Measuring Perceived Service Quality of Fast Food Restaurant in Islamic Country: a Conceptual Framework

Sik Sumaedi a,*, Medi Yarmen b

a,bIndonesian Institute of Sciences Puspiptek Area, Building 417, Setu, South Tangerang, 15314, Indonesia

Abstract

Service quality is a critical success factor of fast food restaurant. Fast food restaurant managers need to measure and improve the service quality of their restaurant continuously. Given this, the knowledge on measurement of service quality of fast food restaurant is needed. Service quality is an abstract and elusive concept. Furthermore, the way of customer on perceiving the quality of service depends on the type of service and the context where the service is provided. Thus, this paper aims to propose a service quality model that is specifically designed for measuring perceived service quality of fast food restaurant in Islamic Country.

INTRODUCTION

*Corresponding author.
Email address: siks002@lipi.go.id
It is well known that service quality is a critical success factor for a service company [1, 2]. Many empirical studies have shown that service quality positively influences customer satisfaction [3, 4, 5], customer trust [6], customer loyalty [3, 7], and customer perceived value [3]. On the other hand, a service company that doesn’t focus on service quality will be leaved by its customer and even obtains bad reputation [8]. Therefore, a service company should monitor and improve the quality of services the company provides.

Fast food restaurant is a business that can be categorized as a service business [8]. Referring to the explanation on the previous paragraph, a fast food restaurant needs to monitor and improve its service quality in order to win business competition [9, 10]. Furthermore, empirical researches have proved that fast food restaurant service quality positively affects customer satisfaction [11, 12, 13, 14], revisit intention [13,15] and customer’s purchasing decision [16].

In order to monitor and improve their fast food restaurants’ service quality, the managers of fast food restaurants need to know the way to measure fast food service quality [10, 17]. This is important because service quality is agreed to be an elusive and abstract construct [18, 19]. The failure of a service company in measuring service quality effectively will cause the existence of gap between the perception of the company on service quality and the perception of its customer perceived service quality [8,18]. Furthermore, the gap will make negative customer perceived service quality [8, 18]. Thus, one of the fundamental issues that are important to be discussed is the fast food restaurant service quality measurement [10, 17].

Some researchers have tried to proposed service quality models, such as Servqual model [18], Nordic model [20], Multilevel model [19], and Servperf model [21]. Although the models are widely used by service management researchers, the models are critiqued because the models are generic and need to be adjusted with some services specific factors [22]. For example, Brady and Cronin [19] stated that their multilevel model needs to be adjusted with services specific factors when the model is implemented in a certain type of services. Servqual model is critiqued due to the stability of the service quality dimensions the model proposed [23]. Researchers who re-tested the service quality dimensions of Servqual model found that the number of the dimension of the model can be differed depending on the service industry characteristics [23].

Empirical studies have proved that service quality measurement is affected by service type and the cultural context where the service is provided [24, 25, 26]. Related to this matter, Gayatri et al. [25] and Gayatri and Chew [26] have also found that Islamic values adopted by Muslim customers influence the way of customers in evaluating service quality. This means service quality measurement model of a fast food restaurant is Islamic country should involve service quality dimension that represents service aspect that related with Islamic values adopted by its customers.
In the fast food restaurant context, some researchers have proposed service quality models that are aligned with the characteristics of fast food restaurant and different with the generic service quality model [12, 14]. However, literature service quality that discusses fast food restaurant service quality model that involves service quality dimension that represents service aspect that related with Islamic values is still very limited [9]. Therefore, in order to address the gap in the literature, this paper aims to propose service quality model that is specifically designed for measuring perceived service quality of fast food restaurant in Islamic Country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is a topic that is important to be discussed by practitioners and academicians that related with service industry [1, 2]. This is because service quality has strategic roles [1, 2]. In a mature service industry, service quality is an order qualifier that ensures a service company survives [27]. In other words, service quality is a source of comparative advantage [27]. Meanwhile, in a growth service industry, service quality is an order winner, that is a source of competitive advantage [27].

