



A CUSTOMER-EMPLOYEE ENCOUNTER: A REVIEW OF CUSTOMER QUALITY CONTROL ON RESTAURANT FOOD SERVICE

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Abstract

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study review was to fill the literature gap into the customer quality control on restaurant food and beverage service, with the objective of identifying customer quality control methodologies within the hospitality's food and beverage operations.

Methodology: For purposes of carrying out the study review, the concept of customer employees encounter in the process of not only creating and offering goods and services but also the quality control aspect, and the various methodologies in doing so were considered and reviewed. The study employed a meta-analysis in gathering, analyzing, presentation and discussion of the study results.

Main Findings: The study review findings reveal that hospitality organizations are facing a drift from the conventional restaurant standard operating procedures in reference to foodservice quality control with the customer taking a central position in the production and presentation of food services.

The study proposes three main and most common global methodologies used by hospitality restaurant clients in setting and maintaining standards and in their attempts in controlling restaurant food service quality from frontline staff. These control measures include; restaurant tipping, customer satisfaction surveys as well as on-the-spot customer complaints.

Limitations: This is a study review and therefore the study findings were arrived at in consideration of mainly secondary sources. Some studies are traditionally region and/ or country-specific and therefore much caution is needed when generalizing the study findings.

Social implications: There is a myriad of ways through which restaurant food service quality control can be integrated into the customer employee service encounter. They reviewed three main methodologies in this study review may provide the best tools not only for quality control function but also build confidence among the customer base, thus yielding customer satisfaction and retention on the one hand, while creating business sustainability on the other hand.

Originality: Minimal studies have been instituted and published in the area of customer quality control not only within the hospitality's restaurant operation but also in the larger services industry. This study will, therefore, help the hospitality restaurant business to appreciate the role of customers in the process of quality services provision, thus enable organizations to achieve a strategic business competitive position.

Keywords: *Tipping, On-the-spot Customer Complaints, Customer-employee Encounter, Quality Control, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Food Service, Service Failure.*

INTRODUCTION

The participation of foodservice customers in service quality control is a behavioral concept that emphasizes that the customer plays an active role ([Yi Hsu & Yu Chen, 2014](#)) either directly on product and/ or service quality control or indirectly through product and/ or service quality control. However, not all customers may possess relevant skills and knowledge in the restaurant services operations, and therefore may be the origin of compromises in the projected organizational goals and standards in regard to quality. Moreover, evaluating what hospitality restaurant clientele think about their restaurant food and beverage sales and service experience is a difficult challenge for hospitality practitioners striving to achieve service quality. Phillip Crosby's zero defects ([Conie, Sparks & Kandapully, 2013](#)) could be resourceful in creating quality food services that fulfill the customer needs and wants, and thus increasing hospitality's customer loyalty through repeat business. For many organizations though, service failure is a common phenomenon even among the industry leaders in the service provision task. According to [Namasivayam & Hinkin \(2003\)](#), research indicates that offering goods and services is not enough, thus customers must be provided with experience, which sometimes calls for the role of customers in ensuring quality goods and service provision.

Thus hospitality's food and beverage service operation involves customer quality control in helping to create a restaurant meal experience and the ultimate food and beverage service value ([Claycomb, 2001; Conie, Sparks & Kandapully, 2013](#)). According to [Namasivayam & Hinkin, \(2003\)](#) "one common theme from the research is the importance of the actual

customer-employee encounter”, with the focus on the behaviors of the hospitality’s restaurant food and beverage service staff. However, the extent and type of participation and the effect on restaurant food and beverage service quality varies. Nevertheless, [Vasile \(2009\)](#) is in agreement with the findings that hospitality guests impose a quality control function on the products and services offered within the hotel set-up.

A number of scholarly arguments do support this view ([Amorim, Rosa & Santos, 2014](#); [Chen, Raab & Tanfood, 2015](#); [Rajatis & Nikseresht, 2016](#); [Staus, Robbert & Roth, 2016](#)), on the basis of the changing dynamics within the global hospitality business environment which has modified the traditional roles of hospitality’s restaurant food and beverage service customers making them active players not only in the creation of value but also enabling restaurant customers meal experience and therefore customer satisfaction and eventually retention.

