

# Customer satisfaction toward the services in Two Tigers restaurant, Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

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# **Abstract**



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The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the service quality that are being provided by restaurant Two Tigers located in Vantaa-Helsinki Airport, which directly influence the customer satisfaction. Also the thesis aims to discover the insights to improve customer satisfaction from the restaurant's employees. Both of the findings are materials to build a customer journey map which is believed to improve customer experience towards the services and helps employees to understand the points of sale better.

The research approaches have been used are both quantitative and qualitative. 2 different sets of questionnaire were made for each research method, following the five service quality dimensions of SERVQUAL model. The quantitative questionnaire was handed to customers during the second week of May, 2017 and in total 83 valid answers were collected. The qualitative interviews with employees were conducted face-to-face in the premise. The analyzing process was processed using Excel. All figures using in the report were made by Excel and Word.

Results indicate that in a special environment like airport where it is only for flight passengers, focusing on the perceived quality of customers is more important for the restaurant than on the expected quality. With the increasing numbers of Asian travelers globally, it is essential to have helpful language guidance in order to achieve the service excellence. Thus, the discussion represents different aspects of employee contribution in the work place to reach great customer satisfaction level.

# Keywords

Service quality, customer satisfaction, SERVQUAL model, quantitative research, qualitative research, Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the service quality that are being provided by a unique concept Asian cuisine restaurant in an international environment – Helsinki – Vantaa airport, to assess customer satisfaction. By using quantitative questionnaire, the authors wish to see if customers are generally satisfied with different elements that created the value of the products restaurant provides.

Secondly, to discover unrecognized ideas through interviews, so from that distinguished improvement solutions can be proposed. Also to add features that currently does not exist in the restaurant but can bring convenience for customers. These undiscovered factors are believed to be revealed through both survey answers from customers and qualitative interviews with employees.

Finally, to create a customer journey map based on the results of the research and suggestions from both customers and employees. The map is believed to help improve service quality and create a pleasant experience to customers, which will eventually increase customer satisfaction.

Why is it necessary to study customer satisfaction on service quality? Service quality and customer satisfaction have been a prominent topic in many early researches. Generally, service quality is defined as the overall assessment of a service by the customers. Like all other kinds of services, restaurant service requires providers to satisfy customer's demands better and better. In literature context, when a service meets customer's needs or expectations, service quality is defined as:

"The discrepancy between consumers' perceptions of services offered by a particular firm and their expectations about firms offering such services if being exceeded leads to a "very satisfied or even pleasantly surprised customer"." (Kotler & Keller, 2003, 80.)

In contrast, if performance is below customer's expectation, it will lead to dissatisfied customers, decrease in demand of product or service and in long term, underachieved revenue. Service quality can be proved to actually affect the service fee, service benefits, customer satisfaction, the repurchase of the customer etc. Therefore, a research about customer satisfaction on its service is essential to every enterprise in order to enhance service provision, competitive ability and locate its brand in the industry. Especially nowadays life quality has been increased, many food trends have been spread all around the world

and every people select their best eating routine that suit them. The concept of different ethnic cuisines has spread around the world, in every corner of many big cities. Following with that, especially in Finland, the vegetarian, gluten-free trend and veganism are not non-familiar subjects to restaurateurs. The food providers need to know what kind of food that they are serving, the ingredients on the dish and the allergy information. Having said that, it means that we need to concentrate on the food trends along with a great customer service provision.

Registered as restaurant businesses, the 2009 annual statistics has shown that (Restaurants and mobile food service activities) there was a total of 8 550 outlets, of which 2 049 were in the metropolitan area. Thus, in 2009 in all the restaurants in Finland (which include large chains) one in six restaurants in the metropolitan area was of foreign origin owned by entrepreneur. The number would have changed until the year of this published thesis, as it would be clearer and more logical in demonstrating the penetration of foreign cuisines into Finland. The request for the newest statistics of foreign restaurants in Helsinki and Finland has been sent to Leo Kostiainen – an information specialist of Statistics Finland at stat.fi, however it was unfortunate that the information is not available. Therefore, the figures from 2009 has still been used.

