

Does “SERVEQUAL” Model Impact on Food and Beverage Service Quality in Customer Retention during COVID 19 New Normal? ; A Study Reference to Family Restaurants in Western Province, Sri Lanka

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The service quality is considered to be a critical factor in contemporary and changing Hospitality and Tourism industry. COVID 19 New Normal has created an exceptional paradigm in the recent tourism, creating a detrimental effect on the restaurant industry. Immediate recovery of the tourism during “dramatical” New Normal needs to possess the service quality excellence at its highest to regain the customer retention in the food and beverage sector. In consonance with that, this study aims to identify whether “SERVEQUAL” model impact on food and beverage service quality in customer retention during new normal COVID 19 in family restaurants in Western Province, Sri Lanka. A questionnaire based telephone Interview series was conducted by selecting 50 family restaurants in the Western Province as the sample through judgemental sampling technique. After the comprehensive literature review, the study decided to adopt the deductive approach over quantitative design. Initially, a multiple regression analysis was performed to diagnose the impact of SERVEQUAL dimensions: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness on the customer retention. The results disclosed that, there is a strong direct and significant impact of SERVEQUAL on Customer retention for family restaurants, especially during New Normal. Further, empathy and assurance of service quality of food and beverage were highlighted as the most apprehensive and decisive influences on customers’ retention during New Normal. Advancement in the smart electronic service practices and changes in the behavior, attitudes and hygienic appearance of service staff need to be aggrandized in order to retain customers with family restaurants during new normal. Moreover, studies on the moderating effect of customer satisfaction for SERVEQUAL model in retaining customers in food and beverage industry can be carried out.

Keywords: SERVEQUAL Model; Service Quality; New Normal; Customer Retention; Food and Beverage