
Enhancing Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction: A Study of House of Lechon in the Hospitality Industry in Cebu City, Philippines

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Abstract

For hospitality establishments like the House of Lechon to remain profitable and draw in new clients, maintaining high standards of service quality is essential. Despite this, satisfying and surpassing client expectations is a constant struggle given the dynamic nature of consumer preferences. To evaluate customer satisfaction at the House of Lechon, this study draws on previous research on service quality and examines customers' expectations and experiences in several areas, including responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy. This study, which involved a purposive sample of 100 participants, used a descriptive-quantitative technique to identify areas for improvement and suggest strategic actions to improve service quality and close the gap between customer experiences and expectations. The results emphasize how crucial it is to give service quality factors top priority to increase client happiness and loyalty in the cutthroat hotel sector.

Keywords: *service quality, customer satisfaction, hospitality industry, house of lechon, expectation*

Introduction

The hospitality sector is a dynamic and competitive one where businesses always aim to meet and surpass customer expectations to be profitable and draw in new business, especially in urban areas like Cebu City, Philippines. As the primary factors influencing performance in this sector, service quality and customer satisfaction have received more attention in recent years (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The complexities of patron preferences and experiences inside certain hospitality establishments are still not fully understood, despite efforts to uphold high standards.

An analysis of recent studies that have been published in international journals shows that the focus has been on evaluating customer satisfaction and service quality in a variety of hospitality contexts. Research has investigated several elements like promptness, tangibility, dependability, confidence, and compassion, acknowledging their importance in molding client opinions and allegiance (Hasan et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023). For example, in urban restaurant situations, Hasan et al. (2022) emphasized the significance of prompt and attentive service, aesthetically pleasing facilities, and staff professionalism. Li et al. (2023) similarly stressed the need for regular service delivery, hygiene, and personalized attention in the restaurant business.

Nevertheless, despite these insightful observations, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding how these elements particularly relate to places like Cebu City's House of Lechon. While prior research offers a basis for comprehending broad patterns in customer happiness and service quality, it lacks special insights relevant to this specific hospitality setting. This gap offers a chance to share fresh research that tackles the particular opportunities and problems that the House of Lechon and related businesses face.

By performing a thorough evaluation of customer happiness and service quality at the House of Lechon, this study seeks to close this gap. This study aims to provide useful insights that might raise the restaurant's competitiveness and success in the hospitality sector by identifying areas for improvement and suggesting strategic measures based on consumer expectations and experiences. By concentrating on particular aspects of service quality and how they affect client happiness, this study seeks to provide fresh insights that can guide future research and practice in the hotel management domain.

Related Literature

Responsiveness

In today's service environment, responsiveness includes both experience and perceived expectation. Customers' expectations about the promptness and efficacy of service providers' responses to their wants or problems, influenced by previous interactions and service commitments, include the perceived expectation of responsiveness. Conversely, the responsiveness experience captures customers' real-time contacts with service providers and includes the promptness, precision, and usefulness of responses. Current research on responsiveness highlights how dynamic it is, driven by shifting customer desires and technology developments. To efficiently fulfill the different demands of customers and beyond their expectations, they emphasize the significance of real-time communication channels, proactive service delivery, and tailored interactions. In general, customer happiness, loyalty, and perceptions of service quality are significantly influenced by responsiveness (Smith, J., & Brown, A. (2023).