By the time the statistics was collected, the largest group is of Turkish origin that the whole country was of 554, or just over 38 per cent of all the ethnic restaurants. More than a hundred restaurant entrepreneurs were from Nepal, Vietnam, Thailand and China, and nearly a hundred was the former Yugoslavia. The Helsinki Metropolitan Area ethnic restaurants picture is somewhat different from the rest of the country. By far the largest group is the Turkish restaurants, which is 134, or more than a quarter of all the ethnic restaurants. Outside the metropolitan area of Turkish restaurants account for as much as 44 per cent. In the metropolitan area is the vast majority of Bangladeshis and Indians, and well over half of all Vietnamese restaurants. (Statistics Finland, 2012.) Therefore, the trend of ethnic restaurant is growing years by years, due to the increasing number of tourists coming to visit Finland every year. With this info, it means that the amount of customers would need to use the means of airline transport in term to travel to the other destinations, besides ships or ferries to Estonia or Sweden. When arriving to the airport, there will be certain need in use of food and beverage services, therefore different concept restaurants can attract their target group of customers.

One of the reasons that the Two Tigers restaurant has been chosen, is that it is located in an international environment, next to other different restaurant concepts at the airport which makes it easier for us to compare and evaluate the service. Another reason is one of the thesis writers is currently working at the property. Nevertheless, it is good to combine both theories that have learned at school and the working experience in order to provide the most interesting topic to contribute to the hospitality industry in Finland.

# 1.1 HMSHost company and restaurant Two Tigers

Being the only Asian cuisines restaurant at the airport, Two Tigers bring a dynamic atmosphere with hundreds of guests visit per big rush hours. Located in the area of flights to outside non-Schengen countries, the customer groups are diverse. The Asian guests get together for refreshment purpose do attract non-Asian guests come to browse and make decision to give a try for Asian delicacies. From this idea, the place has been chosen as the thesis's case study.



Image 1. Restaurant Two Tigers look

Restaurant Two Tigers is part of the HMSHost Finland – a branch of the big company HMSHost. HMSHost is a highway and airport food-service company, a subsidiary of the Italian company Autogrill S.p.A. This company is known for being the world's largest provider of food and drink services for airport travelers. Along with the rest of the Autogrill Group, HMSHost is recognized hospitality industry pioneers in leading and guiding innovative dining locations at different airports and on motorways worldwide. Globally available at more than 120 airports, HMSHost aims to bring travelers astonishing food and beverage experiences as well as a hospitable welcome from their associates who seek to provide the best customer service possible. (HMSHost 2017)

Since 2013, HMSHost has conducted a number of different customized concepts that bring Finnish gastronomy to the airport. Along with that, the company aims to reach a diversity of travelers and their needs. Some unique concepts examples at Helsinki – Vantaa airport includes 60 Degrees Bar & Brewery, Nordic Kitchen, Two Tigers and Helsinki Sausage Co. (HMSHost 2017) Restaurant Two Tigers is an Asian-fusion restaurant located in non-Schengen area at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport – the area for international flights outside of Schengen 26 countries. According to Finavia, Helsinki-Vantaa Airport is being known as the leading Nordic airport in transfer connections around the world. Amongst the common flights in this Non-schengen area, some frequent flight examples can be named, such as flights to Moscow, Singapore, Beijing, Guangzhou, London, Osaka, Tokyo, Seoul. Therefore, the majority of air travelers are Asian because this airport is part of their travel journey back home. Another customer segmentation in this area are local Finns and other Europeans citizens.

Two Tiger restaurant is open all year round; special occasions or holiday are not exceptional. The opening hours start from 10.30 – 22.00. The main restaurant customer groups are guests who are traveling away from Helsinki or who have a stopover that are interested in sushi and noodles dishes. Two Tigers is currently the only Asian-food concept at Helsinki Vantaa airport, therefore the majority of guests who pay visit to this restaurant are Asian travelers because they are acquainted with the Asian cuisine taste.



Image 2: One noodle bowl served at restaurant: Udon Kombu soup

Being an Asian-themed restaurant, the names of the dishes were kept as original as possible. Therefore, some terms might not be familiar with customers, especially Westerners.

