

IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY OF SELECTED FAST-FOOD RESTAURANTS IN LAGOS STATE ON CUSTOMER PATRONAGE

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Abstract

The provision of excellent customer service is a vital aspect in the growth of a fast-food business. The purpose of this study was to look into the impact of the quality of service on consumer patronage of chosen fast-food restaurants in Lagos State. The study used survey research design, with the target audience consisting of customers of fast-food restaurants in Lagos State. 6 fast-food outlets were randomly selected in each of Lagos State's 3 senatorial zones. The analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The population was assumed to be infinite, sampling quotas was employed to select a sample of 240 participants. Individually, reliability ($\beta_2=0.280$, $p=0.000$) and responsiveness ($\beta_3=0.370$, $p=0.000$) were discovered to have a considerable favorable impact on client patronage. Tangibility, on the other hand, has a favorable but small impact on consumer patronage ($\beta_1=0.058$, $p=0.271$). The study suggests that fast-food management consider the tangibility aspect of service quality.

Keywords: Customer patronage, Fast food restaurant, Reliability, Responsiveness, Tangibility

1.0 Introduction

Fast food restaurants are critical components of the lodging and food service industries, and they play critical roles in keeping an economy functioning smoothly. In today's competitive company market, service quality is an essential component for increasing client loyalty (Nushrat, 2019). As a result, the quality of fast-food restaurant service is a critical success factor. Managers of fast-food restaurants must continually assess and enhance the quality of their service. So, knowledge of fast-food eatery quality of service

assessment is essential. Quality of service is a hazy and ambiguous concept. In addition, the kind of service provided and the setting in which it is offered influence how clients perceive service quality (Renner & Ezekiel-Hart, 2022). As a result of the increasing degree of competition in the food services business, fast food restaurants need to devote attention to the quality of their food product in order to continue operating and achieve an edge over their competitors (Herman, 2022). In today's extremely competitive climate, fast-food restaurant services no longer sell innovative and excellent cuisine; they sell clients an experience. Customers come to take pleasure in their usual modern way of life, which is also a component of their social activity, rather than simply eat meals in a restaurant. As a result, it is apparent that restaurants provide a variety of intangible services in addition to serving meals.

Service quality is a well-known term among marketing academics. It's been employed in a variety of service situations. The popular SERVQUAL model has been used to study service quality in restaurants (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It requires an overall evaluation of the service vendors' level of performance. This evaluation depends on consumer impression. It is crucial for restaurant services because it has a significant impact on both consumer happiness and behavioral goals (Harwina, 2021). Customer satisfaction is also a predictor of behavioral intentions. The SERVQUAL approach addresses the gap between consumer expectations and service performance (Herman, 2022). The greater the disparity, the more dissatisfied the customer. Customers will be pleased if the gap is small or non-existent. They will also show frequent patronage and determination to spread the news. A simple glance around every crossroads in Nigeria today, particularly in towns and cities, would show a minimum of two eateries with front-lit menus fighting for the attention of customers. The country currently has over 150 brand names (Fakokunde et al., 2014). According to Harwina (2021), the number of fast-food restaurants in Nigeria is expected to triple in five years. Nonetheless, the quick rise and expansion of fast-food restaurants in Nigeria may be rationalized as a worldwide occurrence.

The growing tendency of people, households, and friends who patronize fast food establishments in Nigeria have increased customers' consciousness of the visual appeal, product, and service they receive from fast food restaurants as competition among fast food restaurants increases (Okeke, 2020). Food quality, quality of service, surroundings, cost, and rapid assistance, restaurant image and fast-food store image factors, customers' eating-out values, and customers' opinions about globalization are all taken into account to impact the customer base of fast-food restaurants in places with varying cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic characteristics. As a result, several growth policy implications are generated and informed. Tabassum and Rahman (2012) and Okeke (2020) both agreed that food consumption patterns can vary due to variances in culture, climate, socioeconomic level, and so on. In truth, the eating habits of a country's residents might alter due to a variety of circumstances. However, due to these disparities in experts' conclusions, it is unclear which elements influence client patronage in the area of study.

