QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED RESTAURANT SERVICES USING THE MYSTERY SHOPPING METHOD: CASE STUDY OF PORTUGAL

[a]IVICA LINDEROVÁ, [b]PETR SCHOLZ, [c]NUNO MIGUEL CASTANHEIRA ALMEIDA

College of Polytechnics, Tolstého 16, 586 01 Jihlava, Czechia
Technical University of Liberec, Voroněžská 13, 460 01 Liberec, Czech Republic
Polytechnic of Leiria, Rua do Conhecimento 4, 2520-614 Peniche, Peniche, Portugal
email: [a]ivica.linderova@vspj.cz, [b]petr.scholz@tul.cz, [c]nunoalmeida@ipleiria.pt

Acknowledgements: This research was supported by the College of Polytechnics Jihlava.

Abstract: At present, the market development of accommodation facilities and restaurants accompanied by the growth requirements of the guests focus on the quality and structure of additional services. The paper pays attention to the quality of tourism services as an essential criterion for travel decision. The paper also focuses on tourism in two regions of Portugal and offers tourism overview in selected districts. The paper aimed to evaluate the quality of hospitality services in selected regions during the low season. The research evaluation categories were: place and important visible information, atmosphere and cleanliness, menu, order process, payment process, staff – delivery person. The research was realized in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and Central Portugal in October 2019 and used mystery shopping as a research method. We also used the analysis method (the Correspondence analysis), mathematical and statistical methods. For the evaluation of the results, Statistica 13 EN Program was used.

Keywords: Hospitality. Mystery shopping. Restaurant. Quality. Services.

1 Introduction

The purpose of the tourism sector is the provision of accommodation, food, drink and leisure activities. The industry is closely bound to ensure a high standard of guest service and quality visitor experience. The visitor is at the heart of the industry and further synergy is found in common vertical and horizontal ownership which means that many operators can be found in more than one industry (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005).

At present, the market development of accommodation facilities and restaurants accompanied by the growth requirements of the guests focus on the quality and structure of additional services. Guests´ satisfaction with services in tourism is, thus, one of the critical factors affecting the level of sales and profits, prosperity, position in the competitive environment, etc. The quality of accommodation facilities and restaurants is proportional to the satisfaction of the guests. Apart from the quality, service and professionalism of the staff are important factors. Professionalism, friendliness, and willingness influence the guests´ perceptions (Scholz & Voráček, 2016).

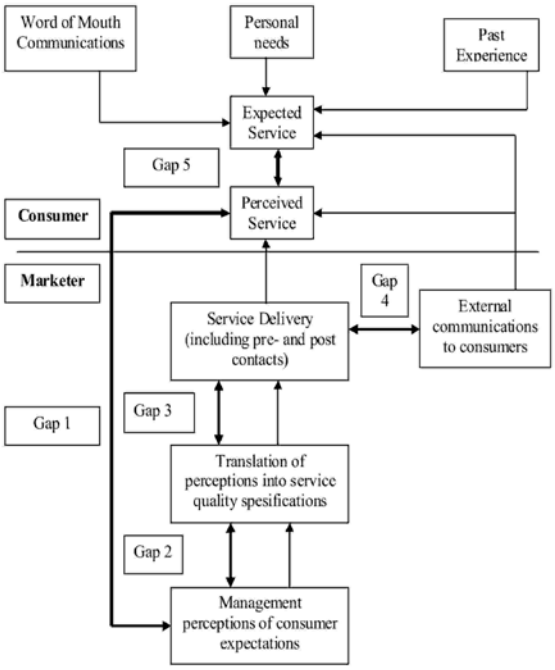
2 Literature Review

Quality and high-level services are concepts indissolubly associated with the tourism and hospitality industry. Quality involves consistent delivery of products and guest services according to expected standards (Kapiki, 2012). Simultaneous production and consumption make people the key to successful service delivery. The guest experience comprises a series of server interactions at the point of service (Hoque, 1999; Svensson, 2003; in Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). Quality is meeting or exceeding guest expectations. To meet or exceed guest expectations, organizations must fully understand all service attributes that contribute to the guest value and lead to satisfaction and loyalty (Evans & Lindsay, 2010; in Kapiki, 2012).

In analyzing service quality, both employee and guest perceptions must be examined (Randall & Senior, 1996; in Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). If employees and guests share the same values, then service quality expectations should be met. Where gap exists, for cultural and other reasons, producers need to be in place for employee development and training (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005).

The gap model (also known as the five gaps model, figure 1) of service quality is an important guest-satisfaction framework, and it is used in research method SERVQUAL. Its primary building block is the so-called paradigm of conflict between the ideas of guests and thus what kind of service they will receive. Gap 1 is between consumer expectation and management perception; arises when the management or service provider does not correctly perceive what the guest wants or needs. Gap 2 is between management perception and service quality specification; this is when the management or service provider might correctly understand what the guest wants, but may not set a performance standard. Gap 3 is between service quality specification and service delivery; may arise pertaining to the service personnel. It could occur due to there being inadequate training, incapability or unwillingness to meet the set service standard. Gap 4 is between service delivery and external communication; guest expectations are highly influenced by statements made by accommodation facilities and advertisements. The gap arises when these assumed expectations are not fulfilled at the time of service delivery. Gap 5 is between expected service and experienced service; this gap arises when the guest misinterprets the service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Figure 1: The Gap model



Source: Parasuraman at al., 1985.

