

## CAN I TAKE YOUR ORDER?



Here today, gone tomorrow. This seems to be the common theme in the restaurant industry. Restaurant managers seem distracted by irrelevant details instead of focusing and delivering on the basics. At the end of the day, keeping customers satisfied and creating a memorable experience is the key to ensuring repeat visits.

A recent study on customers' perception on foodservice quality in casual restaurants was conducted by Marisa Greyling, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), in order to examine the relationship between the three dimensions of foodservice quality and customer satisfaction. The study was conducted in Gauteng amongst a sample of 265 restaurant customers.

Foodservice quality is divided into three dimensions including food quality, physical environment quality and employee service quality. These dimensions of foodservice quality contribute directly to the overall satisfaction that a customer experiences when at a restaurant. Customers evaluate food quality based on sub-dimensions which include presentation, healthy options, taste, freshness, temperature and portion size. Employee service quality is evaluated based on the following sub-dimensions: reliable, timely and assured service. Customers evaluate the physical environment quality based on sub-dimensions which consist of facility layout, facility aesthetics, ambiance and lighting.

The results of the study provide evidence that food quality, employee service quality and physical environment quality are all positively related to customer satisfaction. On average, food quality had the greatest impact on customer satisfaction, followed by physical environment quality and employee service quality. The sub-dimensions that have the highest impact on customer satisfaction are tasty food (food quality), knowledgeable staff (employee service quality) and no unpleasant odours (physical environment quality).

The findings of this study provide clear indications of the importance that foodservice quality dimensions have on customer satisfaction. The main reason customers go to a restaurant is to eat the food, and therefore restaurateurs should make sure that food is of high quality and tasty at all times. Staff should be adequately trained to ensure that they are knowledgeable, helpful and friendly. By doing the basics right, restaurants can keep customers satisfied and coming back for more.

*This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2011 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Marisa Greyling, under the supervision of [Theuns Kotzé](#).*