Tangibles are significant as they affect consumer views and expectations of service quality, and they reflect client loyalty because they have a major effect on the customer's appraisal of service quality. Customers utilize tangibles as clues to deduce the efficacy of intangibles, particularly if evaluating or comparing intangibles is challenging. Reliability on the other hand is a way of calculating the likelihood that a system, good, or service will meet its obligations over a certain length of time. It is an element consumers seek, and if it is not delivered, the company will face dissatisfied customers, low retention rates, and stagnate corporate growth while customer responsiveness relates to how rapid and precise a company can resolve technical problems. It contributes to a better overall customer experience and increases commitment by making customers feel as if their opinion is acknowledged. To fill the void, this study investigates the impact of tangibles, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy on consumer patronage of chosen fast-food businesses in Lagos State.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The specific goals are to:

- i. investigate the impact of tangibles on consumer patronage at selected fast-food outlets in Lagos State.
- ii. investigate the influence of dependability on consumer patronage of selected Lagos State fast-food restaurants; and
- iii. investigate the effect of responsiveness on consumer patronage of chosen Lagos State fast-food restaurants.

1.2 Research questions

The following questions will be answered in the study:

- i. How do tangibles affect consumer patronage at selected fast-food outlets in Lagos State?
- ii. What effect does dependability have on consumer patronage at selected fast-food businesses in lagos state?
- iii. How does responsiveness affect consumer patronage at selected fast-food businesses in lagos state?

1.3 research hypotheses

The null hypotheses are expressed as follows:

- i. **H₀₁**: Tangibles have no substantial impact on consumer patronage of selected fast-food businesses in Lagos State.
- ii. **H₀₂**: Reliability has no substantial impact on client patronage of selected fast-food establishments in Lagos State.
- iii. **H₀₃**: The responsiveness of selected fast-food businesses in Lagos State has no meaningful effect on consumer patronage.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual framework

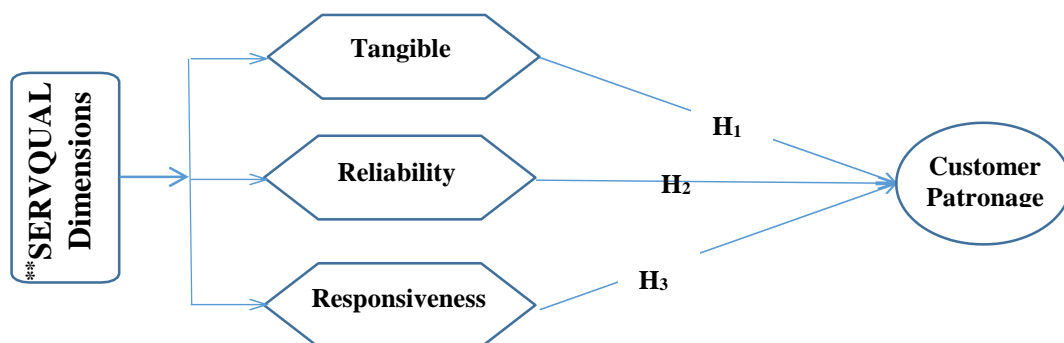


Figure 1: Conceptual Model, 2023. **SERVQUAL = Service Quality
Source: Parasuraman et al. (1988)

The diagram above depicts the links with hypotheses by demonstrating the link between each of the independent variables (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness) and dependent variable (customer patronage).

Quality

Garvin (1988) outlined 5 aspects of quality which affect the description that is presented in an attempt to unify the multiple definitions of quality in literature:

- a. The transcendental perspective on quality: According to this viewpoint, quality is associated with natural perfection. It is applicable to both dramatic and artistic visualization and claims that humans acquire the ability to detect value through repetition and experience.
- b. The product-based strategy: Quality is viewed as a precise quantitative variable in this context. It claims that variations in quality reflect variations in the quantity of an element or feature contained by the item in question.
- c. Definition based on the user: This begins with the idea that quality is determined by the beholder. This concept acknowledges that various clients have diverse demands and needs, and thus associates quality with maximum satisfaction.
- d. In engineering and manufacturing procedures, the manufacturing-based approach is commonly used. Quality is defined in this method as compliance to internally generated specifications, which are frequently motivated by productivity and cost maintenance goals.
- e. In a value-based definition, quality can be expressed as a function of its worth and cost. When the compromise between efficiency (or compliance) and cost is examined, quality is described as affordable perfection.

