

The improvement in service quality of small-scale food service businesses in Surabaya

by Monika Kristanti

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MONIKA KRISTANTI
Petra Christian University

The improvement in service quality of small-scale food service businesses in Surabaya

ABSTRACT

Two types of small-scale food service business existing in Surabaya are hawker centres and depots. Generally, depots and hawker centres are managed unprofessionally as the owner does not pay much attention to the service quality. Conversely, nowadays customers pay more attention to the service quality. Based on a survey, it was identified that hawker centres and depots are lacking in three aspects: (1) hygiene and sanitation, and (2) poor knowledge among staff in terms of both service quality and (3) grooming. Training was provided to the staff on food and personal hygiene; knowledge of food safe packaging; and how to provide excellent services. On the basis of feedback from the owner and the customers, it was found that these activities had positive impacts on depots, hawker centres and the customers. Hawker centres and depots could improve their staffs' service quality so that in the end, customers feel satisfied visiting them. Since students performed these activities, they have also had a positive impact on them. By interacting with the owner and the staff at the hawker centres and depots, the students learned to be humble and open-minded, to interact with people from different backgrounds of education and economy, to have self-motivation and to not underestimate other people. Most importantly, the students realized that they should be thankful for what they have.

KEYWORDS

service quality
small-scale food
service business
depot
hawker centre
customer satisfaction
tangible and intangible
aspects

INTRODUCTION

As stated by Yapto W² Sinatra, the chairman of Food and Beverage Businessman Affiliation in East Java, the number of food and beverage businesses in East Java has grown by 20–30 per cent, and small-scale food and beverage businesses have been growing rapidly (Widarti 2019). According to the database of the Indonesian Cafe and Restaurant Business Association (Apkrindo) in East Java, the growth of restaurants in Surabaya is almost 20 per cent per year (JPNN 2018), which is including the growth of hawker centres and depots. A hawker centre is an open-air complex housing many stalls that sell a variety of inexpensive food. A depot is a small and simple place to eat, with simple furniture, service and menu.

However, most depots and hawker centres are managed unprofessionally by their owners. The owner does not pay attention to the customers' experiences while the customers are eating in the depots or hawker centres. The owner does not pay attention to the service quality and customer satisfaction. Conversely, nowadays customers pay more attention towards the service quality, such as good ambience and service that make customers feel comfortable. As stated by Andaleeb and Conway (2006) customer satisfaction is significantly influenced by the responsiveness of the staff, the price and food quality. Further, Markovic et al. (2010) show that service quality is very important in creating customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention. The definition of repeat purchase is the intention to return to a particular food business due to a satisfied feeling. Wu and Liang (2009) state that service staff positively affect customer satisfaction. Others, Liu and Jang (2009), Zopiatris and Pribic (2007) find that food quality, reliability, cleanliness of the environment, design interior and atmosphere and staff's grooming and attitude significantly influence customer satisfaction.



Figure 1: The hawker centre, located in Menanggal, Surabaya. Photograph by authors, 2017. There are many stalls in the hawker centre that sell food and drink; each stall is generally owned by different person.



Figure 2: Depot 3M Makassar, located in Raya Mulyosari, Surabaya. Photograph by authors, 2017.

Based on a survey done by the students, it was identified that hawker centres and depots are lacking in three aspects: first, hygiene and sanitation aspects, such as the cleanliness of the depot and/or the hawker centre; second, poor knowledge of staff of service quality, such as the staff's unfriendly behaviour towards the guests; and staff grooming. Based on these problems, the students joining the Introduction to Food and Beverage Service (FBS) class were assigned to do service-learning at hawker centres and depots. Service-learning itself offers one of the most unique tools to promote student engagement, motivation and academic achievement. As a powerful form of experiential learning, service-learning integrates community engagement with academic coursework through the essential requirement of critical reflection (Cazzell et al. 2014). The objectives of the service-learning can be divided into four categories:

1. For the depot and hawker centre:

- build awareness that service quality is important so that depots and hawker centres can improve the service quality;
- improve the awareness that sanitation hygiene is important, such as the cleanliness of depots and hawker centres, the cleanliness of the food served and the cleanliness of the staff themselves.