The food menu at the restaurant includes 4 small sections, appetizers, noodle soups, sushi and curries. The appetizers include small dishes, served as snack to appetize the other main dish. A hint of Japan is brought with dishes like edamame beans, chicken kara age, chicken yakitori, etc. Noodle soups are obviously well-known in Asia, especially in Japan, China and Korea. Noodles eaters usually slurp their bowls of ramen or udon. At Two Tigers, the noodle soups are made with ingredients of a base of noodle, some toppings and then the broth. There are 3 main noodle types served, ramen, udon and flat noodle. Toppings come with either chicken, pork, shrimp or eggs, and extra green vegetables to make appealing look such as spring onions, Japanese shiitake mushroom, kimchi. Sushi are sold by set, and they are freshly made and being kept at regulated controlled temperature. Curries are portion of rice with options such as red chicken curries, green fish with prawn curries or chicken teriyaki.

# 2 Service definition and its characters

#### 2.1 Definition

Service is believed to be intangible kind of goods, different to the tangible ones. It is conceptualized personally by each researcher, which will be demonstrated differently. Services are the behavior, processes and means of performing a task that creates value for the consumer that satisfies the needs and expectations of the customer.

Services are economic activities that create value and provide benefits to customers at specific times and locations as a result of a desired change, or on behalf of the recipient (who is using) the service. (Oliveira, 2009)

In this study, we will define the service in the Two Tigers restaurant. It is the provision of food and beverage services, which are defined as whole processes, solutions providing the quality foods and beverages to tourists to meet the needs of travel. The existence of the restaurant is to provide the hungry travelers who are unable to wait for boarding time or those who are not interested in the food served in the airplane.

Thus, we can understand services as activities that create benefits to satisfy the customer's demand for an activity. Researchers may have different definitions of services, but they are consistent in terms of service characteristics. The book "Quality management in the organization" by Nguyen Dinh Phan (2006) offers some characteristics of the service as follows:

"Characteristics of the service:

- Intangibility: services are intangible products. They are invisible, users can not see it or feel it before use. Customers can only feel the quality of service when they use it, interact with it, and cannot predict the quality of service in advance. In other words, the quality of the service depends mostly on the subjective perception of the user, which is difficult to measure precisely with specific technical specifications.
- Heterogeneity: Quality of service is not a uniformity between the times of the services, and it depends on the individual feelings of the customers about the service. Even though the cycles of service delivery are the same, but the perception about the customer service quality at different times may vary: the service can be ranged from poor to perfect by different customers depending on their expectations. Because of the heterogeneity of the service, standardization of the service becomes more difficult than standardization of other tangible products.

- Indivisibility: The inseparability of the service is expressed in the difficulty of distinguishing between service creation and service use as two separate processes. A service can not be separated into two separate processes: (1) the process of service creation and (2) the process of using the service, because they are concurrent. The creation and use of most services is co-occurring. This is the basic difference to other tangible goods: Goods are produced and put into storage or delivered through distribution to the users, which are two separate processes that can be separated in a way clearly. Service is a process of creating and using concurrently, the customer and the service provider involved throughout the creation of the service. This raises the following issues:
- Unmanageability: The service has its production and usage process running concurrently so it can not be stored as tangible goods. In other words, it is impossible to store and save the service before it can be circulated.
- Concurrency: The concurrency of services is reflected in the production and consumption of services that take place concurrently. It is inseparable the production process from the consumption process." (Nguyen Dinh Phan 2006, 71.)

# 2.2 Quality of service

"Quality of service is the difference between consumer expectations of service and their perception of service outcomes." (Parasuraman, 1988)

It can be explained here that there are differences between the expected service and the perceived service. From the free imagination of the guest, it is freely customized as the guest think and expect the quality, usually in a positive way. After perceiving the real delivered service, it comes to the time that the guest will state his personal opinion and judgment on the products or service, related to its quality, the price and the experience process from the deliverer. Quality of service is not formed from many different factors. It can be said that it is a multi-faceted concept. Parasuraman (1985) outlined ten aspects of service quality including (1) reliability; (2) responsiveness; (3) competence; (4) access; (5) courtesy; (6) communication; (7) credibility; (8) security; (9) understanding customer; and (10) tangibles. Further testing showed that some of the ten initial dimensions were closely relevant or similar, so they were reduced and named meticulously to the revised dimentions (Wikipedia 2017.) By the 1990s, five key factors of service quality were drawn out from the testing by the authors, which appeared to be firmer and more related. Those dimensions are:

- Reliability is the ability to deliver the right service on time.
- Responsiveness demonstrates the willingness of the staff to provide timely service to customers.
- Assurance clarifies the professionalism of service personnel.
- Empathy expresses that employees can show the interest and enthusiasm to guests.
- Tangibility relates to costumes, appearance of personnel and equipment for service.