Service quality

It is generally agreed in the service quality literature that various people perceive different things when it comes to service quality as a multidimensional concept. Customers' service quality was defined by Bolton and Drew (1991), and Oliver (1980) as the difference between actual service performance and their expectations. Similarly,

Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined perceived service quality as "the extent and trajectory of the gap between consumer impressions and desires." According to the services marketing literature, "service quality has been differently described as paying attention to satisfying customer needs and demands, as well as ensuring that the service provided corresponds to customers' requirements". They also asserted that "service quality is an international client assessment or viewpoint pertaining to the experience arising from consumer expectations of service being compared to what they think of real-life accomplishment." Service quality refers to the gap between what customers expect for the quality of service and their assessment of the service received.

Dimensions of Service Quality

In an effort to quantify quality, Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined 10 major determinants of quality of service known as SERVQUAL, which are reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, comprehension, and tangibles while Parasuraman et al. (1988) reduced the 10 original dimensions of SERVQUAL to 5, which are:

Tangibles

The visual appeal of structures, machinery, personnel, and media for communication. The physical condition of the surroundings demonstrates the service provider's concern and attention to detail.

Reliability

The capacity to regularly and accurately deliver the promised services. A consumer expects dependable service, which implies that the service will be completed on time, in a similar way, with no issues whatsoever.

Responsiveness

Desire to help clients and provide prompt service. Maintaining customers being patient especially for no obvious cause, fosters unjustified negative quality opinions.

Assurance

Employees' knowledge and civility, along with their capacity to communicate with integrity and trust, are assured.

Empathy

Customers receive dedicated, personalized treatment. Empathy is characterized by accessibility, compassion, and an attempt to understand the customer's needs.

Customer patronage

A customer is as old as a company. One of the primary goals of any firm is to get a client or customer (Okeke, 2020). According to Ogwo and Igwe (2012), the only socioeconomic basis for any business's sustainability is to provide customer satisfaction. As a result, customer relevance and repeat business are critical since they incorporate monetary as well as non-monetary components. Defining and evaluating patronage is a challenging task, as experience has shown. Customer patronage has been measured using

attitudes and actual usage patronages. According to Dick and Basu (1994), patronage is defined by an optimistic mindset and recurring purchases.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study is hinged on the hierarchical service quality theory proposed by Brady and Cronin (2001).

Hierarchical Service Quality Theory

The hierarchical service quality theory is a response to the ideas on service quality. They strengthened the aspects of service quality by precisely refining them into reliable, responsive, empathic, assured, and palpable. Based on the hypothetically robust support for multifaceted service quality, they suggested three segments for each dimension, such as behavior, attitude, and skills for the communication quality dimension; design, ambient situation, and societal variables for the quality of the atmosphere dimension; and tangibles, waiting time, and valence for the outcome quality dimension. Based on the foregoing, hierarchical theory is a relevant theory for the dimension of service quality.

3.0 Methodology

The data was examined using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The survey research design was used in this study. A descriptive survey was selected and the study's population consists of loyal customers of all fast-food establishments in Lagos Metropolis. Due to the difficulty in determining population size, the population is assumed to be infinite. For simplicity and convenience, quota sampling was utilized to choose 6 fast food restaurants across 3 senatorial zones in Lagos State, as well as a sample of 240 respondents, 40 people representing each chosen fast-food restaurant. However, a simple random and snowball sampling approach was used to disseminate the survey questions to each of the participants that visited the site on a regular basis.

Area of Study

The research area is Lagos state, Nigeria's major commercial center. The assessment covers certain selected fast-food establishments in Lagos state's 3 senatorial zones. As a result, 2 fast food restaurants were chosen from each of the 3 senatorial zones, namely Tastee Fried Chicken and Chicken Republic in Lagos east, KFC and Steers Burger in Lagos west, and Sweet Sensation and Tantalizers in Lagos central.