Service quality has been widely discussed in service management literature [1, 2]. Many researchers have tried to define the construct. Generally, they have agreed that service quality should be studied by using customer perspective [2, 22, 23]. Given this, researchers propose that service quality is customer evaluation on the superiority of service performance provided by a service company [28]. More clearly, Zeithaml [28] explained that service quality is “the consumer's judgment about a [service]’s overall excellence or superiority”. Zeithaml [28]’s definition on service quality is the widely quoted definition of service quality [28, 29].

Referring to the previous explanation, it can be stated that service quality is customer evaluation on the superiority of service performance provided by a service company [28]. Thus, fast food restaurant service quality is fast food restaurant customer evaluation on the superiority of the services provided by fast food restaurant [17].

Service Quality Model

To date, there is no agreement on service quality measurement [14, 19]. However, researchers have agreed that service quality is a multidimensional construct [14, 19]. This means service quality consists of more than one dimension. Furthermore, service quality dimension represents service component that is important for customer [2].

Some researchers have proposed generic service quality models. It is believed that the models can be used for measuring service quality of various services [18]. Parasuraman et al. [18] proposed a generic model that is called as Servqual. Servqual reveals that service quality consists of
five dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness [18]. Servqual is the service quality model that is widely adopted by service quality researchers [23], including fast food restaurant service quality researchers [10]. However, Servqual has some fundamental problems [23]. First, the model only includes service quality dimensions that can be categorized as functional quality dimension [23]. In other hands, technical quality dimension is excluded [23]. Second, the stability of Servqual’s dimensions is also questioned [23]. This is because the number of Servqual’s dimension was changes when researchers retested the model [23].

Another generic service quality model is Nordic model. The model, which is proposed by Gronroos [20], divides service quality into two main dimensions, namely technical quality dimension and functional quality dimension. The technical quality dimension relates with the outcome of services while the functional ones relates with the way on delivering services [20]. Nordic model also involved the important role of corporate image in developing customers’ perceived service quality [20].

In addition to Servqual and Nordic model, Brady and Cronin [19] proposed multilevel service quality model. They extended the idea of Gronroos [20] by adding one service quality dimension, i.e. environment quality dimension. The dimension focuses on the servicescape where the services are provided [19]. More specifically, Brady and Cronin [19] revealed that service quality has three dimensions, namely outcome quality, interaction quality, and environment quality. Outcome quality is another name for Gronroos [20]’s technical quality while interaction quality is another name for Gronroos [20]’s functional quality. The idea of Brady and Cronin [19] is also widely adopted by researchers for measuring service quality, including fast food restaurant service quality [14].

Generic service quality models have been proposed by some researchers [18, 19, 20, 21]. Furthermore, the models have also been adopted by other service quality researchers, including fast food restaurant service quality researchers [14]. However, the use of generic service quality model has some problems from both theoretical and practical aspect. Theoretically, researchers have proved that the way of customer on evaluating the quality of service depends on the service contexts, such as service type and customers’ culture [24, 25, 26]. In addition, the proposer of the generic quality models also warned users to consider the specific characteristics of the service industry to be measured when they adopts the generic models [19]. Practically, the use of generic service quality model will make the model users will lost specific information of the service they needed [22]. Based on these considerations, fast food restaurant service quality model should be adapted to the context of fast food restaurant.
**Fast Food Restaurant Service Quality Model**

**Defining Fast Food Restaurant**

Restaurant is a part of food service industry [10, 17, 30, 31]. Generally, restaurant can be classified into fast food restaurant and full service restaurant [30]. In this paper, fast food restaurant is defined as restaurant that serves fast food, both of which are located in its own building and into a part with other fast food restaurants [31]. Meanwhile, fast food is defined as “food that can be prepared and served very quickly” [10]. Thus, it can be categorized as fast food restaurant, such as McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino Pizza, and Subway [10].

Fast food restaurant business is growing rapidly in this decade [10, 17, 30, 31]. Some multinational companies open their business in other countries aggressively [10]. The companies include McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino Pizza, and Subway [10]. One of the fundamental challenges that must be considered by the companies doing the invasion is the culture of the target market customers [32]. Given this, fast food restaurant that operates in Islamic countries should consider the customer needs on service quality dimension that related with service component representing Islamic values [9, 26].