2. For the student:

- learn to serve and share, to the owner and the staff of hawker centres and depots so that they can improve their service quality;
- learn to cooperate with classmates and the owner and staff of the depot and hawker centre.

3. For the customer:

- receive a warm service and safe-to-consume food while eating in depots and hawker centres;
- feel comfortable and satisfied.

4. For the lecturer:

- obtain some information on how to manage depots and hawkers more appropriately through sharing sessions with the students;
- enrich teaching materials by reading students' reports and reflections, which the lecturer can then use as an example in teaching;
- gain ideas for research on the basis of the knowledge of the problems that are faced by hawker centres and depots, for example, customer satisfaction in depots.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality

Garvin states that there are five aspects of quality: a transcendental approach, a product-based approach, a user-based approach, a manufacturing-based approach and a value-based approach (Tjiptono 2012).

1. *Transcendental approach*: In this perspective, quality is seen as an innate excellence something that can be comprehended intuitively and yet is almost impossible to communicate. This kind of perspective affirms that people can only understand quality through repeated exposure.
2. *Product-based approach*: This perspective defines quality as a characteristic, a component or an attribute of a product that can be measured. The number of product attributes determines the quality of a product.
3. *User-based approach*: This perspective is based on the idea that quality is subjectively based on the customer and demand-oriented; thus, the most satisfying product is the one that meets the assessor's preferences (highly qualified product).
4. *Manufacturing-based approach*: This approach is supply-based and defines quality as conformance to requirements. The customers will not set the quality but the standards of the company set the quality.
5. *Value-based approach*: This perspective considers quality based on value and price. By prior consideration towards the trade-off between value and price, quality is therefore defined as affordable excellence: having the best performance or worth the money paid.

Lewis and Booms define service quality as a measurement of how excellent the levels of service provided to meet customer expectations are. According to this definition, service quality can be defined through the fulfilment of the needs and desires of consumers and the precision of delivery to offset the consumer expectations. Thereby, there are two major factors that affect service quality: expected service and perceived service. If the perceived service is in accordance with the expected service, the service quality will be perceived as positive or good. If the perceived service exceeds the expected service, the service quality will be perceived as the ideal quality. Conversely, when the perceived service is worse than the expected service, the quality of service will

be perceived as negative or bad. Therefore, the performance of service quality depends on the ability of the service provider to fulfil the expectations of the customers consistently (Tjiptono 2012).

Service quality is measured by five dimensions as follows (Tjiptono 2012):

1. *Tangible*: Related to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material.
2. *Reliability*: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
3. *Responsiveness*: The willingness and ability to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. *Assurance*: Related to staff's competency, courtesy and credibility, and their ability to build customers' trust and confidence.
5. *Empathy*: How the staff understands the customer, and pays personal attention to the customer.

Customer satisfaction

Kotler and Keller (2006) define satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that results from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome against his/her expectations. On the other hand, Lamb et al. (2012) stated that customer satisfaction is the feeling that a product has met or exceeded the customer's expectation. Hansemark and Albinsson (2004) define satisfaction as the customer's attitude to the service provider or emotional reaction to the difference between expectation and perceived service.

Bitner and Hubbert state that there are two ways to define customer satisfaction: first, *service-encounter satisfaction*, which happens when the customer feels satisfied with the service in a particular area, and second, overall satisfaction, the evaluation of some or the overall service area. These days, overall satisfaction is used since satisfaction becomes a determinant of customer loyalty (Quddus and Haryasah 2014).

According to Dutka (1993), there are three main attributes to measure customer satisfaction:

1. *Attribute related to product*: Kotler (2005) stated that the product is everything, both tangible and intangible, including colour, packaging, company reputation and the service that can be offered to the market to be noticed, owned, used or consumed to satisfy customers' needs and wants.
2. *Attribute related to service*: Dutka (1993) explains that there are four attributes related to service:
 - a) Guarantee or warranty that is given by a company for a product. If the product is defective, it can be returned to the company for repair.
 - b) Delivery, related to the speed and accuracy of the product and service delivery to the customer.
 - c) Complaint handling, how the company handles customers' complaint related to a company's product or service.
 - d) Resolution of a problem, the company's ability to solve customers' problems.