To provide better service and value, it becomes increasingly important for hotels and restaurants to monitor guest perceptions of service quality. Employees in these facilities should follow the rules of guest care to prevent dissatisfaction rating: (1) Acquire a new guest is more complicated than to keep the existing one. (2) If the problem persists, then the guest will be lost forever. (3) Dissatisfied guests have a lot more friends than satisfied. (4) The guest is not always right and, therefore, depend on the employee how to explain the situation to the guest. (5) Hotels and restaurants should never forget that the guest always has a choice. (6) The complaint is a gift. Hotels and restaurants should receive complaints because they can improve. Hotel and F&B managers must listen to their guests to know what they want. (7) When the hotels and restaurants do not take care of their guests, somebody else will do (Scholz & Voráček, 2016).

Managing guest-server interactions is one of the most challenging but crucial tasks for tourism managers (Baum, 1197; in Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). Employers must define service quality goals and achieve employee commitment to them, as well as ensuring employees have the appropriate skills, knowledge, attitude, authority and access to information necessary for providing high-quality guest service (Hoque, 1999; Evans et al., 2003; in Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). Keith & Simmers (2013) state that many hotel and F&B managers choose comment cards as a method to measure guest satisfaction. However, the question remains as to whether comment cards are an effective evaluation tool and whether the appropriate service quality dimensions are being assessed.

Service quality is the key to competitive advantage. Long-term effects of service quality are more important than short-term ones (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005). Kapiki (2012) states that quality assurance is a long-term commitment which represents a cost, but a welcomed and a lower one than that of non-quality. The managers should identify, record and weigh up the impacts of quality cost-profit and be in a position to prioritize towards quality improvement processes. The cost-benefit ratio of quality could be achieved through an equation of non-quality costs and quality assurance towards the benefits of operational cost savings, as well as guest return rate and word of mouth recommendation.

In many ways, defining and controlling the service quality is more complicated than the quality assurance of products. Unlike manufacturing, service industries share unique characteristics that make the process of quality control less manageable but not less important. Moreover, the level of quality expected is less predictable. Service company operations are affected by several characteristics, including the intangible nature of the output and the inability to store the output. Other distinguishing features include: (1) behavior of the delivery person, (2) image of the organization, (3) the guest present during the production process and performing the final inspection, (4) the measure of output is difficult to define, (5) variance and acceptance ranges may not apply, (6) adjusting the control system if the guest is present (Ross, 1999).

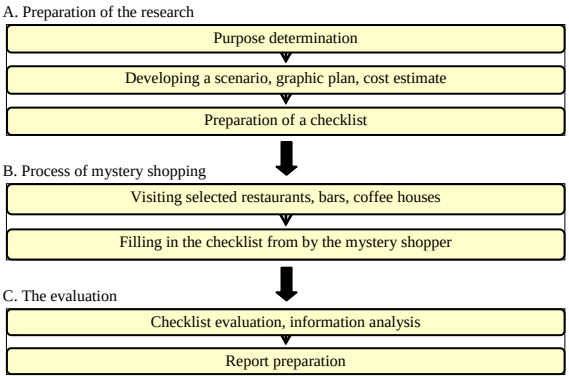
However, the most significant problem with the delivery of services is that it is typically measured at the guest interface – the one-on-one, face-to-face interaction between supplier and guest (Ross, 1999).

3 Materials and Methods

The paper aimed to evaluate the quality of hospitality services in Portugal during the low season. The research was realized during October 4-26, 2019. The area of study was Central Portugal and Lisbon District. Those regions are interesting for tourists during the low season considering good possibilities for golf tourism, surfing and cultural heritage. We used mystery shopping as a method to evaluate the quality of services in selected restaurants, bars, and coffee houses.

Mystery shopping (also called mystery guest research) is a research method that is based on the principle of the so-called secret shopping. Secret shopping is used to find out the level of sale and the readiness of individual shops or their staff members to cope with the arrival of the potential guest. During the research process, there is observed the seller's behavior. Also, the time spent waiting, form and the realization of the offer, interior, atmosphere, visage and the neatness of seller and other features which can influence the success of the selling process. The process of mystery shopping (figure 2) consists of three phases. The first phase is project preparation. The second phase represents the process of mystery shopping itself, and in the last phase, the evaluation process is finished (Staňková & Vaculíková, 2007).

