

CONSUMER SATISFACTION STUDY OF PUBLIC FOOD SERVICES

CONSTANTINESCU SIMONA CRISTINA*¹, ORBOI MANUELA-DORA¹, DUMITRESCU
CARMEN SIMONA¹, IVANIC ALEXANDRU²

¹*University of Life Sciences „King Mihai I” from Timisoara,
Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania*

²*University of Life Sciences „King Mihai I” from Timisoara,
Faculty of Food Engineering, Romania*

*Corresponding author's e-mail: simona_constantinescu@usvt.ro

Abstract: *Quality is a strategic tool of the global management of organizations because it determines, to the highest degree, the competitiveness of products, services, firms, companies on a domestic and international level. The large volume of new knowledge about the quality of products and services, the importance and implications of quality on economic and social indicators, are just some of the arguments in favor of the need for each organization to make special efforts for professionalism in the approach to quality. In terms of food security, it is the guarantee of each individual, permanently, in any place, or time/moment of access to a sufficient and healthy diet, which allows him a satisfactory diet, for a healthy and active life.*

Key words: *consumers, quality, public food services, particularities*

INTRODUCTION

“The purpose of studying consumer preferences and behavior is to adjust the product to the audience, rather than, as in advertising, to urge the audience to the product.” Irwin Bross

Treated as a distinct function of the company, quality presents particularities, because part of its requirements will inevitably be fulfilled by the other functions. In relation to this particularity, we can give as examples the marketing activities, through which the quality level requested by the customer is identified and the supply activities, which must ensure quality raw materials, but which belong to the commercial function, as well as the production activities through which ensures the products the specified quality requirements but belonging to the production function. [4,12,13,17]

In order for a business to be run and run successfully, it needs to be coordinated and controlled in a systematic and transparent way. Success can result from implementing and maintaining a management system that is designed for continuous improvement of performance taking into account the needs of all parties and including, among others, quality management. [2,7,11,19]

Based on the quality management system, each enterprise proposes a series of strategic objectives: economic, social, technological, commercial, which are achieved through optional objectives, such as: obtaining quality products and services corresponding to the requirements, in the requested quantity, at the agreed time and to be available on the desired market, all this under the conditions of minimal costs. [1,3,5,8,9,15]

Quality strategy in the new millennium depends on:

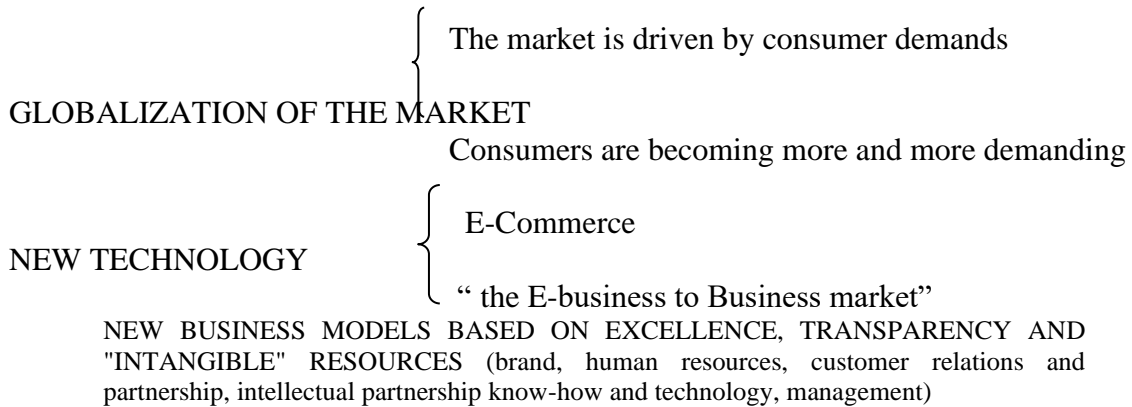


Figure 1. Quality strategy

Source: own processing after Paraschivescu

The three major directions of international development have created six new dimensions, i.e. areas of change important for the future of quality: [11,13,18] Achieving high value for the customer, associated with quality, materialized in products and services, Successful use of technology (information technology, shortening the time to launch new products, ensuring performance, etc.), Effectiveness of human resources, Ability to work productively with suppliers and other important business partners, Integration of economic aspects of quality in financial-accounting systems, Effect of quality on leadership and management the company itself. Quality culture has three precise targets: man, market economy and management.