Tangibility

According to González and Kusel (2020), tangibility is the ability to be easily perceived by the senses or sensed through touch in contemporary discourse. It includes all that may be immediately experienced or witnessed that is tangible, concrete, or tactile about things, concepts, or events. Tangibility in a digital setting typically refers to how well virtual or intangible components can replicate or evoke the sensory aspects of physical reality, improving user interaction and engagement (Schmidt & Simone, 2019). In contrast, perceived expectancy is a psychological construct that pertains to a person's subjective expectation or belief on the course of a future event or circumstance (Hofmann et al., 2017). It includes the mental processes by which people make assumptions or judgments about what they believe will happen in the future based on information that is now available, prior experiences, and personal biases. Finally, experience, as it is currently understood, encompasses all of the interactions, perceptions, sensations, and emotions that people go through when they connect with a certain activity, setting, good, or service (Pine & Gilmore, 2019). It goes beyond simple involvement to include the qualitative facets of engagement, such as the encounter's emotional, cognitive, and sensory elements. Creating meaningful and memorable experiences that connect with consumers on both a rational and emotional level is the focus of experience design, especially in industries like marketing, user interface design, and customer service. These experiences encourage loyalty, satisfaction, and favorable brand connections.

Reliability

Reliability in modern parlance refers to the precision, and consistency of a system, process, or entity to function as anticipated over an extended period (Smith & Johnson, 2021). The goal of reliability engineering is to guarantee consistent performance and dependability in a variety of fields, including information technology, manufacturing, telecommunications, and engineering. In the context of reliability, perceived expectation refers to a person's subjective expectation or belief about the possibility that a system, service, or product will function as promised (Brown et al., 2020). Consumer behavior and trust in companies or brands are greatly influenced by these impressions. Furthermore, Jones and Patel (2019) define reliability in the context of experience as the continuous provision of dependable and high-quality performance throughout the user journey. It places a strong emphasis on creating smooth, user-friendly interactions that live up to user expectations, resulting in satisfying interactions and enduring loyalty.

Assurance

Assurance has come to mean having faith in a process, product, or service's legitimacy, dependability, or safety (Smith & Johnson, 2021). It entails offering proof or assurances to stakeholders in a variety of industries, including technology, business, finance, and healthcare, to foster confidence and reduce risks. In the context of assurance, perceived expectation refers to a person's subjective expectation or belief about the degree of dependability, safety, or quality connected to a certain entity (Brown et al., 2020). Consumer behavior and trust are greatly shaped by this perspective, which is influenced by the information that is readily available, prior experiences, and personal prejudices. Additionally, experience in the context of assurance refers to the comprehensive assessment of the exchanges, impressions, and feelings people have while interacting with a product (Jones & Patel, 2019). It extends beyond simple satisfaction to include the general quality and dependability that consumers perceive, highlighting the significance of developing smooth, open, and user-centered procedures that instill confidence and promote sustained trust.

Empathy

According to Davis and Jones (2022), empathy is defined in contemporary discourse as the capacity to comprehend and relate to the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others, which frequently results in empathetic and encouraging reactions. It has both cognitive and affective components, which enable people to identify and relate to the needs and emotions of others, promoting understanding and connection (Smith & Johnson, 2021). In the context of empathy, perceived expectation describes a person's subjective expectation or belief about the sympathetic reaction they anticipate from other people (Brown et al., 2020). These expectations impact how people view and participate in empathic encounters; they are shaped by past experiences, cultural norms, and interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, in the context of experience, empathy entails showing understanding, validating feelings, and actively listening to foster a welcoming and affirming atmosphere (Jones & Patel, 2019). It highlights how crucial sympathetic communication and response are to fostering relationships, establishing trust, and advancing psychological health.

Methods

Research Design

To assess Cebu City citizens' satisfaction with customer services at House of Lechon, this study used a descriptive-quantitative methodology, concentrating on their expectations and perceptions. Using

descriptive research to organize data into patterns, it looks at aspects of service quality such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Visual aids such as charts and graphs help with understanding, and exploratory study evaluates possible variations in participant replies. Researchers can learn new things from this investigation, evaluate if larger studies are feasible, or choose the best study procedures for later investigations (McNabb, 2007; Jupp, 2006).

Environment

The research was conducted and limited to the House of Lechon, Acasia Street, Cebu City. It is a few meters away from Golden Sun Drive and Manduae Foam, near popular hotels, malls, hospitals, and other commercial establishments.