3. *Attribute related to purchase:* Purchasing attribute is a consumer-satisfying attribute related to service delivery in the pre-purchase phase and the purchase phase. There are five attributes related to purchase:

- a) Courtesy, related to the politeness, attention and cordiality of staff with customers.
- b) Communication, the process of sending information to the customer.
- c) Ease or convenience, the convenience in obtaining information on the company's product or service.
- d) Company reputation, which affects the customers' purchase decision.
- e) Company competence, the company's ability to fulfil customers' needs and wants.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME

Preparation

In preparing the implementation of the service-learning programme at hawker centres and depots, students had to make some preparations as follows:

- the students learned to create an interesting menu card, providing an excellence service, creating good meal experiences and so on;
- the students and the lecturer explored hawker centres and depots;
- the students surveyed hawker centres and depots to understand the needs of the owners;
- the students, in collaboration with the lecturer, tried to find a solution for training and discussed it with the owner of the depot or the management of the hawker centre. The local government manages hawker centres.

Implementation

There were three hawker centres and six depots in Surabaya for the service-learning programme.

No.	Name	Address	Staff members
1	Hawker centre Gayungan	Raya Gayungan	15
2	Hawker centre Karah	Gunungsari	18
3	Hawker centre Menanggal	Menanggal	20
4	Depot Nyabe	Siwalankerto VIII / F-7	3
5	Depot Mr. Lucas	Pasar Atom Mall 2nd floor	5
6	Depot Mbak Rin	Siwalankerto VIII / B-2	3
7	Depot Glory	Siwalankerto 235	3
8	Depot Bebek & Ayam Remuk	Kutisari	4
9	Depot 3M Makassar	Raya Mulyosari 120	4

Table 1: List of hawker centres and depots.

The implementation at each hawker centre and depot was different depending on the needs of each hawker centre and depot. In general, it improved both the tangible and the intangible aspects. The tangible aspects include the arrangement of display dishes, instruments' placement in the hawker centre and the depot, and/or the tidiness of the guests' table. The intangible aspects include training related to customer service excellence, sanitation and hygiene, sales technique and so on. Implementation of the programme at the hawker centre and the depot was conducted by lectures and role-play. Each hawker centre was handled by two groups of students. There were some programmes that the students conducted at the hawker centre.

Coaching related to sanitation and hygiene

The staff was coached about the importance of food hygiene, personal hygiene and also the cleanliness of the environment, especially the trash bins and the dining tables. All aspects mentioned are important for hawker centres, since these could influence customers to eat at the hawker centre.

In terms of food hygiene, the topics were handling of the food: from the storage of ingredients, preparation, cooking and serving to the customers. The staff would keep food ingredients in a box under the table, just placing them on the floor. In this case, the staff learned that the ingredients had to be stored correctly (*mise en place*); for example, the dry ingredients had to be placed on a rack or a table and the fresh ingredients had to be placed in the refrigerator. While preparing the food, the staff handled the food without the use of any equipment or hand gloves. The students coached the staff to use spoons to scoop the food ingredients. While serving food to the customers, sometimes the staff members often put their fingers on the plates and often touch the food, which would eventually contaminate it. Therefore, the students coached the staff on technical skills.

In terms of personal hygiene, the staff learned that they should bathe regularly, and wash their hands before they handle food and after they use the toilet. The staff were also instructed to pay more attention to their grooming (especially their hairstyle and the clothes they wear). The uniform should be cleaned and ironed. In addition to food hygiene and personal hygiene, the staff learned about the importance of environmental cleanliness in both the food processing area and the dining area. The floor should be cleaned and the tables should be well polished.

Coaching related to service quality or customer service excellence

Service quality is an important aspect to make the customers feel comfortable and satisfied while eating at a hawker centre. The staff learned how to greet the customers, how to take an order and repeat the order, and how to serve the food. The staffs not only learned that they should have good menu knowledge in order to answer the customers' question about the food, but they also learned that they should adapt the food according to the customers' (reasonable) requests. In addition, the staff was coached to be responsive to the customers' needs and wants. In addition, the staff also learned how to be hospitable and sincere when providing the service.