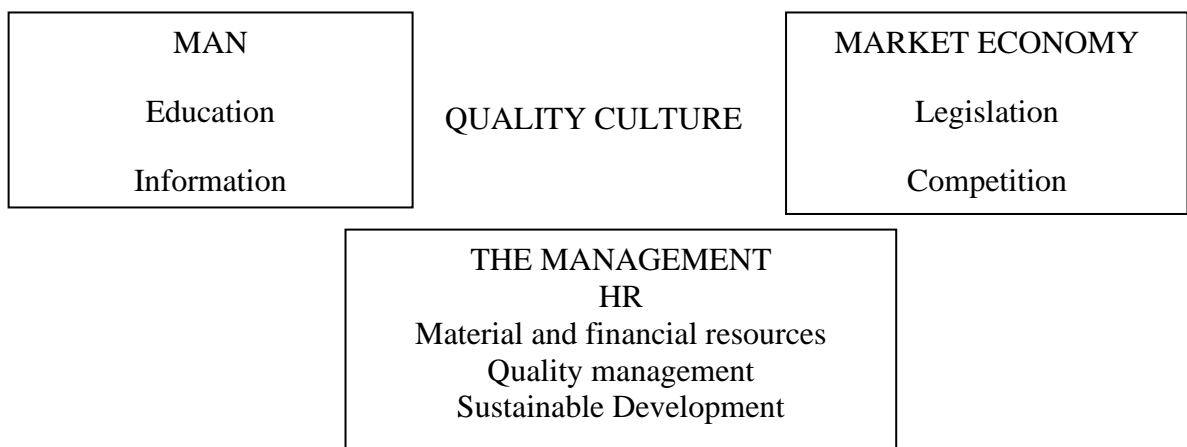


Figure 2. Quality culture

Source: own processing after Paraschivescu

Both at the level of each individual and at the level of collectivism, the degree of concern for the big problems of food, nutrition and eating behavior is very high, in this way looking for correct solutions to the questions: what, how, when, and where we eat for satisfying cultural physiological needs, it being known that food and lifestyle are essential factors in preventing disease, maintaining health, increasing quality of life and slowing down aging. [2,3,10.12,20]

Public catering represents the economic activity, which results from the production of a diversified range of culinary preparations, confectionery-pastry products, which can be offered to consumers together with drinks and other food goods, both for consumption on the spot, in the public catering establishment, and at home, through the catering service.

In the organization of the public catering activity, the basic criterion remains efficiency. For this purpose, it is necessary to structure the sector, in general, and each economic agent, in particular.

The public catering sector is an almost par excellence private, well-organized sector, showing a marked diversification of the profiling of the units, depending on the category, the prices charged, the location of the units and their size. Simultaneously carrying out production, sales and service provision activities, located in a close interdependence, the economic agents operating in the public food sector have to solve particularly complex problems, related to the organization and management of the processes carried out at the level of the basic units, they must ensure the satisfaction of the increasingly demanding demands of consumers.