Table 1: location of selected fast-food restaurants

SENATORIAL ZONE	RESTAURANT	COORDINATE
Lagos East	Tastee Fried Chicken	6.622473 (latitude) 3.498087 (longitude)
	Chicken Republic	6.4401519 (latitude) 3.4555867 (longitude)

Lagos West	KFC	6.5992959 (latitude) 3.3532298 (longitude)
	Steers Burger	6.6141385 (latitude) 3.3575885 (longitude)
Lagos Central	Sweet Sensation	6.4354361 (latitude) 3.4305886 (longitude)
	Tantalizers	6.4513957 (latitude) 3.3910365 (longitude)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

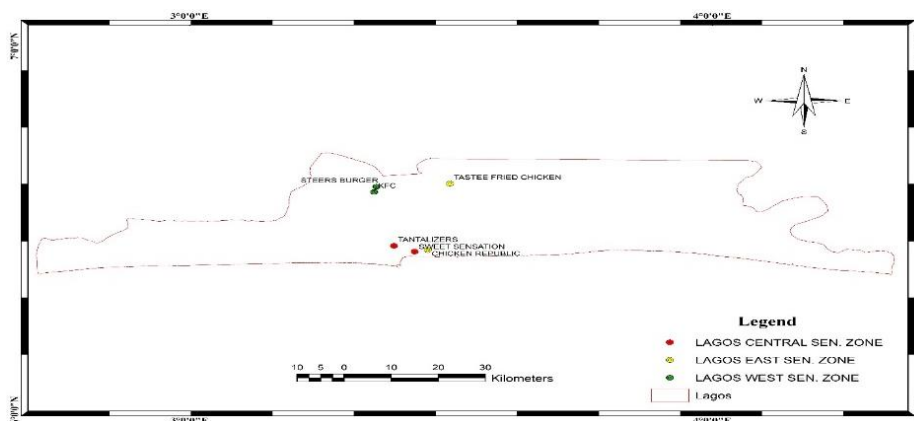


Figure 2: Map showing area of study
Source: Field Survey, 2023

Validity and reliability

To determine the validity of the research instrument, content validity was employed judgment expert in validating data collection instrument. In addition, The Cronbach Alpha was used to assess the study's dependability, as shown below:

Table 2: Reliability test result using Cronbach’s Alpha

S/N	Variable	No. of Items	Coefficient Alpha
1	Tangibility	5	0.721
2	Reliability	5	0.700
3	Responsiveness	5	0.712
4	Customer patronage	5	0.708

Source: Researcher’s computation, 2023

Each of the coefficients falls between 0.7 and 1.00 indicating the existence of consistency, and That the items measure the same constructs (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and client patronage). As a result, the measuring scales provided by

replies are consistent. This means that 72.1%, 70.0%, 71.2%, and 70.8% of the variances in the variable scores are dependable.

4.0 Data analysis and discussion

The collected data was examined using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools, with regression analysis used to evaluate hypotheses. More crucially, the regression output displays the individual significance test (t-test), overall significance test (f-test), and explanatory power coefficient.

Descriptive Analysis of the Demographic Details of the Respondents

The demographic information provided for analysis includes sex, marital status, sex, educational status, restaurant location, and most chosen restaurant.

Table 3: distribution respondents' demographic details

S/N	Variable	Categories	Frequency	%
1	SEX	Male	97	40.4
		Female	143	59.6
		Total	240	100
2	MARITAL STATUS	Single	131	54.6
		Married	109	45.4
		Total	240	100
3	AGE	10 - 19 Years	63	26.3
		20 - 29 Years	126	52.5
		30 - 39 Years	26	10.8
		40 - 49 Years	16	6.7
		50 Years & Above	9	3.8
		Total	240	100
4	EDUCATIONAL STATUS	Primary	14	5.8
		Secondary	101	42.1
		Higher Institution	125	52.1
		Total	240	100
5	LOCATION OF RESTAURANT	Lagos East	34	14.2
		Lagos West	129	53.8
		Lagos Central	77	32.1
		Total	240	100
6	MOST PREFERRED RESTAURANT	Tastee Fried Chicken	40	16.7
		Chicken Republic	40	16.7
		KFC	40	16.7
		Steers Burger	40	16.7
		Sweet Sensation	40	16.7
		Tantalizers	40	16.7
		Total	240	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Descriptive analysis of the variables:

The highest scale (most desirable) is 5.00, while the lowest scale is 1.00. Responses to any scaled statement with a mean between 3.00 and 5.00 are considered desirable, that is, the responses cluster around 'excellent' and 'very good', while responses to any scaled item below the mean point of 3 are considered less desirable, that is, the responses cluster around 'fair' and 'poor'. The coefficient, on the other hand, is positive if the associated mean response is less than 3.0.