Figure 2: Process of realized mystery shopping in Portugal



Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

The primary document for mystery shopping provider is the checklist. Through it, we can check in detail the sale process that is focused on the given topic and particular services. The checklist is a supplementary instrument of evaluation of the mystery shopping which evaluates especially following parameters, e.g.:

- the first impression, interior,
- behavior of staff workers, their neatness and appearance,
- the first contact, addressing, beginning of the communication,
- extent to what guest's needs were found out,
- communicative skills of the seller,
- scope of supply, advantages and discounts provided,
- realization of the selling itself, supplementary sale,
- providing information about after-sales service,
- sand-off and acknowledgements.

The checklist contains a list of criteria (table 1). Our research evaluation categories were (1) place and important visible information, (2) atmosphere and cleanliness, (3) menu, (4) order process, (5) payment process, (6) staff – delivery person. Restaurants could receive a maximum of 39 points from all categories. Every category has some evaluating criteria which were surveyed.

Table 1: Control criteria

Category	Criteria	Points	Total
Place & important visible information	• name of the restaurant	2	**11**
	• opening hours	2	
	• payment possibilities	2	
	• other details (e.g. accessible for kids, disabled person)	2	
	• parking possibilities	3	
Atmosphere & cleanliness	• atmosphere	1	**9**
	• table	2	
	• cleanliness of the restaurant	2	
	• accessibility of condiments	2	
	• cleanliness of the toilet/restroom	2	
Menu	• visual effect, information about dishes	1	**2**
	• special offer (e.g. autumn offers, happy hours, etc.)	1	
Guest arrival	• greeting till 30 seconds	1	**2**
	• welcoming	1	
Order process	• salutation waiting time	2	**9**
	• order waiting time	2	
	• waiting time for beverages	2	
	• waiting time for dishes	2	
	• service of dishes and beverages	1	
Payment process	• waiting time for the bill, correctness of bill	2	**4**
	• send-off with guest	2	
Staff – delivery person	• visage	2	**5**
	• behavior	1	
	• professionalism	1	
	• direct marketing	1	
Total points			**39**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

We selected 15 restaurants for our research. The selection was made based on local inhabitant recommendations and according to TripAdvisor rating.

For the evaluation of the results, Statistica 13 EN Program was used. Further, we used the analysis method (also Correspondence analysis - CA), mathematical, and statistical methods. Using the graphic tools of this CA, it is possible to describe an association of nominal or ordinal variables and to obtain a graphic representation of a relationship in multidimensional space – for the readers; it is easier to understand. The analysis provides further evidence that dependencies exist between variables. Correspondence analysis (CA) is a multivariate statistical technique. It is conceptually similar to principal component analysis but applies to categorical rather than continuous data. In a similar manner to principal component analysis, it provides a means of displaying or summarizing a set of data in a two-dimensional graphical form (Zámková & Prokop, 2014).

All data should be non-negative and on the same scale for CA to be applicable, and the method treats rows and columns equivalently. It is traditionally applied to contingency tables - CA decomposes the chi-squared statistic associated with this table into orthogonal factors. The distance between single points is defined as a chi-squared distance. The distance between the i-th and i'-th row is given by the formula

$$D(i,i') = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^{c} \frac{(r_{ij} - r_{i'j})^2}{c_j}} \quad (1)$$

where r_{ij} are the elements of row profiles matrix R and weights c_j correspond to the elements of column loadings vector c^T, which is equal to the mean column profile (centroid) of the column profiles in multidimensional space. The distance between columns j and j' is defined similarly, weights correspond to the elements of the row loadings vector r and sum over all rows. In correspondence analysis we observe the relation between single categories of two categorical variables. The result of this analysis is the correspondence map introducing the axes of the reduced coordinates system, where single categories of both variables are displayed in graphic form. The aim of this analysis is to reduce the multidimensional space of row and column profiles and to save as far as possible original data information. Each row and column of the correspondence table can be displayed in *c*-dimensional (*r*-dimensional respectively) space with coordinates equal to the values of the corresponding profiles. The row and column coordinates on each axis are scaled to have inertias equal to the principal inertia along that axis: these are the principal row and column coordinates (Hebák et al., 2007).

For the correspondence analysis model, the degree of dispersion of points is defined, i.e., row and column categories, the so-called total inertia. The term inertia comes from mechanics, where it is defined as the sum of the product of mass and square distances from the centroid of all the object's particles. Geometrically, inertia expresses the degree of dispersion of points in multidimensional space and it can be understood as an analogy to the dispersion known from statistical modeling. In the correspondence analysis, the total inertia (I) is equal to the weighted average (with weights p_{i+}) chi-square of the distance of the row profiles from their average/mean (vector **c**)

$$I = \sum_{i=1}^{r} p_{i+}(\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{c})^{\mathrm{T}} \mathbf{D}_{\mathbf{c}}^{-1} (\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{c}) \quad (2)$$

the same as the weighted average (with weights p_{+j}) chi-square of the distance of the column profiles from their average (vector **r**)

$$I = \sum_{j=1}^{c} p_{+j}(\mathbf{c}_j - \mathbf{r})^{\mathrm{T}} \mathbf{D}_{\mathbf{r}}^{-1} (\mathbf{c}_j - \mathbf{c}) \quad (3)$$

A significant part of the total inertia of the original table is usually explained by the first several axes. That is why it is generally sufficient for the result of the correspondence analysis to be represented in the space of the first two or three ordinal axes. Total inertia equals the sum of all eigenvalues of the matrix. Therefore, it is possible to specify how many ordinal axes it is reasonable to interpret. This can be decided in either of two ways: (1) we set the threshold value (e.g., 80%) and determine how many axes have the cumulative inertia higher than the set threshold value, (2) we interpret the ordinal axes whose eigenvalue is above-average, i.e., higher than the average of all eigenvalues.