Food security is the guarantee of each individual, permanently, in any place, or at any time, access to sufficient and healthy food that allows him a satisfactory diet for a healthy and active life. [6,14,17]

The market economy is an economy of the quality of products and services, where economic agents in the free and functioning market economy must understand that it is not enough to "produce for the sake of producing" or "to sell for the sake of selling". First of all, the actions undertaken must respond to the needs of the market: quantity, variety, quality, food safety, price, etc. [16,18]

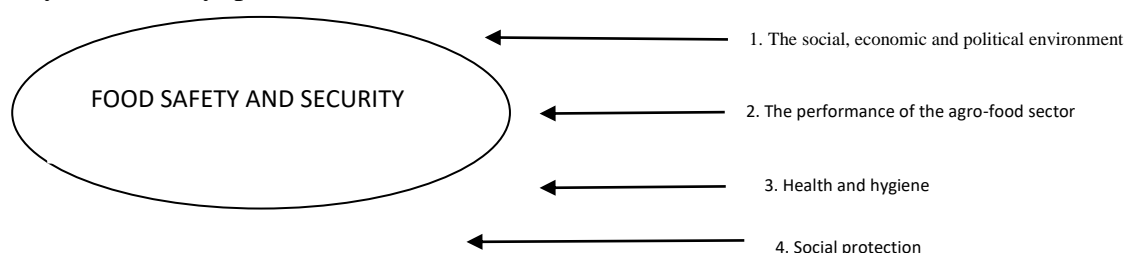


Figure 3. Influencing factors of food safety and security

Source: own processing after Paraschivescu

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is to carry out an analysis as complete as possible on the quality of services offered by the McDonald's restaurant to its customers. In this way we want to detect any problems that may arise in the relationship with the service consumer.

In order to achieve this objective, we carried out a survey based on a questionnaire with a set of questions intended for loyal and potential customers, questions intended to help us in determining possible errors encountered during the performance of the service and of real use in removing the causes in the relationship with customers and consumers in the restaurant.

The questionnaire was applied during the months of November 2023 - April 2024, in one of the restaurants in the Municipality of Timișoara, to 1500 respondents.

In the following figures, the aspects of the appreciation of the services offered by the McDonald's restaurant will be shown.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Method of receiving the order. Most customers chose to pick up their order in person, without waiting to be served at the table. Expressed as a percentage, we reproduce this in the figure below:

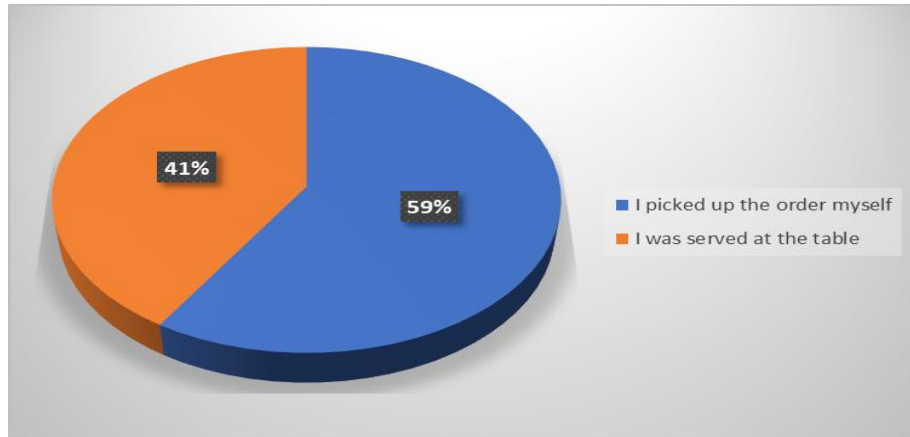


Figure 4. The manner in which the order was received, expressed in percentage

Source: results obtained after processing survey data

Based on this last experience in our restaurant which is the way to evaluate the level of satisfaction as a whole.