Providing knowledge of food-safe packaging

There is lots of plastic packaging, but not all packaging is safe for the food. The students passed important knowledge to the owners and staff on the safe packaging for food. The safest plastic packaging for food is that made from polypropylene (PP).



Figure 3: Food-grade plastic symbol.

The arrangement of the physical environment

Tangible aspects represent one of the important factors in hawker centres to ensure customer satisfaction. At hawker centres, the students helped to arrange the physical environment by placing some ashtrays on the tables, assigning a table number on each table to make it easier for the staff to serve the food, placing trash cans to segregate the waste (organic and non-organic waste) and also providing cloth for cleaning the guests' table and polish the plate and glassware at each food stall.

Since a depot is smaller than a hawker centre, each depot was handled by one group of students. The programme of service-learning at a depot included the following:

1. *Coaching on sanitation and hygiene:* The staff learned how to store food ingredients and equipment in the right place. The aim was to keep the food ingredients free from bacteria and equipment free from dust and dirt when it is used to serve food to the customers. In addition, the students coached the staff to keep changing the water for mopping and to change the cooking oil regularly.
2. *Knowledge sharing of sales techniques:* Sales techniques are needed in depots to optimize profits; therefore, the students trained the staff how to offer the food and drink so that the customers buy more food and drink than intended. The students also taught the staff how to give recommendations to the customers. To recommend or upsell food or drinks, the staff had to have good knowledge of the menu.



Figure 4: The coaching process at a hawker centre.

3. *Develop simple service procedures:* The students helped the owner with simple service procedures starting from greeting the customers when the customers come to the depot, offering the menu, taking the order and repeating the order to avoid mistakes, serving the drinks and food, clearing up the table, providing the bill and saying thank you when the guests leave the depot.



Figure 5: The coaching process for carrying a tray.

4. *Coaching on technical skills:* The students coached the staff on how to carry trays full of food. The staff is coached on how to carry plates and glasses so as to avoid touching the rim of the glass, from which patrons drink, or the plate from which they eat.
5. *Coaching related to service quality:* The coaching for excellence in service quality covered two aspects: the service procedure and the staff's attitudes. First, the service training covered how the staff should greet the customers by opening the door when the customers enter the depot and how to take the order. Second, the staff's attitudes included hospitality, politeness, sincerity and good communication between the staff and the customers and also among the staff themselves.
6. *Providing knowledge of personal grooming:* Personal grooming, which is also called personal hygiene, is an important aspect in service industries. Personal hygiene refers to the cleanliness of the clothes worn at work, hairstyle and hair cleanliness (e.g., dandruff free) and bodily cleanliness (e.g., recently bathed and odour-free).
7. *The arrangement of the physical environment:* It refers to the way the staff should place the dishes on a buffet table to ensure the dining ware is always kept to a high standard of hygiene and makes the meals served on them appear appetizing. In addition, the students helped the owner to rearrange the depot to make the depot look tidy and inviting.



Figure 6: The coaching process of service quality.



Figure 7: Providing knowledge of personal grooming.

IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Based on the service-learning course, 'Introduction to food and beverage service' (FBS), at the centres, there were some positive effects for the depots and hawker centres, and for the students themselves. For depots and hawker centres:

1. The owners and staff gained new insight into and broader knowledge of service quality:
 - a) the importance of being hospitable and polite;
 - b) the importance of menu knowledge for recommendations of food and drink to maximize profit;
 - c) the right procedures for serving the customers;
 - d) with knowledge of service quality, the staff have more confidence in providing excellent service quality for the customers.
2. The owners and staff gained more awareness of sanitation and hygiene:
 - a) food should be stored in food-safe packaging;
 - b) food ingredients should be stored in a place that is suitable, for example, in the refrigerator or on a rack or a table;
 - c) the importance of washing the hands before handling food and after using the toilet;
 - d) food on display should be free from bacteria;
 - e) the hawker centre and depot should be kept clean and tidy.
3. The customers are satisfied with the service of the depot and hawker centre since the service quality is improving. Eventually, customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty and profit.