The contributions of the row points to the inertia in the corresponding dimension are defined by the quotient

$$\frac{r_i f^2 ik}{\lambda_{(k)}} \quad (4)$$

where f_{ik} corresponds with the elements of the matrix **F** (the score of the i-th row category in the k-th dimension), r_i elements of the row loadings vector and $\lambda_{(k)}$ is inertia expressed by the k-th dimension (an eigenvalue of the matrix). A contribution of the row points to inertia expresses the relative degree of the effect of the given category on the final orientation of the main axes. In a similar fashion, the contributions of column points to inertia are expressed in the corresponding dimension

$$\frac{c_j g^2 jk}{\lambda_{(k)}} \quad (5)$$

For each row category, we can calculate the total row inertia, defined as

$$\sum_k r_j f^2 jk \quad (6)$$

Similarly, for column categories, the total column inertia is defined as

$$\sum_k c_j g^2 jk \quad (7)$$

The values of inertia for individual columns and rows give us an indication of the significance of the various categories on the resulting ordination.

4 Results and Discussion

Portugal is a country located mostly on the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe. The border on the west and south is the Atlantic Ocean, on the north and east Spain.

The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2017 was EUR 13.2bn (6.8% of GDP). It primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 2.6% pa to EUR 18.0bn (8.2% of GDP) by 2028 (WTTC, 2019).

Travel & Tourism generated 401,500 jobs directly in 2017 (8.5% of total employment). It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. By 2028, Travel & Tourism will account for 493,000 jobs directly, an increase of 1,6% pa over the next ten years (WTTC, 2019).

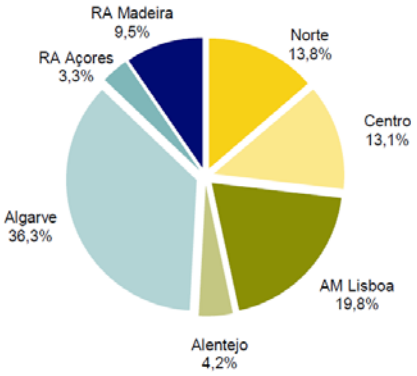
Visitor exports are a key component of the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism. In 2017, Portugal generated EUR 18.1bn in visitor exports. By 2028, international tourist arrivals are forecast to total 17,731,000, generating expenditure of EUR 26.4bn, an increase of 3.1% pa. (WTTC, 2019).

4.1 Tourism in Central Portugal and Lisbon

Portugal has five administration parts – Nord Portugal, Central Portugal, Metropolitan area of Lisbon, Alentejo district, Algarve district and two autonomous regions – Azores, Madeira (figure 3). Our research was conducted in regions of Central Portugal and the Metropolitan area of Lisbon.

In Portugal are located 6,868 accommodation facilities, i.e., hotels, apart-hotels, tourist apartments, tourist villages/resorts, farms, rural accommodation facilities such as camps, rural hotels, private accommodation, Airbnb etc. (INE, 2019b). Hotel industry concentrated 27.2% of total accommodation facilities and 75.9% of bed capacity (INE, 2019a). Central Portugal offers 1,175 accommodation facilities (60,646 beds), Metropolitan Area of Lisbon 908 accommodation facilities (84,184 beds, INE, 2019b).

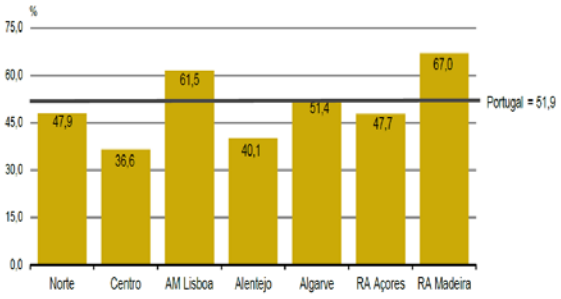
Figure 3: Capacity of beds in regions of Portugal



Source: INE, 2019a.

The net bed occupancy rate (figure 4) in hotel facilities was 51.9%. The net bed occupancy rate in Central Portugal was 36.6% and in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon 61.5% (INE, 2019a).