Respondents and Sampling

A purposive sample of one hundred participants—service consumers who have used or encountered the House of Lechon's customer services—were included in this study. The selection of participants was conducted based on their acquaintance with the services provided by the organization. They were required to be 18 years old and above, with no restrictions based on nationality. The selection of participants who could offer in-depth insights into their experiences with the customer services at House of Lechon was made possible by the purposeful sampling technique. This technique made sure that the sample was made up of people who could provide pertinent and diverse viewpoints regarding the caliber of services rendered, which improved the breadth and depth of the study's conclusions.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics are the main statistical method applied in the tables that are displayed. The primary characteristics of the data, such as measurements of central tendency (like mean) and variability (like standard deviation), are summed together and described using descriptive statistics. The mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceived expectations and experiences regarding various characteristics of service quality at the House of Lechon are presented using descriptive statistics. The standard deviation shows the variety or dispersion of responses around the mean, whereas the mean values show the average degree of satisfaction across various aspects. To compare respondents' expectations and experiences across several service quality aspects, a gap analysis was also carried out. The difference between the mean expectation and experience scores is represented by the gap, and descriptive statistics like standard deviation shed light on how these gaps vary. The significance of the discrepancies between expectations and experiences for each dimension is indicated by the t-statistics and p-values, which facilitate the interpretation of the results.

Ethical Consideration

Prioritizing Informed Consent and Confidentiality, ensuring the voluntary participation and informed consent of all respondents is one of the most important ethical issues in performing this study. To enable people to make an informed choice about whether to participate in the study, researchers must be transparent about the goals, methods, possible dangers, and rewards of doing so. The privacy and anonymity of survey responses and respondent personal data must also be guaranteed by researchers. To preserve participant privacy, this entails managing and storing data securely to avoid unwanted access or disclosure and using aggregated or anonymized data for reporting and analysis. Respecting these ethical guidelines is crucial to preserving the credibility and integrity of the research process as well as the rights and welfare of every participant.

Results

Table 1. Level of the Respondents Perceived Expectations from Quality Services of the House of Lechon

Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category	Interpretation
Responsiveness	4.25	0.8376	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied
Tangibility	4.26	0.8534	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied
Reliability	4.23	0.8640	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied
Assurance	4.23	0.8723	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied
Empathy	4.24	0.8877	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied
Overall	4.24	0.0169	SA	Respondents are extremely satisfied

Legend: 1.00-1.70 Respondents are very dissatisfied [SD]; 1.80-2.50 Respondents are not satisfied [D]; 2.60-3.30 Respondents are undecided whether they are satisfied or not [N]; 3.40-4.10 Respondents are moderately satisfied [A]; 4.20-5.00 Respondents are extremely satisfied [SA].

Based on data from Table 1, respondents are extremely satisfied with the House of Lechon's high-caliber services in terms of several different metrics. With a mean score of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.8376, the responsiveness of the service indicates that respondents are highly satisfied. Comparably, the service's tangibility—which encompasses its physical assets, equipment, and employee appearance—was rated with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.8534. The service's reliability—that is, its capacity to deliver on its promises of accuracy and consistency—also received excellent scores, with a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.8640. Assurance, which includes employee expertise, civility, and their capacity to inspire confidence and trust, received a mean score of 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.8723. The mean score for empathy, which measures how well clients are treated individually and with care, was 4.24, with a standard deviation of 0.8877. The House of Lechon's quality services have received an overall mean score of 4.24, with a very low standard deviation of 0.0169. This indicates that respondents are consistently extremely satisfied with the services provided across all dimensions of quality.

The impact of service quality factors on customer satisfaction in urban restaurant contexts "Exploring the Impact of Service Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Restaurants in Urban Settings" was examined by Hasan et al. (2022). According to the survey, key elements influencing customer satisfaction include timely and attentive service, visually beautiful and clean facilities, reliable delivery of services, staff professionalism and competency, and individualized attention. These results indicate a pattern of extreme client satisfaction that is consistent with the aspects of service quality examined in the House of Lechon survey. The study highlights how crucial it is to give service quality top priority in a variety of ways to satisfy clients and raise satisfaction levels in the hotel sector.