Table 4: Summary Statistics of Tangibles Sample Size (n): 240 Respondents

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	S _K
TAN_1	Available kitchen equipment	4.400	0.747	-1.46
TAN_2	Employees' professional appearance	4.170	0.658	-1.347
TAN_3	The neatness of restaurant's premises	4.108	0.826	-0.878
TAN_4	Communication equipment	4.010	0.831	-0.818
TAN_5	Parking space	3.880	0.893	-0.798

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

Table 4 shows that each of the items has a mean response greater than the mean response, and thus are considered desirable and more reasonable, indicating that respondents have a positive perception of tangibles for service quality. Furthermore, the items have negative coefficients of skewness, indicating that most responses to the items cluster between 'excellent' and 'very good.'

Table 5: Summary Statistics of Reliability Sample Size (n): 240 Respondents

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	S _K
REL_1	Timely Service	4.19	0.79	-1.176
REL_2	Credibility	3.68	1.036	-1.136
REL_3	Accuracy of records	4.13	0.752	-0.694
REL_4	Dependability	4.19	0.913	-1.554
REL_5	Food Quality	4.17	0.765	-0.978

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

Table 5 shows that each item has a mean response greater than the mean response, and hence is deemed desirable and more reasonable. This indicates that respondents have a favorable attitude toward dependability. Furthermore, the items have negative coefficients of skewness, indicating that the majority of responses fall between the 'excellent' and 'very good' scales.

Table 6: Summary Statistics of Responsiveness Sample Size (n): 240 Respondents

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	S _K
RES_1	Staff conduct	4.20	0.81	-0.961
RES_2	Willingness of staff to help customers	4.30	0.642	-0.943
RES_3	Attentiveness	4.15	0.858	-1.007
RES_4	Provision of prompt service	4.29	0.700	-0.685
RES_5	Alertness and patience in handling transactions.	4.32	0.721	-0.906

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

Table 6 demonstrates that each of the things has a mean answer larger than 3, making them more attractive and rational. This shows that respondents have a favorable attitude regarding responsiveness. Furthermore, the items have negative coefficients of skewness, indicating that the majority of responses fall between the 'excellent' and 'very good' scales. As a result, the respondent has significant tendencies toward staff behavior, readiness to assist customers, and prompt service.

Table 7: Summary Statistics of Customer Patronage Sample Size (n): 240 Respondents

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	S _K
CP_1	Consistent loyalty to my preferred food restaurant	4.30	0.723	-0.935
CP_2	Recommending my preferred food restaurant to my friends and relative	4.30	0.739	-1.234
CP_3	Distance is not a barrier	3.96	0.751	-0.058
CP_4	Satisfaction of products and services	4.06	0.685	-0.553
CP_5	Not intended to change my preferred food restaurant	4.08	0.812	-0.856

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

Table 7 shows that each item has a mean response bigger than the mean response of 3, making it more desirable and reasonable. It implies that respondents have a favorable attitude toward certainty. Furthermore, the items have negative coefficients of skewness, indicating that the majority of responses fall between the 'excellent' and 'very good' scales.

Test of hypotheses

The natural logs of the variables were used to estimate the models. As a result, the estimated elasticity coefficients are produced.

Table 8: Model Estimation Results (OLS) Sample Size(n): 240 Respondents

Response Variable:	CP
<u>Independent Variable</u>	
C	0.409*** (0.000)
TAN	0.058 (0.271)
REL	0.280*** (0.000)
RES	0.370*** (0.000)
<u>Statistics and Diagnostic</u>	
R-Squared	0.356
Adjusted R-Squared	0.348
F-Stat. (Global Test)	43.536*** (0.000)
<u>Normality Test:</u>	
Shapiro-Wilk	0.062 (0.199)
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.968 (0.104)

Source: Author’s computation, 2023

Note: *** denotes statistical significance at 1% level.

Values in parentheses () are p-values of the respective estimates.

Table 8 shows the individual coefficients and tests of significance, the estimated model's explanatory capacity (r-squares), and diagnostics for normalcy state.

Test of significance for hypothesis i

H₀₁: Tangibles have no substantial impact on consumer patronage of selected fast-food businesses in Lagos State.