In actual fact, [Pralhad & Ramaswamy \(2000\)](#) acknowledge the fact that customers possess experience in knowledge and skills of restaurant hospitality operations, and thus they tend to engage themselves in an active relationship with employees of hospitality food and beverage services. Besides, [Namasivayam & Hinkin \(2003\)](#) corroborates that hospitality’s restaurant customers’ sense of quality control in service encounter is essential, thus food and beverage customer ability in hospitality’s services is an essential issue. In fact, [Lugosi \(2007\)](#) focuses on hospitality guests’ roles as sources of income for an organization, or on the other hand as surrogate marketing agents for the hospitality’s food and beverage service operations.

On the contrary however, [Langnick-Hall \(1996\)](#) focuses on customers’ roles from a customer-firm affiliation perspective and explains roles of customers on the basis of a resource worker or co-producer, buyer, beneficiary, and a collection of transformation activities, which involves different degrees of participation in the control of quality of both hospitality’s restaurant products and services. Nonetheless, [Bitner \(1997\)](#) as well suggests that hospitality guests may contribute to quality service experiences in three ways: as productive agencies, as contributors to quality satisfaction and value and lastly as competitors. In view of the above arguments in relation to the customer’s role in food and beverage service quality in the hospitality industry, this review paper focused on customer quality control function on food and beverage service within the larger hospitality’s restaurant business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have defined service quality relative to the concept of consumer-perceived quality as the action of the customer that stimulates the responses of the hospitality’s restaurant food and beverage service staff to act appropriately towards the customers’ achieving a suitable meal experience ([Namasivayam & Hinkin, 2003](#)). In reality, customers in food and beverage sections of the hospitality establishments examine service quality ([Nguyen Hue, Nguyen Thu Ha, Phan Chi & Yoshiki, 2015](#); [Mohsin, 2011](#); [Ladhari, 2009](#); [Grandbois, 2016](#)) and as such, they are prompted to institute quality control measures depending on the individual customer service satisfaction level, ([Rauch, Collins, Nale & Barr, 2015](#); [Liat, Mansori & Chuan, 2017](#); [Musaba & Musaba, 2014](#); [Mukhles, 2016](#); [Ali, Ryan & Hussein, 2016](#)), hence an important factor for consideration in the context of increased profitability as a result of repeat business, profitability, and loyalty. However, it should be mentioned that for effective customer participation in restaurant services quality control, they must be in possession of general relevant skills and knowledge in restaurant services provision. In reality, though, this may be a missing link among many of the clients and therefore a point of concern on the quality of the resultant services as a result of customer participation.

[Stephen, Kevia & Mike \(2011\)](#) as well as [Kandapully & Suhartanto, \(2000\)](#) emphasize the fact that every hotel has to pay the importance of making satisfaction to its customers by developing staffs’ attitudes and service potential, thus placing much premium on the importance of service quality. A number of philosophies such as Kaizen, Total Quality Management, Six Sigma or usage of dynamic models in improving service quality ([Nadeliakova, Stefancova & Kudlac, 2017](#)) have been explored by researchers. In all these service quality philosophies, there is a striking similarity in which customers are prioritized in the control of service quality as they are in a better position to identify and correct specific service failures in the food and beverage service cycle within hospitality’s restaurant food and beverage service, although this could be on the basis of the experience level in relation to restaurant-quality service provision. The following is a detailed review of the strategies applied by hospitality restaurant clients in the customer quality control function within the hospitality’s food and beverage section.