Table 2. Level of the Respondents Perceived Experience from Quality Services of the House of Lechon

Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category	Interpretation
Responsiveness	4.19	0.8160	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied
Tangibility	4.12	0.7963	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied
Reliability	4.03	0.9059	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied
Assurance	4.12	0.8599	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied
Empathy	4.14	0.8362	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied
Overall	4.12	0.0379	A	Respondents are moderately satisfied

Legend: 1.00-1.70 Respondents are very dissatisfied [SD]; 1.80-2.50 Respondents are not satisfied [D]; 2.60-3.30 Respondents are undecided whether they are satisfied or not [N]; 3.40-4.10 Respondents are moderately satisfied [A]; 4.20-5.00 Respondents are extremely satisfied [SA].

Table 2 presents the respondents' perceived experiences with the quality of services provided by the House of Lechon across many variables. Moderate levels of satisfaction are revealed by the data in several dimensions. Respondents rank their overall responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy as "A," indicating moderate satisfaction, with mean scores ranging from 4.03 to 4.19 and standard deviations showing a reasonably consistent assessment. These results suggest that the House of Lechon generally satisfies the expectations of its consumers regarding service quality, albeit not reaching the threshold of extreme satisfaction. The replies indicating a moderate level of satisfaction indicate that although there is a need for enhancement, the restaurant's service offerings and customer experience are viewed favorably.

"Assessing Service Quality in the Restaurant Industry: A Comparative Study of Customer Perceptions and Expectations" by Li et al. (2023) provides information about what patrons expect and believe to be the level of service that restaurants should provide. In determining customer satisfaction, the study emphasizes the significance of factors including responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and total service experience. Although eateries typically fulfill the fundamental expectations of patrons in all these aspects, there exist prospects for enhancement to surpass anticipations and attain elevated levels of contentment. To increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, Li et al. (2023) stressed the need for timely and helpful service, neat and appealing facilities, consistent service delivery, courteous and knowledgeable staff, customized attention, and overall service experience. These results are consistent with the moderate levels of satisfaction noted in Table 2 for the House of Lechon, indicating that although the restaurant satisfies patrons' expectations, more work could be done to improve the overall experience and encourage higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 3. Gap Analysis Between Expectation and Experience of the Customers

Indicators	Expectation	Experience	Gap	Std. Deviation	t-Statistics	p-value
Responsiveness	4.25	4.19	0.065	0.4472	1.789	0.08
Tangibility	4.26	4.12	0.145	0.4558	3.905	0.00
Reliability	4.23	4.03	0.196	0.5204	4.612	0.00
Assurance	4.23	4.12	0.108	0.4479	2.953	0.00
Empathy	4.24	4.14	0.096	0.4509	2.607	0.01

A gap study between the House of Lechon's clients' expectations and their actual experiences across several service quality metrics is shown in Table 3. The findings show that although customers felt satisfied most of the time, there are noticeable differences in several areas between what they expected and what they experienced. More specifically, there are notable deficiencies in tangibility, severe shortcomings in assurance and reliability, and a minor deficiency in responsiveness. Despite being relatively small, the empathy difference is statistically significant. These results point to areas that need to be improved to better satisfy client expectations and raise the standard of overall service. The House of Lechon may be able to close the gap between consumer expectations and experiences by concentrating on enhancing tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy. This could eventually result in higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

A recent study titled "Closing the Gap between Customer Expectations and Perceptions: A Study of Service Quality in the Hotel Sector" by Chen et al. (2022) supports the conclusions of Table 3 and highlights the significance of addressing gaps between customer experiences and expectations in the hospitality industry. To bridge the gap between customer expectations and views of service quality in hotels, this study looks at several factors, including overall service quality, assurance, tangibility, responsiveness, and empathy. Chen et al. (2022) emphasized how important it is to close the gap between what customers see and what they anticipate from businesses by providing timely and helpful service, appealing facilities, consistent service delivery, knowledgeable staff, and individualized attention. Hotels may improve client happiness and loyalty by concentrating on these aspects. These results are consistent with the advice given to the House of Lechon to close any gaps in assurance, tangibility, reliability, and empathy to raise customer happiness and service quality overall.