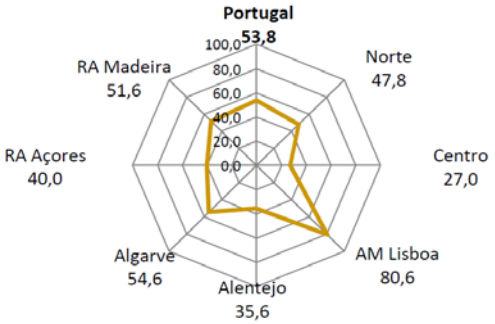
Figure 4: Net bed occupancy in Portugal



Note: Norte = Nord Portugal, Centro = Central Portugal, AM Lisboa = Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, Alentejo = Alentejo district, Algarve = Algarve district, RA Acores = Autonomous region Azores, RA Madeira = Autonomous region Madeira
Source: INE, 2019a.

The average stay in Central Portugal is 1.74 days, in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon 2.32 days (INE, 2019a). The number of overnight stays was 67.7 million in Portugal. According to Statistics Portugal (INE, 2019), 19.9 million of overnight stays was in domestic tourism, and 47.7 million of overnight stays in incoming tourism (INE, 2019a).

The average income per available room (RevPAR, figure 5) in hotels was EUR 53.8 (data for the year 2018). The highest RevPAR was recorded in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (EUR 80.6), followed by the Algarve (EUR 54.6) and RA Madeira (EUR 51.6, INE, 2019a).
Figure 5: RevPAR in Portugal



Source: INE, 2019a.

In 2018, residents made 22.1 million of tourist trips. The main reason for travelling was “leisure and recreation”, justifying 10.3 million trips (46.5% of the total trips), followed by “visiting family or friends”, with 9.1 million trips (41.4% of total trips). Travel for “business” reasons (1.8 million) represented 8.3% of the total trips (INE, 2019a).

Central Portugal remained the leading national destination, with 5.9 million trips, concentrating 30.1% of the total trips. The main reason for travelling was “visiting family and friends” (54.6%). The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon covered 17.4% of national trips. The main reason for travel was “visiting family and friends” also (43.8%, INE, 2019a).

In 2018, the average expenditure per tourist on each trip was EUR 167.0. On domestic travel, residents spent on average EUR 121.5 per trip, while on abroad trips the average spending per trip was EUR 525.7 (INE, 2019a). The average daily expenditure of each resident tourist was EUR 42.0. While domestic travel corresponded to EUR 34.2 and international travel to EUR 71.6. Trips for “business” reasons reached the highest value of average daily expenditure per trip (EUR 4.6). The highest average expenditure on international trips reached “leisure and recreation” motivated trips. Those trips generated EUR 82.3 per trip (INE, 2019a).

4.2 Quality of Hospitality Services in Central Portugal and Lisbon

Quality of service is one of the factors in travel decisions. It is essential for tourist/guest return and also for company goodwill. Wu and Liang (2009; in Marković et al., 2011) stated that service encounter in restaurant settings consists of three main elements: environmental elements (e.g. design, music, lighting), employees (e.g. professional skills, reliability), and guests (e.g. interaction with other guests).

We focused on the quality of the restaurant, bar and coffee house services in selected Portuguese facilities. All researched facilities were located in the Metropolitan area of Lisbon and Central Portugal.

We researched 15 restaurants, bars and coffee houses. Mentioned facilities were chosen according to local inhabitant recommendations, and we also used the TripAdvisor rating. We evaluated restaurants 4 restaurants in Metropolitan Area of Lisbon (Saudade, Troppo Squisito, Lamassa, Upon Lisbon Prime Residence) and 11 restaurants in Central Portugal (Taberna do Ganhão, Praia del Rey Marriot Golf & Beach resort, Cantina de Ferrel, Wow Restaurant, Pausada do Castelo, Club House West-Cliffs Golf Resort, Legend Restaurant,

Pasteleria d´Avó Adélia, Entre Amigos, Jamón Jamón, Tasca do Joel, table 2).

The research was conducted in October 2019. Visits were held from Monday to Sunday in all daily interval (morning, lunch, afternoon, evening).

Table 2: Selected restaurants

Code of Restaurant	Type	City/Town	Region/District
R1	Family restaurant	Estoril	MA Lisbon
R2	Hotel restaurant	Lisbon	MA Lisbon
R3	Restaurant	Lisbon	MA Lisbon
R4	Coffee house	Sintra	MA Lisbon
R5	Hotel restaurant	Amoreira	Central Portugal
R6	Tavern	Baleal	Central Portugal
R7	Restaurant	Baleal	Central Portugal
R8	Canteen	Ferel	Central Portugal
R9	Hotel bar	Óbidos	Central Portugal
R10	Restaurant	Óbidos	Central Portugal
R11	Golf resort restaurant	Óbidos	Central Portugal
R12	Restaurant	Óbidos	Central Portugal
R13	Coffee house	Óbidos	Central Portugal
R14	Restaurant	Peniche	Central Portugal
R15	Restaurant	Peniche	Central Portugal

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

a) Place & important visible information. This category evaluated criteria: (1) name of the restaurant, (2) opening hours, (3) payment possibilities, (4) other details (e.g. accessible for kids, disabled person), and (5) parking possibilities. In this category was important information which a guest can get before his/her entrance to the restaurant.