Managerial functions of restaurant clients in foodservice quality control

Customers play a vital role in the maintenance of standards within the food and beverage service areas. On the other hand, though, the waiters need to be adequately motivated and/ or supervised for the clients to obtain satisfaction from the services offered. To achieve the balance in the customer-server relationship, various strategic options are key which this study review puts in to focus including; the tipping function, on-the-spot customer complaints feedback and customer satisfaction surveys;

Tipping

Tipping is an interesting economic behavior within the entire service industry, having attracted economists for some time ([Lynn, 2006](#)). This is not only on the basis of the importance and widespread nature of the tipping phenomenon but also as a restaurant customer quality control mechanism that food and beverage clients are free to practice ([Wang & Lynn, 2013](#)). In fact, several studies attempting to explain the theory of tipping have appeared in psychology, economics and a few in the hospitality management literature ([Lynn & Sturman, 2010](#)), but with a modest focus on hospitality's restaurant food and beverage service. A number of scholars have tried to utilize these theories, models, and principles by carrying out studies on variables that affect tipping and various interactions between these variables and food service quality in hospitality's restaurant operations ([Lynn, 2006](#); [Wang & Lynn, 2013](#); [Were, Miricho & Maranga, 2019](#)). Although it has been assumed that tipping is a boost on the quality of restaurant services, it may also result in compromised service provision especially where the tip amount is small, or maybe in the absence of the tipping act. Generally, this study review synthesized tipping on the basis of three proposals on why hospitality's food and beverage service recipients tip in an attempt to control service quality including; incentives/ reward for outstanding or superior service, attempts to buy improved/enhanced future service as well as a social norm ([Megan, 2017](#)).

Incentive/ Reward

The economic explanation of tipping is based on the grounds that it is an effective means of monitoring and rewarding hospitality's restaurant food and beverage service staff, ([Ali, Ryan & Hussein, 2016](#); [Grandbois, 2016](#)). [Lynn, Jabbour & Kim, \(2012\)](#) found out that the act of tipping is related to the restaurant's consumer evaluation of the dining experience, hence anticipated to foster quality food and beverage service. Nonetheless, the highly personalized and intangible nature of services means that customers are in a much better position than managers to evaluate and reward food and beverage service, even though, there is no clarity on what basis the customer evaluates service quality and how s(he) is supposed to rate the same for rewarding purposes and therefore the need for further investigations on this topic. However, studies by [Lynn Jabbour & Kim, \(2012\)](#) were region-specific and therefore needs to be generalized with caution as a result of regional, geographic, demographic as well as cultural differences across the world.

[Bigler & Hoaas, \(2016\)](#); [Charity & Kazembe, \(2014\)](#); [Lynn, Jabbour & Kim, \(2012\)](#) and [Lynn \(2015\)](#) asserts that monetary benefits in terms of tips affect worker motivation, and therefore endorses previous findings that tips do increase with customers' perception of service quality and therefore one of the active and effective measures used by restaurant food service clientele to control quality. Tipping, on the other hand, has not been globally accepted since in some countries such as New Zealand and Britain, the act of tipping is not allowed ([Ala' Nimer, Abukhalifeh & Puad Mat, 2012](#)), and thus casting doubts on the quality control function of tipping within the hospitality's food and beverage operations sections. Further, service quality is difficult to measure, as quality may mean differently to different people and therefore a function of the hospitality organizations' management to define the term quality based on the company's strategic objectives, mission, and vision as well as core values. Basing on these identified gaps in studies on this subject, there is a need to further interrogate this subject for purposes of providing solutions in policy and industry practice.

Enhanced Future Service

Investigators on this topic have employed reciprocity theory to clarify the reasoning behind tipping as attempts to buy enhanced or improved future service ([Bodvarson & Gibson, 2002](#)). According to this theory, reciprocity is a behavioral response between the participants to perceived kindness. [Folk & Fishbacher \(2006\)](#) established proof of a universal reciprocity norm necessitating people to pay the favors others do for them. In association with tipping, it is related to the tit-for-tat strategy which suggests that the association between service quality and tipping should be robust for regular than non-regular customers ([Lynn, 2010](#)), although tipping is practiced virtually by clients irrespective of patronage frequency. All the same, these strategies have extensively been used by scholars to explain tipping as an attempt to buy enhanced future service within the hospitality's food and beverage service operations ([Megan, 2017](#)).