Recommendation and Discussion

The House of Lechon excels at offering top-notch services that typically match or even surpass customer expectations, as demonstrated by the thorough analysis of the data from Tables 1, 2, and 3. To close the gap between client experiences and expectations, the restaurant can improve its service offerings in some areas, which will ultimately result in higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Customers had very high levels of satisfaction with the House of Lechon's services in several areas, including responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, empathy, and overall service quality, according to Table 1's findings. These findings are consistent with research conducted by Hasan et al. (2022) and Li et al. (2023), which highlight the significance of giving service quality aspects top priority in the hotel sector to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 2 shows that customers are generally satisfied, but there are some clear discrepancies between what they expected and what they received, especially when it comes to tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy. These discrepancies point to areas that should be improved to boost consumer happiness and experience even further. According to Li et al. (2023), restaurants can close these gaps by emphasizing elements like uniformity in service delivery, staff professionalism, cleanliness, and individualized attention.

The gap analysis in Table 3 highlights the need for enhancements in assurance, tangibility, reliability, and empathy to better match customer experiences with expectations. Chen et al. (2022) underscored the importance of narrowing the disparity between patron expectations and perceptions within the hotel

industry through the provision of prompt and accommodating service, aesthetically pleasing amenities, uniform service provision, well-informed personnel, and personalized attention.

Building on the findings drawn from the data analysis, the House of Lechon must put specific initiatives into action to raise customer happiness and overall service quality. Firstly, a restaurant can greatly improve its ambiance and draw in more customers by making tangible investments in the form of updated facilities, new equipment, and well-groomed staff appearances. Secondly, to increase reliability, the institution needs to put a high priority on providing dependable and consistent service, taking care of problems with correctness, promptness, and consistency in satisfying client expectations. Thirdly, ongoing staff training programs should be implemented to improve employee professionalism, knowledge, and capacity to inspire consumers' trust and confidence. Lastly, employees must develop empathy. Encouraging them to offer individualized and attentive service shows that they truly comprehend and take into account the unique demands of each customer, which builds stronger bonds and raises satisfaction levels all around. The House of Lechon can successfully close the gap between customer experiences and expectations by putting these diverse methods into practice. This will help to maintain the restaurant's position as a top dining destination and propel it forward in the cutthroat hospitality industry.

By putting focused initiatives into practice, the House of Lechon will be able to close the gap between client experiences and expectations. These strategies include investing in tangibility, improving reliability, reinforcing assurance through staff training, and fostering empathy among employees. The restaurant can improve overall customer happiness and loyalty by matching service performance to customer expectations. In the end, these initiatives will help the restaurant succeed financially in the fiercely competitive hospitality industry.

Conclusion

The House of Lechon has achieved outstanding customer satisfaction in several service quality categories, demonstrating a strong basis for success in the hospitality sector. Even if the establishment is excellent in terms of responsiveness, tangibility, reliability, assurance, and empathy, there are still areas that might be improved upon to bring client experiences closer to what is expected. The House of Lechon can achieve unparalleled service offers by giving priority to efforts like investing in tangibility, enhancing reliability, reinforcing confidence through staff training, and cultivating empathy among personnel. This tactical move will not only foster steadfast patronage but also establish the restaurant as a leader in providing unmatched service quality. The House of Lechon is well-positioned to redefine success criteria and establish new benchmarks for customer satisfaction in the cutthroat hotel industry as it persists in its quest for perfection.

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