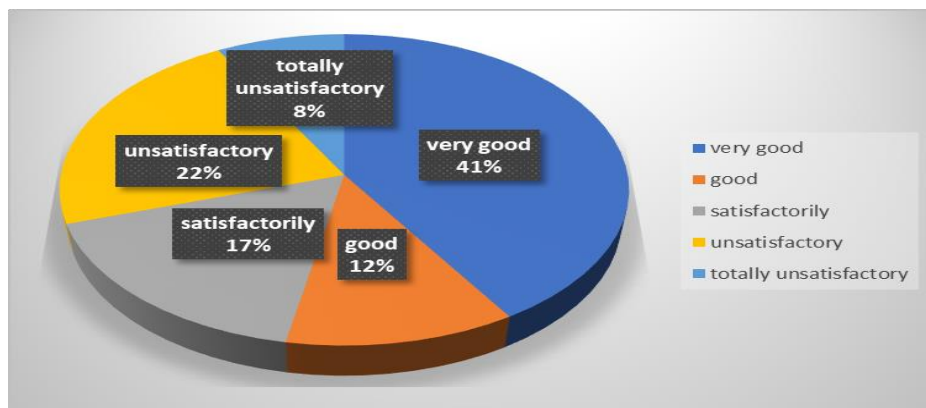


Figure 5. Overall satisfaction level

Source: results obtained after processing survey data

The majority of customers declare themselves very satisfied with the service offered as a whole, which is highlighted in the graph in figure 5, where we can see that 41% appreciate the level of satisfaction very well, 12% very well and only a relatively small percentage considers this service totally unsatisfactory.

The interviewed customers appreciated the cleanliness inside the restaurant, on the other hand, they stated that they consider that the cleanliness on the terrace sometimes leaves something to be desired.

Regarding the friendliness of the staff, we can state from the results obtained that this is relatively satisfactory, noting a very good opinion for a percentage of 39% of the respondents, a good one for 11% and totally unsatisfactory for 10%.

Most of the customers stated that they received the correct order and the waiting time in receiving the order was quite good.

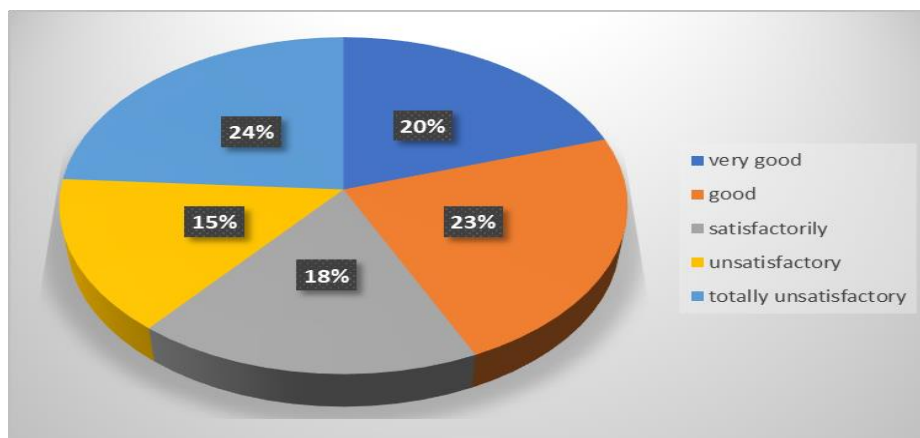


Figure 6. The quality of the products ordered

Source: results obtained after processing survey data

We notice, according to the graph in the figure above, that not many respondents are very satisfied with the quality of the products offered.

Most of those who responded to our survey say that they had no problems during their visit to the restaurant, a relatively small percentage, 12%, stating that they encountered certain problems.