All restaurants had a visible name, and they were well labelled; apart from two restaurants that had small and poorly visible names and designations around the corner. Some of the restaurants did not inform at the entrance door about opening hours and payment possibilities. We suppose that the necessary pieces of information are important for guests. Majority of the examined restaurants had no information about other details, e.g., accessible entrance for disabled visitors, kids friendly, dog-friendly, etc. Parking places close to the restaurant are also important for visitors. Majority of restaurants disposes of with parking places (for free or paid). If the restaurant did not have a parking lot, the reason was a historical area location (table 3).

Table 3: Place & visible important information

Restaurant	Name	Opening hours	Payment possibilities	Other details	Parking	Total points
R1	2	2	0	0	0	**4**
R2	2	0	0	0	2	**4**
R3	2	1	1	0	0	**4**
R4	2	0	0	0	2	**4**
R5	2	2	2	0	3	**9**
R6	2	1	1	0	2	**6**
R7	2	0	0	0	3	**5**
R8	2	2	2	0	0	**6**
R9	2	2	0	0	3	**7**
R10	2	2	2	2	3	**11**
R11	2	2	2	2	3	**11**
R12	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
R13	2	0	0	0	1	**3**
R14	1	2	0	2	3	**8**
R15	2	0	2	0	2	**6**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

b) *Atmosphere & cleanliness*. This category focused on criteria: (1) atmosphere, (2) table, (3) cleanliness of restaurant, (4) accessibility of condiments, and (5) cleanliness of the toilet (table 4).

Table 4: Atmosphere & cleanliness

Restau-rant	Atmos-phere	Table	Cleanliness of restaurant	Accessibility of condiments	Cleanliness of toilet	Total points
R1	1	2	2	1	2	**8**
R2	0	2	1	1	2	**6**
R3	1	2	2	1	2	**8**
R4	0	2	2	2	2	**8**
R5	1	2	1	1	2	**7**
R6	1	2	2	1	2	**8**
R7	0	2	2	1	2	**7**
R8	0	2	2	0	1	**5**
R9	1	1	2	2	1	**7**
R10	1	2	2	2	1	**8**
R11	1	2	2	2	2	**9**
R12	1	2	2	1	1	**7**
R13	1	2	1	2	2	**8**
R14	1	2	2	2	2	**9**
R15	1	2	2	2	2	**9**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

Some of the restaurants did not evoke a good impression because of the crowded places, no people inside, and no welcoming atmosphere. Tables were generally prepared and clean. The cleanliness of the restaurant was sufficient; some small deficits caused by crumbs on table or floor, the tables were filled with leftover dishes from a previous meal, etc. Flavorings as salt, pepper or olive oil were available on the table, eventually on request. The majority of the restaurants was hygienic (with the cleanliness of toilets) by keeping the place spick and span and implementing hygiene standards and procedures. If there were some limits, they were caused by poorly visible labels, not by dirt or impurity (table 4).

c) *Menu*. The mentioned category evaluated the visual effect of restaurant offers, information about dishes and special offers (seasonal, signature dishes, the specialty of the district, etc.). All menu should inform the guest about the quantity of serving dishes, price and allergens. These pieces of information missed the majority of the restaurant´s menu (table 5).

Table 5: Menu

Restaurant	Information about dishes	Special offer	Total points
R1	1	1	**2**
R2	1	0	**1**
R3	1	0	**1**
R4	1	1	**2**
R5	1	0	**1**
R6	1	0	**1**
R7	1	0	**1**
R8	1	0	**1**
R9	1	0	**1**
R10	2	0	**2**
R11	2	0	**2**
R12	1	1	**2**
R13	1	0	**1**
R14	1	1	**2**
R15	1	0	**1**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

d) *Guest arrival*. This category evaluated the behavior of the staff during the guest´s entrance to the restaurant. Greetings and welcoming were asked. The staff, in some cases, did not see guest arrival. The main reason was the overcrowded eating area or the lack of interest. We have to state that the majority of waiters welcomed guests. Some of the surveyed restaurants had a special reception for arriving guests. The hostess welcomed them and showed them their table (table 6).

Table 6: Guest arrival

Restaurant	Greeting till 30 seconds	Welcoming	Total points
R1	1	1	**2**
R2	1	1	**2**
R3	1	1	**2**
R4	1	0	**1**
R5	1	0	**1**
R6	1	1	**2**
R7	1	1	**2**
R8	1	1	**2**
R9	0	1	**1**
R10	1	1	**2**
R11	1	1	**2**
R12	1	1	**2**
R13	0	0	**0**
R14	1	1	**2**
R15	1	1	**2**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

e) *Order process*. This category evaluated the behavior of stuff during the guest´s stay in the restaurant. All processes from salutation until serving dishes and beverages were assessed.