For the students, the learning points for the students were as follows:

1. By gaining knowledge on how to manage a depot and/or a hawker centre, the students became aware of how difficult it is to manage even a small business.
2. The students more easily understand the topic taught at the introduction to food and beverage service (FBS) course since they apply the theory into practical by coaching the staffs of depot and hawker centre.
3. Upon realizing that it is not easy to earn money, the students will have to learn not to waste money.
4. The students learned to be more open-minded and humble and not to underestimate people with lower income.
5. The students learned to interact and communicate with other people from different backgrounds, such as family background, economy background, social class background, education background and so on.
6. The students learned to be patient and gain self-control, especially when facing difficult situations
7. The students developed critical thinking and creativity towards any programme planning.
8. The students learned to cooperate with classmates having different characteristics, or realizing that every person is blessed with their own innate characteristic(s).

9. The students learned good time management and developing a willingness to sacrifice and strive to make a programme successful.
10. The students learned to always be thankful for what they have.

Based on the implementation of service-learning, there was also an impact the lecturer:

1. Learned from the students' experience how to manage depots and hawker centres, became aware how difficult it is to manage an enterprise, even just a mere small business.
2. The result of service-learning can be used as teaching material. On reading the students' report and reflections, the lecturer can use depots and hawker centres as examples in teaching.
3. Gained ideas for research, such as the perception of customers towards service quality in depots and hawker centres.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

There are two conclusions that can be derived from this experiment:

1. A service-learning programme is a good vehicle for students to serve and to share with others based on the knowledge they have.
2. A service-learning programme exerts positive impacts on depots, hawker centres, the lecturer and the students themselves. The service quality of depot and hawker centres is improving, thus maximizing their profits. On the other hand, the students achieve improvements in their soft skills and the lecturer gains ideas for research and teaching material.

Recommendation

There are three recommendations for better implementation of service-learning programmes in the future:

1. An evaluation or inspection of depots and hawker centres should be performed several months after the implementation of the service-learning programme to observe whether the service quality or the performance of the depot and hawker centre has improved or not.
2. A pre-implementation survey and a post-implementation survey should be conducted on the customers by questionnaire to determine if there is an improvement in service quality at the depot and hawker centre.
3. The choice of the depot or hawker centre for the service-learning programme should be appropriate to provide positive effects to those working within and being served at the venues.

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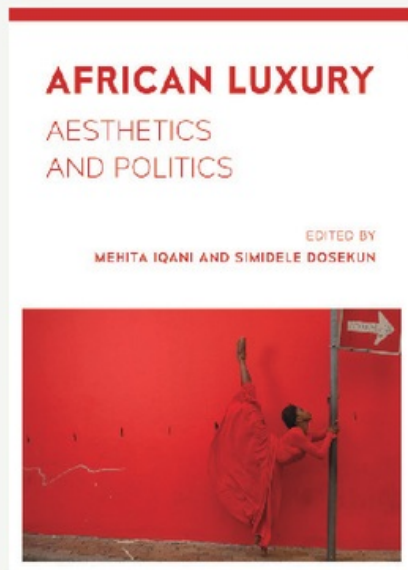
Monika Kristanti is a lecturer in the hotel management programme, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia. She received her master of art (MA) in international hospitality management from London Metropolitan University, London. She focuses her teaching on food and beverage service. Her research focuses on hospitality industry topics, especially related to food and beverage service and green hotels or restaurants.

Contact: Hotel Management Programme, Petra Christian University, Siwalankerto 121–131, Surabaya 60236, Indonesia.

E-mail: mkrist@petra.ac.id

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4941-0791>

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African Luxury Aesthetics and Politics

Edited by Mehita Iqani and Simidele Dosekun

Moving far beyond predominant views of Africa as a place to be 'saved', and even the more recent celebratory formulations of it as 'rising', *African Luxury* highlights and interrogates the visual and material cultures of lavish and luxurious consumption already present on the continent. Methodologically, conceptually and analytically, the collection dismantles taken-for-granted ideas that the West is the source and focus of high-end and hyper-desirable material cultures. The book's varied chapters explore what the culture of consumption means to the continent in historical and contemporary contexts, studying diverse luxury phenomena including fashion advertising, retail, gendered consumption, reality television and gardening.

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