When asked if they would recommend the restaurant to the circle of acquaintances and friends who were addressed to the customers, on a scale from one to ten where ten represents "I would definitely recommend", according to the graph below we can see the following:

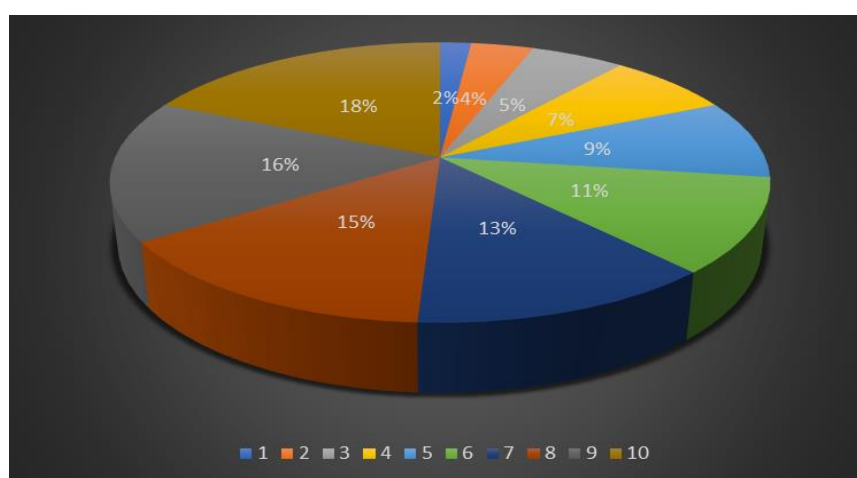


Figure 7. Restaurant recommendation

Source: results obtained after processing survey data

The variety of products is not very satisfactory, it is possible to increase the range of products and most of those interviewed consider the quality/price ratio of the products offered by the restaurant to be satisfactory.

The advice of the staff is not particularly important, customers do not particularly take it into account.

The availability of services (table service, takeaway services, contactless delivery) is satisfactory from the point of view of the people who responded to our survey.

Most of those who frequent McDonald's belong to the category of young people, followed by those of middle age, mostly parents of children under 18 or parents who buy the restaurant's products for children.

Regarding the gender of the people who answered the questions we asked in the survey, it is relatively balanced, the percentage of men being slightly higher than that of women.

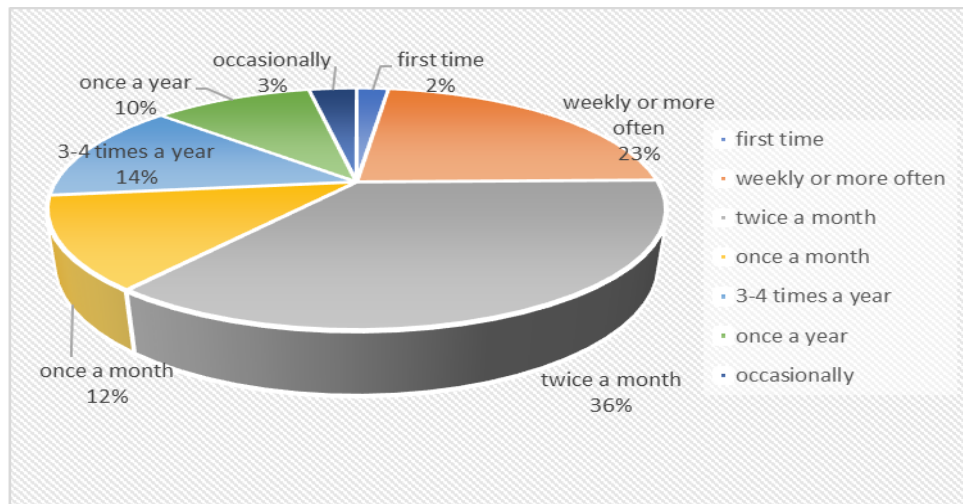


Figure 8. The frequency with which you go to the restaurant

Source: results obtained after processing survey data

For an effective organization, the implementation of effective solutions, it is necessary to apply the optimal strategies by the management, to boost all the employed personnel as well as to motivate them, in order to optimally achieve the objectives imposed by the company. It is necessary to constantly evaluate the employees, the complex evaluation of the candidates applying for certain positions in parallel with certain collaborations with all institutions specialized in public food services.