Changes in TAN (tangibles) have a favorable and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.058, p = 0.271 > 0.1$ and 0.05) as indicated in table 8 on customer patronage (CP). This means that in Lagos State, TAN is not a key factor of consumer patronage. The partial elasticity coefficient of 0.058 indicates that CP in TAN is inelastic, implying that the degree of reaction of TAN to CP is less than one. In other words, the magnitude of the CP reaction is smaller than the proportionate change TAN. Meanwhile, based on the test statistic, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Individual test of significance - hypothesis ii

H₀₂: Reliability has no substantial impact on client patronage of selected fast-food establishments in Lagos State.

While maintaining other variables equal, changes in REL (reliability) have a positive and statistically significant influence ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ and 0.05) as indicated in table 8 on customer patronage (CP). According to the preceding, REL is a crucial determinant of customer patronage in Lagos State. The partial elasticity coefficient of 0.280 indicates that CP in REL is inelastic, implying that the degree of response of REL to CP is less than one. In other words, the magnitude of the CP response is smaller than the proportionate change REL. Nonetheless, based on the test statistic, the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Individual test of significance - hypothesis iii

H₀₃: The responsiveness of selected fast-food businesses in Lagos State has no meaningful effect on consumer patronage.

While maintaining other variables equal, changes in RES (responsiveness) have a positive and statistically significant influence ($\beta = 0.370$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$ and 0.05) as indicated in table 8 on customer patronage (CP). According to the aforementioned, RES is a crucial factor of CP in Lagos State. The partial elasticity coefficient of 0.370 indicates that CP in RES is inelastic, implying that the degree of response of RES to CP is less than one. In other words, the size of the CP reaction is less than the proportionate change RES. Nonetheless, based on the test statistic, the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Measure of goodness of fit of *cp* model

The adjusted-R-square statistic of 0.348 indicates that the explanatory variables (such as tangibles [TAN], reliability [REL], and responsiveness [RES]) included in the model account for approximately 34.8% of the variation in CP, as shown in table 8. According to the adjusted-R² value, the calculated regression model's explanatory power is fairly poor. As a result, the computed CP model may have poor predictive potential.

Overall test of significance

The F-statistics (43,536) in table 8 show that all of the included factors (such as tangibles [tan], reliability [rel], and responsiveness [res]) appear to have a combined significant tendency in describing customer patronage (cp), with a p-value (0.000) less than 5% level of significance. Overall, the service quality measures evaluated appear to have a considerable effect on client patronage.

Model adequacy test

The Kolmogorov-smirnov (stat.=0.062, p=0.199) and shapiro-wilk (stat.=0.968, p = 0.104) normality tests reveal that the residuals of the estimated cp model are normally distributed (statistically insignificant) with p-values above the 5% level of significance, as shown in table 8. As a result of the preceding diagnostic test result, the estimates obtained are suitable for inference or policy making.

4.1 Discussion of findings

From the research results, tangible has a negligible positive effect on customer patronage of the selected fast-food business in Lagos State. Nonetheless, it tends to be inelastic in

terms of changes in consumer responses, and as a service quality dimension, it has the potential to expedite customer patronage. Reliability, on the other hand has a favorable and significant effect on consumer patronage of the selected fast-food business and it looks inelastic in terms of changes in reactions to customer patronage, and as a service quality dimension, it has a tendency to accelerate client patronage. Responsiveness has a favorable and significant impact on consumer patronage of the chosen fast-food business in Lagos State. It appears to be inelastic in terms of changes in reactions to client patronage, and as a service quality dimension, it has a propensity to accelerate customer patronage.

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

From the findings of this study, the majority of fast-food restaurants are dependable, giving timely service, using sophisticated kitchen equipment, and being aware and patient when processing transactions. Furthermore, dependability and responsiveness are both important factors of client loyalty. However, tangible appears to have a negligible effect on consumer patronage. Meanwhile, the three service quality characteristics under consideration have a major impact on client patronage. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that service quality tends to increase consumer patronage of fast-food restaurants in Lagos state, implying that customers are satisfied with the variety of services offered by fast food restaurants. As a result, the study proposes that fast-food restaurant management consider the tangibility component of service quality, such as personnel professional look, effective communication technology, and ample parking space, in order to increase client patronage. Also, higher employee enthusiasm, improved selling abilities, a good training attitude, clearer role perceptions, strong service expertise, and high understanding of organizational policies can all help to improve fast-food restaurant employees' responsiveness. Thus, both service delivery quality and organizational effectiveness can be increased at the same time.

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