
Government Worker-Student	0.218	0.99	0.404	0.463	0.525
Educator-Student	0.429	0.728	0.882	0.557	0.797
Citizenship					
Filipino-Canadian	0.251	0.5	0.014*	0.867	0.197
Frequency of visit					
Daily-3x a week	0.629	0.198	0.073	0.524	0.786
Monthly-3x a week	0.184	0.69	0.002*	0.922	0.083
Very Seldom-3x a week	0.192	1	0.008*	0.67	0.099
Weekly-3x a week	0.159	0.563	0.004*	0.93	0.062
Estimated Amount Spent					
(100 pesos below) -(1000-999 pesos)	0.053	0.044*	0.002*	0.161	0.008*
(101-999 pesos) -(1000-999 pesos)	<.001*	0.002*	<.001*	0.021*	<.001*
(2000-2999) -(1000-999 pesos)	0.025*	0.084	0.002*	0.212	<.001*

Note that a p-value lower than 0.05 indicates a significant effect.*

The age of the respondents is a predictor of their perception of tangible services, specifically the age range 18-25, 26-35, and 36-45 years old. Hence, it can be construed that the age range 18-25 and 26-35 and the level of satisfaction in tangibility are significantly related. This explains that customers' level of satisfaction in terms of age range is related to the tangibility dimension. The study by Grazhdani & Merollari (2015) found strong evidence of the effect of age on service quality perceptions. The practical access dimension of service quality was significantly higher for mature individuals than their younger counterparts. Their findings suggest that service quality should be more closely tailored to age and not to other demographic characteristics.

In terms of sex, the sex of the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of tangible and reliable services. This means the sex of the respondents affects the tangible and reliable services of the coffee shop. The study by Teeroovengadum (2022) focused on exploring gender's moderating effect on the relationships between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The study suggests that the satisfaction of male customers depends, to a more significant extent, on environmental quality, and there is a need to explore the specific expectations of male customers further. The results further suggest that interaction quality is a major contributor to satisfaction levels for both male and female customers. The company is thus encouraged to focus

on this aspect of its services and invest the required resources to improve on those in general. More specifically, the study suggests that the interaction quality attributes requiring the most urgent attention for female customers relate to employees' appearance, attitude, and competence. The interaction quality attribute requiring the most urgent attention for male customers is related to the employees' ability to respond to queries. Therefore, regular training opportunities in customer care are a must to improve the quality of interaction in customer services.

For occupation, the occupation of the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness and assurance services. Especially those seen by entrepreneurs. The relationship between occupation and responsiveness and assurance services is statistically significant. The results show that the respondents' occupation affects the coffee shop's responsiveness and assurance services. The results are opposite to the study of Mirzagoli and Memarian (2015), which found that wage conditions of employment and occupation had no impact on customers' satisfaction based on their perceived service quality. Their study concluded that there is no relationship between job status and satisfaction and that the results do not match their study. If you change the employment status of workers to unemployed, the probability of satisfaction likely increases.

Regarding nationality, the respondents' citizenship is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness of services. Especially perceived by Filipinos. Since most of the respondents are Filipinos, only one Canadian respondent exists. Coffee owners have to design their facilities to cater to different nationalities. The study by Pantouvakis and Renzi (2016) explains that ethnicity moderates the overall quality of service. This implies that service companies should follow strategies that best fit the demands of each ethnic group. For instance, to increase the overall service quality, different marketing strategies are required, and they need to appreciate the customers and understand their needs.

In addition, the frequency of visits by the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of responsiveness services. Especially perceived by those who visited the coffee shops monthly, very seldom, and weekly. The results show that the frequency of visits of the respondents, especially those who visited the coffee shops monthly, very seldom, and weekly, have observed differences in the responsiveness and assurance services of coffee shops. Customers who visit coffee shops daily may become accustomed to the service quality regarding responsiveness and assurance. The lack of attention to service quality in responsiveness and assurance among daily coffee shop visitors can be attributed to habituation, expectation management, selective attention, normalization, the transactional nature of their interactions, etc. The study by Allen (2017) addressed how improved service quality can lead to customer loyalty and added to the body of knowledge in service quality. The construct of loyalty, as Allen (2017) has used, is expressed by repeat visits and willingness to recommend. Research results indicated a significant, moderate, positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty.

Lastly, the amount spent by the respondents is a predictor or influences their perception of tangible services (especially those who spent 100 up to 2999), reliability services (especially those who spent 999 pesos and below), responsiveness, assurance (especially by those who spent 100 to 1000 pesos, and empathy in service to customers. The amount respondents spend can influence their perception of various aspects of service quality, including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The amount spent by respondents can serve as a proxy for their expectations, preferences, and perceived value derived from the service. Different spending ranges may lead to varying perceptions of service quality across dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. According to the study by Yaqub, Halim, & Shehzad (2019), perceived price fairness is an important factor because they feel that the value of the service provided should be met with a fair price to satisfy and delight their customers. Thus, managers could divert more time and pay attention to improving price strategy and marketing promotion tools to promote customer revisit intention.

4.0 Conclusion

In analyzing the findings regarding the extent of service quality provided by coffee shops in Dumaguete City, it becomes evident that customers perceive the services positively across various dimensions. Customers rated tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy highly, indicating an intense satisfaction with the physical facilities, reliability in service delivery, responsiveness of staff, assurance of safety and politeness, and empathy towards customers' needs. Customers' findings underscore the importance of these dimensions in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty within the coffee shop industry. The analysis of p-values reveals a significant

relationship between customer perceptions and service quality. Customers' interest on service quality underscores the importance of mutual understanding and communication in enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction within the coffee shop industry.

To conclude, the findings highlight customers' opinions of coffee shops' service quality across various dimensions in Dumaguete City. These findings emphasize the need for coffee shop managers to understand their customers' needs and implement strategies that address these diverse factors to enhance service quality and customer loyalty. The research highlights the importance of maintaining high service quality to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty within the coffee shop industry. Future research may examine supplementary aspects affecting customer satisfaction and analyze ongoing enhancement strategies in service quality.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Arnie B. Villanueva: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing. Ryan O. Tayco: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing. Cesar P. Estrope: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review and editing.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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