Direct contact with customers is one of the most effective methods, which involves direct contact with the manager or another person in the management to find out some preferences or pleasures of the customers, a very effective way of building their loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

The quality that is implemented in public food service units is necessary to ensure the optimal act of consumption of the quality-price ratio, by offering high quality services or goods. Food safety, the indispensable and essential factor for consumers because it refers to the risks that these consumers may go through.

Consumer protection policy is prominently at the heart of the main challenges of today's society. For the proper functioning of the market, it is necessary to fulfill a whole series of legislative provisions with reference to respecting the rights and interests of consumers. A poor functioning of the units that provide food services is caused by some inabilities of economic agents in terms of compliance with the laws that are intended to protect consumers with regard to fraud that may occur, fraudulent advertising, unfair commercial practices and abusive contractual clauses.

We propose the following recommendations in order to be able to respond to the constantly growing demands of consumers, preserving the reputation of a high-quality food establishment:

- Amicable resolution of problems that may arise between consumers and employees;
- Effective strategies in terms of combating problems;
- A qualified staff;

- Hiring qualified staff at all levels;
- Periodic staff evaluation.
- Explanatory notes of the menus, the content of the dishes, their preparation method;
- Sanctioning employees who do not comply or do not respond to the imposed requirements;
- Periodic staff training;
- Informing customers about the prices of the products, their contents and weights;
- Hiring unskilled workers, when this becomes indispensable, for a good optimization of the service processes;
- High-performance, modern equipment in the space intended for the preparation of dishes, equipping the premises with modern, high-quality equipment and technology.

REFERENCES

- [1]. **BADEA F.**, 2005, Managementul producției, Editura ASE, București
- [2]. **CONSTANTINESCU D.**, 2002, Managementul calității, Editura Printech, București
- [3]. **DIACONESCU I.**, 2005, Bazele Merceologiei, Editura Uranus, București
- [4]. **DIACONESCU I., DORINA A., DIACONESCU M.**, 2007, Merceologie alimentară. Calitate și siguranță, Editura Universitară, București
- [5]. **DIMA I.C., NEDELICU M.V.**, 2006, Managementul producției, Editura Economică București
- [6]. **DIMA D., DIACONESCU I., PAMFILE R.**, 2006, Mărfuri alimentare și securitatea consumatorului, Editura Economică, București
- [7]. **DINU V.**, 2011, Protecția consumatorilor, Editura ASE, București
- [8]. **GHEORGHE M.**, 2011, Biblia alimentară, Editura Litera, București
- [9]. **ION I.**, 2002, Managementul calitatii sistemelor tehnico-economice, Editura ASE, București
- [10]. **MARTIN SIMONA CRISTINA**, 2014, Serviciile-o provocare a economiei de piață, Timișoara, Ed. Eurostampa
- [11]. **MOLDOVEANU G., DOBRIN C.**, 2005, Managementul calității în sectorul public, Editura ASE, București
- [12]. **PARASCHIVESCU A.O.**, 2008, Managementul calității, Editura Tehnopress, Iași
- [13]. **RONDELLI V., COJOCARIU S.**, 2005, Managementul calității serviciilor din turism și industria ospitalității, Editura THR-CG, București
- [14]. **STEPHEN U.**, 1995, Zen Leadership, Team Management, The Human Side of Total Quality, Edition Mohican Pub, Toledo U.S.A
- [15]. **ZAMFIR I.**, 2005, Manual practic pentru protecția consumatorului, Editura Niva World, Galaxy Tranding, p. 8, Ploiești
- [16]. ***ANPC, disponibil on line la www.anpc.gov.ro
- [17]. ***HACCP, ISO 22000, disponibil on line la www.nationalcert.ro
- [18]. ***www.bibliotecadigitala.ase.ro
- [19]. ***ISO:9000/2015, Quality Management, disponibil on line la www.iso.org
- [20]. ***Reguli în alimentația publică, disponibil on line la www.srac.ro