Generally, the order process in the selected restaurants was evaluated as an ordinary standard level. We have to state the

lack of serving coffee. More than 80% of restaurants served coffee without water; waiters did not use trays for serving dishes, etc. Beverage and food service was the full competence of the waiter, and there were no procedures and standards regarding serving (table 7). Probably, there was a reason why several times the orders were changed (different kinds of food) or forgotten (1 ½ hour waiting for a burger, 30 minutes waiting time for drinks).

Table 7: Order process

Restau-rant	Salutation WT	Order WT	WT for drinks	WT for food	Service	Total points
R1	2	2	2	2	0	8
R2	2	1	0	0	0	3
R3	2	2	2	2	0	8
R4	2	2	1	2	0	7
R5	2	2	1	2	0	7
R6	2	2	2	2	0	8
R7	2	2	2	2	0	8
R8	2	2	2	2	0	8
R9	2	2	2	2	0	8
R10	2	2	2	2	0	8
R11	2	2	1	2	1	8
R12	1	2	1	2	0	6
R13	0	2	2	2	0	6
R14	2	2	2	2	1	9
R15	2	2	2	2	0	8

Note: WT – waiting time
Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

f) *Payment process*. This category evaluated the behavior of staff after quest consumption. Waiting time for a receipt is one of the criteria. The average waiting time for the receipt was approximately 5 minutes. Two restaurants prepared the incorrect bills. They charged not ordered food or made other mistakes. Some of the waiters did not say „Goodbye“. In most cases, it was due to the overcrowded restaurant (table 8).

Table 8: Payment process

Restaurant	Waiting time for bill/receipt	Send-off with guest	Total points
R1	2	1	**3**
R2	2	2	**4**
R3	2	0	**2**
R4	0	0	**0**
R5	2	2	**4**
R6	2	2	**4**
R7	0	0	**0**
R8	2	1	**3**
R9	2	2	**4**
R10	2	2	**4**
R11	2	2	**4**
R12	2	1	**3**
R13	2	0	**2**
R14	2	2	**4**
R15	2	2	**4**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

g) *Staff – delivery person*. The mentioned category evaluated visage, behavior, professionalism of the waiter. Direct marketing was also observed.

If we focused on the uniform dress code for staff, we have to state that 50% of employees were identified with the corporate identity dress code (a nameplate was an exception). Some of the waiters wore casual clothes, not different from everyday guest clothes. Professionalism was not evaluated well. The majority of the staff did not know the basic rules of serving drinks and food. Direct marketing as a sales increasing tool was used in several cases. This type of offer is more common for hotel restaurants or family business (table 9).

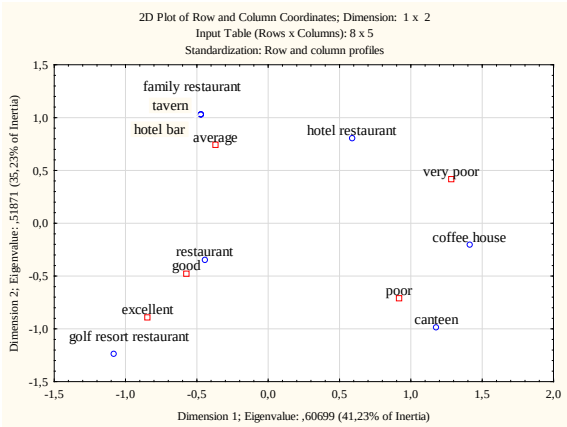
Table 9: Staff – delivery person

Restau-rant	Visage	Behavior	Professionalism	Direct marketing	Total points
R1	1	1	0	1	**3**
R2	2	1	0	0	**3**
R3	2	1	1	1	**5**
R4	1	1	0	0	**2**
R5	2	1	1	0	**4**
R6	1	1	0	1	**3**
R7	1	1	0	1	**3**
R8	1	0	0	0	**1**
R9	2	1	0	0	**3**
R10	2	1	1	0	**4**
R11	2	1	0	1	**4**
R12	0	1	0	1	**2**
R13	1	0	0	0	**1**
R14	2	1	1	1	**5**
R15	2	1	0	1	**4**

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

According to our research, we can state that better results of mystery shopping evaluation had the resort restaurants. We guess the reason is precisely determined corporate quality standards (figure 6).

Figure 6: The research results (1)



Between 29 and 26 points had small restaurants with a unique concept, e.g., little family business with homemade product, surf restaurant, a tavern with local specialties. The restaurants that received less than 24 points, were generally overcrowded, sharing information for guests was confusing. The major problem was the non-professional staff.

The restaurants with the best evaluation in our rating get around 90% of maximum points. The worst evaluation was 49% of possible points (table 10). The guest satisfaction is principally influenced by the behavior of the staff and food quality (appearance, taste, size, shape, color, gloss, and consistency). Some specialized equipment is welcomed, and it can increase guest satisfaction and restaurant attractiveness. Such special services are kids' corner, seasonal food offers, local specialties, fresh fish, etc. We recognized the overcrowded place with noise as the greatest failure in worse evaluated restaurants. The guests could not feel the place genius loci in such an atmosphere.