As a result of the currently increased competition, many hospitality organizations are facing challenges in building and maintaining brand loyalty. [Carev \(2008\)](#) however cements the argument that by raising restaurant services quality, hotel's food and beverage sections gradually raise guests' expectation levels, which may contribute to customer loyalty and make it more difficult and costly to please them, thus brand switching ([Chakraborty, 2017](#)). As a result therefore, this could be an elimination of brand switchers as hospitality's restaurant businesses focus on developing solid brand loyalty among the food and beverage service clients. In reality, though, the organizational customer base comprises an amalgam of both loyal and disloyal clients. Furthermore, given the seasonal nature of the hospitality industry ([Kotler, Bowel & Makens, 2010](#); [Lillicrap & Cousins, 2014](#)), overdependence on tips and service charges is recorded ([Concern Tourism, 2013](#)), with the variability nature of food and beverage service excepts tipping as an act of buying enhanced future service since the chances of not only meeting but also being given the same quality of service is insignificant. In general, the sampling methodology applied by studies on this subject was biased, as it concentrated among the young white college restaurant clients.



Social Norm

According to [Milos, Youngsoo & Matt \(2013\)](#), the social norm is explicit or implicit rules specifying what behaviors are acceptable within society. [Wang \(2010\)](#) records that tipping started as a sign of gratitude and status, became an incentive, and finally a norm. Today, the acceptable norm in the United States dictates that tipping should be 15%-20% of the actual bill ([Bigler & Hoas, 2016](#)). In relation to psychology research, individuals do not want to risk social disapproval ([Margalioth, Sapriti & Coloma, 2010](#)) and as a result, will opt to fulfill the norm of tipping.

[Ala' Nimer, Abukhalifeh & Puad Mat, \(2012\)](#) as well as [Mohd Salehuddin, Mohd Zohari, Mohd Rashdi, Salleh Mohd & Othman, \(2011\)](#) accounts that the custom of tipping varies across countries in development, nonetheless is evolving rapidly to a lesser extent in; Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and hardly ever practiced in Australia, China, Denmark, Japan and Iceland ([Bigler & Hoas, 2016](#)). As noted by [Mohd Salehuddin, Mohd Zohari, Mohd Rashdi, Salleh Mohd & Othman, \(2011\)](#), tipping growth in many countries of the world may be attributed to; increasing numbers of travelers from countries where tipping is the norm, bringing back the custom by the local travelers overseas, and the rapid expansion of the global hospitality industry which is increasingly internationalized. Though, there is no literature within our knowledge on the quality control function of tipping as a norm in the hospitality's food & beverage service.

The norm of tipping is practiced differently across various countries of the world. [Jacobs \(2017\)](#) records that Russia, Romania, Slovenia, and Lithuania uphold the tipping norm of 5%-10% whereas the same is conventional in Argentina, Austria, Turkey, and India. In some countries though, a 10% tip is a usual norm while it varies between 10%-15% for other countries ([Jacobs, 2017](#); [Lynn, 2015](#); [Jeremy, Alecia & Martin, 2014](#); [Sum & Ala' a Nimer, 2012](#) and [Melia, 2011](#)), thus a great variation in the tipping norm across the world in relation to the acceptable percentage of restaurant bill tips as well as service charge ([Concern Tourism, 2013](#)). On the other hand, countries with higher minimum salaries and wages do not advocate for the tipping of restaurant food and beverage service staff, as tipping is not commonly practiced in such nations ([Jahan, 2018](#)). In consequence, these countries experience a lack of tipping because the minimum wage per hour is above average ([Jahan, 2018](#)). It may be assumed that improved employee pay in such cases is a guarantee for standardized restaurant service unlike tipping which is biased and selective, and therefore a compromise to the very restaurant service quality.