**Fast Food Service Quality Model**

Fast food restaurant service quality has been investigated by some researchers. Some researchers adopted Servqual as fast food restaurant service quality measurement model [10, 17, 33, 34, 35]. For example, the study performed by Kaur [10] in Chandigarh, India; Chow and Luk [34] in Toronto, Canada; Oluseye [35] in Nigeria.

Other researchers have tried to develop service quality model that adapted with the specific characteristics of fast food restaurant. For example, Tan et al. [14] proposed Chinese Fast Food Restaurants Service Quality Scale (CFFRSERV). More completely, table 1 shows some service quality models that are specifically designed for measuring service quality in fast food restaurant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author (s)</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tan et al. [14]</td>
<td>Assurance and empathy, food cleanliness, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin et al. [12]</td>
<td>Recoverability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen et al. [11]</td>
<td>Recoverability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campos and Nobreda [31]</td>
<td>Dimensions were identified to be different in each stage customer must perform to obtain fast food. assurance, tangibles, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, low food prices, short service time and convenient location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunus et al. [36]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that researchers who discussed fast food restaurant service by involving service quality dimensions that represents the performance of service companies in satisfying Muslim customer needs related to Islamic values is very limited. This is quite surprising since Gayatri et al. [25]’s research shows the service quality measurement model is influenced by Islamic values of Muslim customers. More specifically, Gayatri and Chew [26] revealed that service quality models of Muslim customers should involve general service quality dimensions and Islamic service quality dimensions. Thus, fast food restaurant service quality should consider general service quality dimensions and Islamic service quality dimensions.

**Islamic Country**

Islam is a comprehensive religion which it not only set the ritual aspect but also regulates the aspects of the daily life of its adherents, including how to dress and how to eat [37]. A Muslim is required to implement Islamic teachings in his daily life even though the country where he/she lives doesn’t state Islam as its constitution explicitly. Given this, this research defined Islamic country as Country with Muslim as the majority population and there is no prohibition of the use of Islamic symbol in public area. Based on the definition, Islamic countries includes countries that explicitly stated that Islam as their constitution, such as Saudi Arabia and Brunei Darussalam and countries that do not explicitly state that Islam as their constitution but its majority population is Muslim and there is no prohibition of the use of Islamic symbol in public area, such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

**FAST FOOD RESTAURANT SERVICE QUALITY MODEL IN ISLAMIC COUNTRY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on Brady and Cronin [19], service quality model should involve three aspects, namely outcome, environment, and interaction. Outcome relates to the result of the service provided; interaction refers to the service delivery; and environment relates to the servicescape where the service provided [19]. The view of Brady and Cronin [19] was supported by some restaurant service quality researchers, including fast food restaurant service quality researchers [14]. Hence, fast food restaurant service quality dimensions should represent these three aspects. According to Gayatri and Chew [26], service quality measurement is influenced by Islamic values had by the customers. Furthermore, they revealed that Muslim customers view service quality from two aspects, namely general service quality dimension and Islamic service quality dimension [26]. Therefore, fast food restaurant service quality model in Islamic country should represent general service quality aspect and Islamic service quality aspect. Based on the explanation, this paper proposed fast food restaurant service quality model in Islamic country as shown in figure 1.
Figure 1. Fast Food Service Quality Model for Islamic Country