Table 10: The research results (2)

Restau-rant	Total points	Note
R11	**36**	bad English
R14	**35**	daily menu
R10	**35**	beautiful place, friendly staff
R15	**30**	tables very close to one another
R5	**29**	nice staff
R6	**28**	unisex toilet/restroom
R3	**28**	very nice and friendly staff
R9	**27**	mislabeled toilet/restroom sign
R1	**27**	little family business delicious home-made pasta, nice authentic atmosphere
R7	**26**	no guests, drink forgotten, order changed without informing the guest
R4	**24**	overcrowded
R8	**23**	bad English, staff were not willing to help
R12	**20**	mislabeled restaurant sign
R13	**19**	overcrowded, self-service, no necessary information for guests (opening hours, accessibility, etc.)
R2	**19**	very slow service, confused order, waiting time for food more than 1 hour

Source: Own elaboration, 2020.

The restaurant service quality is difficult to evaluate because the assessments are made on both the service outcome and on the process of service delivery. Some researchers suggested that food quality, the physical environment, and service are the major components of overall restaurant service quality (Dulen 1999; Susskind & Chan 2000; Ryu & Han 2010; in Marković et

al., 2011). Among these attributes, food quality is the most important dimension of the restaurant experience (Sulek & Hensley 2004; in Marković et al., 2011). Although there is no consensus on the individual attributes that constitute food quality, the researchers focus on presentation, healthy options, taste, freshness, and temperature (Namkung & Jang 2008; in Marković et al., 2011).

5 Conclusion

We have to state that the results are average. On the other hand, we cannot generalize the results. Still, we can say that better results of mystery shopping evaluation had the resort restaurants, the least points received by restaurants, which were poorly marked, slow service, and language skills. However, we find the reluctance of the staff to be the most significant shortcoming. We recommend F&B managers to focus on this issue and thus contribute to higher guest satisfaction. It is also imperative to take an interest in the employees. Satisfied employees equal satisfied guests. Unhappy employees lead to unhappy guests. When employees are not happy at work, their interactions with the guests can, and almost always will, suffer.

Literature:

1. Hebák, P., Hustopecký, J., Pecáková, I., Průša, M., Řezanková, H., Svobodová, A., & Vlach, P. *Vícerozměrné statistické metody 3*. Praha: Informatorium, 2007. 272 p. ISBN 80-7333-039-3.
2. INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística. *Estatísticas do Turismo 2020*. 2019a. ISBN 978-989-25-0497-1. https://www.ine.pt/
3. INE – Instituto Nacional de Estatística. *Quardos - Estatísticas do Turismo 2020*. 2019b. https://www.ine.pt
4. Jones, E. & Haven-Tang, C.: *Tourism SMEs, Service Quality and Destination Competitiveness*. Cambridge: CABI Publishing, 2005. 337 p. ISBN 0-85199-011-8.
5. Kapiki, S. T. Quality Management in Tourism and Hospitality: an Exploratory Study among Tourism Stakeholders. *International Journal of Economic Practices and Theories*. 2012, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 53-61. e-ISSN 2247-7225.
6. Keith, K., & Simmers, S. Measuring hotel service quality perceptions: the disparity between comment cards and lodgserv. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 2013, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 119-131. ISSN 1095-6298.
7. Marković, S.; Raspor, S., & Dorčić, J. What are the key dimensions of restaurant services quality? An empirical study in the city restaurant settings. *International Scientific Conference Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe (ToSEE): Sustainable Tourism: Socio-Cultural, Environmental and Economics Impact*. 2011, pp. 235-249.
8. Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. A conceptual model of service quality and its implicastions for future research. *Journal of Marketing.* 1985, Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 41-50. ISSN 0022-2429.
9. Ross, J. E. *Total Quality Management: Text, Cases and Readings.* Boca Raton: St. Lucie Press, 1999. 568 p. ISBN 1-57444-266-X.
10. Scholz, P., & Voráček, J. Organizational culture and green management: innovative way ahead in hotel industry. *Measuring Business Excellence*. 2016, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 41-52. ISSN 1368-3047.
11. Staňková, P., & Vaculíková, M. *Mystery shopping as an instrument of marketing research*. E+M Ekonomika a management. Liberec: Technical University, 2007, No. 1, pp. 108-113. ISSN 1212-3609.
12. WTTC. *Travel & Tourism Economic Impacts 2018 Portugal*. London: WTTC, 2019, 24 p. https://www.wttc.org/
13. Zámková, M., & Prokop, M. Comparison of Consumer Behavior of Slovaks and Czechs in the Market of Organic Products by Using Correspondence Analysis. *Acta Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*. 2014, Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 783-795. ISSN 1211-8516.

Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AK