Dissimilarly though, some countries such as Japan, South Korea, Georgia, Spain, Peru, Thailand, and Kazakhstan believe that tipping is an insult not only to the food and beverage service staff but also to all service providers across the broad service industry ([Jeremy, Alecia & Martin, 2014](#)). For this reason therefore, tipping is considered a very unfamiliar exercise. The literature on this subject, however, highlights various global norms across nations, without much attention on the African continent leave alone Kenya, thus necessitating studies on the topic to fill the gap.

On-the-spot Customer Complaints feedback

Hospitality's food and beverage service staff are ultimately responsible for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of restaurant customers ([Presbury, 2005](#)). According to [Ford & Heaton, \(2001\)](#) hospitality managers spend time to supervise, train, motivate, and reward employees to produce excellent guest experiences through quality service. However, guests in a hotel are very often in contact with service employees, talking to them and seeing their job performance. So, they have the best opportunity to control the employees' activity and react when they experience service failures ([Al Khattab, 2011](#)). Many hospitality's restaurant customers, therefore, do have the willingness and the necessary competence to signal nonconformance to quality standard in the activity of frontline staff ([Dong, Sivakumar & Zou, 2015](#)), and more than that, they can take corrective actions through negative comments, and compliments ([Baharun & Naderian, 2015](#)).

Hospitality's restaurant services have a great tendency to fail due to their intangible and pragmatic nature of the instantaneous production, sales, service, and consumption, ([Lillicrap & Cousins, 2014](#)), although this is not to rubberstamp service failures in the provision of food services. The high level of human interaction between food and beverage service staff and customers give rise to variability in restaurant service quality ([Suskind, 2002](#)), while on the other side, today's restaurant guests are more demanding, widely traveled, exposed to international hospitality service experience and therefore highly educated, so it is more difficult to meet their expectations. According to [Baharun & Naderian, \(2015\)](#), there are three categories of service failures; failures in implicit or explicit customer requests, unprompted and unsolicited employee actions and service system failures.

Unprompted and unsolicited employee actions

These include events and employee behaviors that are truly unexpected from the hospitality's restaurant customer point of view ([Dong, Sivakumar & Zou, 2015](#)). Satisfactory incidents represent very pleasant surprises or special attention, while dissatisfactory incidents comprise negative and unacceptable employee behavior such as; wrong order delivery, incorrect charges, and to the extreme, rude behavior of employees, discrimination, ignoring the customers, and stealing from customers. These incidents represent truly unexpected and unrequested employee behaviors that either enhance or detract

from the delivery of core quality service ([Baharun & Naderian, 2015](#)). However, such negative employee actions are normally moderated by hospitality's restaurant clientele by either being specific on the staff to offer the service or bringing such acts from staff to the attention of managers who thereafter have a responsibility of reprimanding the staff through disciplinary action. Restaurant employees, however, undergo regular refresher training either organized internally or externally on matters relating to quality service delivery. Further, organizations possess well-crafted rules and regulations to adequately address any possible service failures as a result of unprompted and unsolicited employee actions and therefore eliminating the important role of restaurant clients in foodservice quality control.

Service system failure

When the restaurant's food and beverage service delivery system fails, frontline food service employees are required to respond to the complaints or dissatisfaction from restaurant customers ([Dong, Sivakumar & Zou, 2015](#)). These incidents are related directly to failures to the core food and beverage services such as the dining room, restaurant meal service, or the food and beverage production models, and inevitable foodservice system failures occur for even the best of hospitality restaurants. In the restaurants' food and beverage, service system failures may include; cold food, slow service, insect problems, dirty silverware and crockery ([Baharun & Naderian, 2015](#)). However, hospitality's restaurant clientele brings to the attention of both the food service staff and management of such restaurant service system failures. For purposes of satisfying restaurant customers, hospitality professionals more often carry out service recovery with the aim of maintaining their customer base, hence not only focusing on customer satisfaction but also customer retention.