Table 2. The Operational Definition of Service Quality Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brady &amp; Cronin [19]’s Category</th>
<th>Gayatri &amp; Chew [26]’s Category</th>
<th>Service Quality Dimension</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Related Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment quality</td>
<td>General Service Environment</td>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>Physical facilities and equipment used to provide the services</td>
<td>[9], [10], [14], [18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic Islamic Physical Environment</td>
<td>Physical Physical Environment</td>
<td>Physical facilities and equipment that specifically designed for fulfilling Customers’ Islamic value related needs</td>
<td>[25], [26]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome quality</td>
<td>General Service Food quality</td>
<td>Food quality</td>
<td>The taste and quality of the food provided</td>
<td>[12], [14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic Service Waiting time</td>
<td>Waiting time</td>
<td>The time sacrificed by customer for waiting the food being served from he/she arrives</td>
<td>[19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamic Service Halal Quality</td>
<td>Halal Quality</td>
<td>The halal status of the food provided</td>
<td>[25], [26]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. The Operational Definition of Service Quality Dimension (Cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brady &amp; Cronin [19]'s Category</th>
<th>Gayatri &amp; Chew [26]'s Category</th>
<th>Service Quality Dimension</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Related Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction quality</td>
<td>General Service quality</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>The attitude, behavior, and appearance of personnel</td>
<td>[9], [10], [14], [18], [19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The process arranged for delivering the services and interacting with customers</td>
<td>[9], [10], [14], [18], [19]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Service quality</td>
<td>Islamic Service Related Expertise</td>
<td>Willingness to help and ability to satisfy customer inquiries regarding their Islamic value</td>
<td>[25], [26]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The operational definition of each proposed service quality dimension can be seen in table 2. Based on table 2, it can be seen that the proposed fast food restaurant service quality model in Islamic country consists of eight dimensions. Based on the classification of Gayatri and Chew [26], the model involves five general service quality dimensions and three Islamic service quality dimensions. Based on Brady and Cronin [19]’s categorization, the proposed service quality model has three outcome quality dimensions, which consist of two general service quality dimensions (waiting time, food quality) and one Islamic service quality dimension (Halal quality). The proposed model also has two environment quality dimensions, which includes one general service quality dimension (general physical environment) and one Islamic service quality dimensions (Islamic physical environment). Furthermore, the proposed model involves three interaction quality dimensions, which includes two general service quality dimensions (personnel, process) and one Islamic service quality dimension (Islamic related expertise).

**FUTURE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The proposed fast food restaurant service quality model in Islamic country was developed based on literature review. Therefore, future research will identify the indicators of the proposed model dimension and test the proposed fast food restaurant service quality model. Based on Churchill [38], we recommend some steps that can be performed in future research.

The first step of the research aims to identify the appropriate indicators for measuring the proposed service quality model dimensions. To achieve the objective of the step, it is needed to
perform qualitative research by using in depth interview with the customers of fast food restaurant service quality in Islamic country. In addition, it is needed to perform Focus Group Discussion involving the customers in order to verify and clarify the indicators obtained from the in depth interview.

The second step is the content validity testing of the indicators obtained in the first step. This step aims to check whether the indicators used in the research are appropriate to measure the proposed service quality dimension’s concept. Given this, each indicator will be reviewed by two service management expert. The indicator which according to the experts is not in accordance with the proposed concept is eliminated. The result of the second step is a set of indicators that can be used to develop an instrument for measuring the quality of services based on the proposed fast food restaurant service quality model.

The third step is the collection of empirical data. This will be done through survey using an instrument of questionnaire that has been developed in the previous step. The respondents of survey will be 200 Muslims customers of fast food restaurant. The number of the respondent is determined based on the statistical analysis requirements that will be used in the next step, namely Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) [39].

The fourth step is the model’s goodness of fit, construct validity, criterion-related validity, and reliability testing. The goodness of fit of the model and construct validity testing will be performed by using SEM. Construct validity investigated will consist of discriminant validity and convergent validity [39, 40]. Criterion-related validity testing will be performed by analyzing the correlations between the proposed dimensions of service quality model with the constructs theoretically relate to service quality, namely loyalty and satisfaction [39, 40]. Reliability testing will be performed by analyzing Cronbach alpha coefficient [39, 40].

CONCLUSION

Service quality is a key success factor for fast food restaurant. Given this, the knowledge related to the conceptualization and measurement of fast food restaurant service quality becomes important. This paper aims to propose a service quality model that can be used to measure fast food restaurant service quality in the Islamic country. The proposed fast food restaurant service quality model consists of eight dimensions. More specifically, the proposed service quality model has three outcome quality dimensions, which consist of two general service quality dimensions (waiting time, food quality) and one Islamic service quality dimension (Halal food). The proposed model also has two environment quality dimensions, which includes one general service quality dimension (general physical environment) and one Islamic service quality dimensions (Islamic physical environment). Furthermore, the proposed model involves three interaction quality dimensions, which includes two
general service quality dimensions (personnel, process) and one Islamic service quality dimension (Islamic related expertise).

REFERENCES


Presented at ISFA (September 16-17, 2014-Semarang, Indonesia) as Paper #38 “Managing Biosafety and Biodiversity of Food from Local to Global Industries”