Failures in implicit or explicit customer requests

These are incidents that contain an explicit or inferred request for customized service and may include; food not cooked to order or lost reservations ([Baharun & Naderian, 2015](#)). These may be as a result of a number of reasons. First, it could be as a result of a failure in the employee to provide customer requests in reference to customer preferences. Various customers have their own preferences, for example in relation to the degree of cooking, presentation, and service. Further, service employees may also fail to provide for the customers' special needs or even sometimes disruption from other customers in the service areas which is commonly observed among the alcohol-driven as well as mood controlled customers.

Customer Satisfaction Survey feedback

According to [Conie, Sparks, and Kandapully \(2013\)](#), customer surveys have become a widely used barometer of business performance over the past decade. In fact, [Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, \(1988\)](#) used surveys to develop the SERVQUAL model, which is a dominant service quality survey instrument. However, surveys are often reported in the aggregate, and yet averaging customer preferences and perceived performance hence the value of surveys is limited since they do not represent the customer viewpoint in a useful manner ([Conie, Sparks & Kandapully, 2013](#)). Further, these researchers conclude that customer satisfaction surveys should be replaced by methods that better identify the perspectives of individual customers ([Rajatis & Nikseresht, 2016](#)). Indeed this is paramount as customers demand more customization of products and services to meet their ever-changing needs, and includes;

Employee generated guest feedback

It involves a structured interview or survey technique through which restaurant employees gather foodservice customer perceptions of the service delivery, which allows recovery from service failures ([Liat, Mansori & Chuan, 2017](#)). Hotels know that recovering from service failures yields greater customer loyalty and repeat visits, while employees know that management places greater credibility on service recovery feedback obtained directly from guests ([Ala' Nimer, Abukhalifeh & Puad Mat, 2012](#)). On the other hand, though, there is a need to get a deeper insight into the general behavioral factors affecting guest feedbacks and therefore their reliability. This is because the majority of guest feedbacks may not represent the reality in relation to service quality. Feedbacks are on the basis of perceptions and not real food service experience, which may be far apart and therefore the data on this variable may lead to inappropriate decisions by management.

Comment cards

Comment cards rely on voluntary customer participation. Guests are required to rate the foodservice quality experience by responding to a few simple questions on a conveniently available form and deposit the form in a box, return it to the service provider, or mail it to the corporate office. Their comments may be interesting and helpful to management in understanding the service experience, ([Ali & Hussain, 2016](#)). However, typically only five percent of customers return comment cards, either the delighted or the dissatisfied; the other ninety-five percent say nothing ([Al Khattab, 2011](#)). Further, this method may only capture the extremes of restaurant service quality, which is with a lower and upper focus, while those within might not be willing to give their views which affects the reliability of the data obtained by this method. In addition, comments may be far away from the real restaurant service quality experience, or in other instances may lack the seriously required details.



Personal interviews or surveys with guests

It involves face-to-face interviews that can uncover previously unknown problems or a new twist in a known problem that cannot be addressed in a pre-printed questionnaire ([Carev, 2008](#)). However, personal interviews are costly because of the expense of employing trained interviewers, the custom-designed interview instrument, and the inconvenience to guests. In addition, some clients may not be willing to share their restaurant service experience, hence end up giving false information which in most cases will render the study results unreliable.

Telephone surveys with guests

In the hospitality industry, some organizations telephone customers to obtain feedback about a recent vacation, hotel room or food and beverage experience ([Amorim, Rosa & Santos, 2014](#)). Although telephone interviews eliminate the inconvenience of gathering information while guests are still at the hotel, they present a myriad of other challenges thus making the data collected unreliable. This technique also relies on retrospective information which can be blurred by more recent experiences. In addition, guests regard telephone surveys as intrusions on their time and violations of their privacy.

Use of mystery shoppers

Mystery shoppers provide management with an objective snapshot of the service experience within the hospitality restaurant sections of the hotel set-up ([Chen, Raab & Tanfood, 2014](#)). While posing as guests, these trained observers methodically sample both the service product and its delivery and compile a detailed report of their service encounters, which generally include numerical ratings of their observations so that the quality of the service experience can be compared over time. However, the use of mystery shoppers too may yield construed results thus compromise the study reliability. Further, as a result of the variable nature of the food and beverage service ([Lillicrap & Cousins, 2014](#)), there are no standardized recorded observations from different mystery shoppers.

Theoretical review

The desire for quality service and the response of restaurant customers stimulates waiters to act appropriately towards achieving a suitable meal experience ([Namasivayam & Hinkin, 2003](#)). Researchers have incredulously assumed the importance of restaurant clients in their role to ensure restaurant food service quality and the consistency thereof. Though, the partial peace-meal focus has been directed on individual facets that comprise the building blocks of this topic. In order to offer an insight into the comprehension of the customer employee encounter in the restaurant service quality control, the following models and theory were applied by this study review, and in combination yielded the proposed study model.

REMM and PAM

The Resourceful Evaluation Maximizers Model (REMM), as well as the Pain Avoidance Model (PAM), may be applied in explaining the customer quality control function in hospitality's restaurant business. According to REMM, the solutions suggested by the food and beverage patrons (psychological and psychiatric professions) are best interpreted as helping food and beverage service staff learn to correct their "mistakes" in order to behave in more REMM like ways ([Jensen & Meckling, 1976](#)). The PAM compliments REMM by capturing the non-rational component of human behavior that beset all humans including food and beverage service staff. Recognizing these self-control problems sets the stage to an introduction and further explanation of the agency theory, since they are a second major source of agency costs in addition to the costs generated by conflicts of interest between people.

The Agency theory

The agency theory, which was proposed by [Jensen & Meckling, \(1976\)](#) postulates that "because people are, in the end self-interested, they will have a conflict of interest over at least some issues any time they attempt to engage in cooperative endeavors". This cooperation includes not only business transactions through contracts but also interactions in families and other social organizations ([Jensen & Meckling, 1976](#)), including food and beverage service quality control relationship between restaurant food service providers and restaurant clients. The conflict of interest causes problems and losses to the parties involved ([Jensen & Meckling, 1976](#)); hence they develop a strong motivation to minimize the "agency costs" through monitoring and rewarding quality service, ([Ali, Ryan & Hussein, 2016](#); [Grandbois, 2016](#)). In summary therefore, customer service quality control takes the form of tipping, on-the-spot customer complaints feedbacks as well as customer satisfaction surveys feedbacks.

METHODOLOGY

This was a review study that employed a meta-analysis on the customer quality control aspect of the hospitality's food and beverage service sections. Several models were adopted to address each of the subsections building up the entire variables that contribute to the customer-server relationship that imparts a managerial responsibility on the quality of restaurant food

service. For proper conceptualization of the topic under review, the study proposed and utilized a study model in figure 1 below.

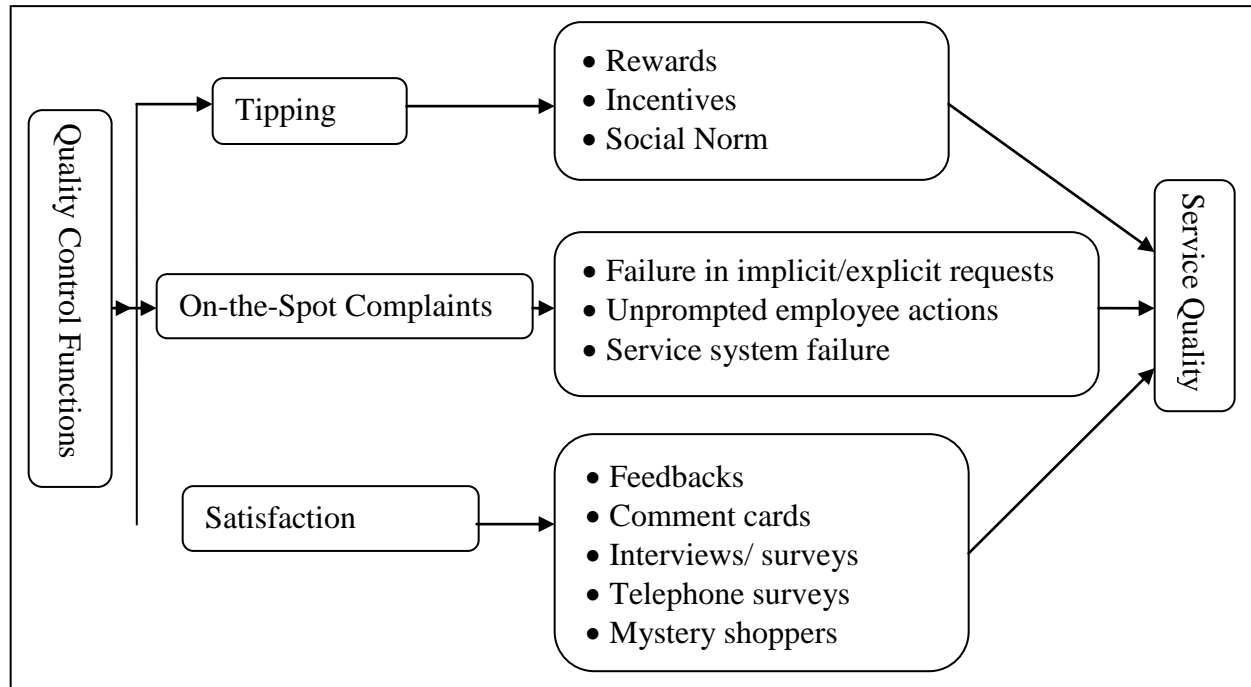


Figure 1: Proposed study model (Adopted from [Vasile, 2009](#); [Bitner, Booms & Stanfield, 1990](#))

FINDINGS

According to studies carried out by [Were, Miricho & Maranga \(2019\)](#) on tipping-food service quality relationship, the results obtained on the relationship between rewards upon perception of service and foodservice quality indicate a moderate, significant positive relationship between rewards upon perception of service and foodservice quality (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), while the magnitude of this relationship was found to be 29.9% thus a clear indication that foodservice quality is dependent on the rewards upon perception of service. Further, a correlation analysis on the assessment of the influence of incentives for improved future service on foodservice quality yielded a moderate but positive association (a Pearson Correlation Coefficient = rho = 0.453), a confirmation of moderate statistical significant association between incentives for improved future service and food service quality. Lastly, an investigation on the relationship between the social norms of tipping and food service quality shows a statistically significant relationship between the two study variables (F = 14.27, Sig. = P = 0.000 < 0.05). Thus in general, there is a statistically significant relationship between tipping as a methodology of customer quality control and restaurant food service quality.

On the other hand, a study by [Conie, Sparks & Kandapully \(2013\)](#) recorded a statistical significant relationship between customer satisfaction survey feedbacks and restaurant food service quality while studies by [Baharun & Naderian \(2015\)](#) as well as [Ford & Heaton \(2013\)](#) gave a moderate correlation between on-the-spot customer complaints and food service quality. This leads to conclusions that there is a statistically significant relationship between customer survey feedbacks and restaurant customer service quality control, and there is a significant moderate correlation between-the-spot customer complaints and restaurant customer service quality control. However, studies on these two independent variables have been given less attention and therefore the need for deeper further studies to yield more robust and reliable results for application in policy and practice.

CONCLUSION

Studies on the role of the customer on restaurant food service quality control show a relationship between tipping and restaurant customer food service quality. Further, the study confirms a correlation between on-the-spot customer complaints and restaurant customer food service quality control. Finally, the study results confirm a significant relationship between customer satisfaction surveys and restaurant customer food service quality control. Thus, restaurant food service quality is dependent on the three service quality control mechanisms; tipping, on-the-spot customer complaints and compliments as well as customer satisfaction surveys. However, studies on the last two methodologies are scanty.

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