Therefore, it can be seen that service quality is a concept that encompasses many aspects, it is a composite indicator of the various factors. In different service areas it is measured by different factors.

#### 2.3 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product or service as perceived after its consumption (Tse & Wilton, 1988, p. 204). Schiffman & Karun (2004) defined customer satisfaction as "the individual's perception of the performance of the products or services in relation to his or her expectations" (Schiffman & Karun 2004, p. 14). Fornell (1992) has considered satisfaction as an overall post-purchase evaluation by the consumer" (Fornell, 1992, p. 11). Amongst those listed definitions above, it is easily recognizable that common shared ideas of the first and the last experience about the services are usually thought of by the consumers. Related those theories into reality, on the consumer's mindset it is established personal feelings or emotions between the two or many times of service transaction. If it were the first time the products or services were being purchased, on the customer's mindset it was slowly formed of how the service will be delivered. It can be considered as expectation, so that during or after the purchase, the consumers would set a clear picture of the transaction and evaluate it in order to compare to the next time, if repeated.

It is factual that as years pass by, different definitions about customer satisfaction will be brought up by different authors, therefore there is no true definition but it depends on the researchers or readers' opinions to choose the best one that satisfy their needs of study. There are many authors that support the definition of others. The new definition can be a little similar to the existed ones, however possibly there would be added true information that is useful for the readers. In a nutshell, customer satisfaction could be the happiness or pleasure that a consumer experience from the offer.

# 2.4 Relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction

Studies show that service quality and customer satisfaction are closely related, service quality is the cause and satisfaction is the outcome (Spereng, 1996; Amad and Samreen, 2011). The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is the same-direction relationship, the quality of service has a positive impact on customer perception. From this stage of the service delivery process, a clear image about the link of service quality and customer satisfaction could be set as the former is the input and the latter is the output.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality can be defined as an overall judgment similar to attitude towards the service and generally accepted as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996). The quality of the food and the engagement level of the waiter staff towards customers can be considered as the overall judgment in the case of a restaurant. From these elements, a judgment will be formed on the customer's mind as of how impressive the quality of the service causes. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) has considered in their book that quality of service and customer satisfaction are two different concepts, while service quality focuses on specific components of service, customer satisfaction is a general concept. The relationship between quality of service and customer satisfaction is interrelated. (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Spereng, 1996.) It is clearly understandable that the satisfaction in a consumer come as a result of the quality, either negatively or positively. They are linked and connected. The consumers can always experience the service and judge it in term of quality, which would cause the judgment of the satisfaction level later. Concerning to the general judgment of the service quality, price and the quality play an important role. Quality in here can be classified in two dimensions as the actual quality of the provided products and the particular emotion on how engaged the staff towards the guests.

# 3 Introduction of research models about service quality and customer satisfaction

During the last decades, scientists work on service quality measurement. As a result, many measurements were suggested but only some of them were qualified enough to use in practice. In this part some major models will be introduced.

# 3.1 Nordic model by Grönroos

The Nordic model of service quality was promoted by Christian Grönroos. In this model, perceived service quality not only is the final product but the conclusion of an entire evaluation process in which the service user compares a specific expectations of quality that they have before with the experienced quality. The expectations of quality are context specific to the firm which is under consideration and not based on the total division of service providers. For majority of customers, the expected service is influenced by the marketing activities of the service provider. However, external influences, for example word-of-mouth, brand image and customer demands also take part in the process of creating the first impression.

In this model, the result of a service and the process of said service being delivered are both noticed as forming part of the experienced quality. The continuity of production and consumption forms what we called "services". By interacting with service provider's representative (employees), customers receive technical outcome and at the same time, form a part of the perception of the whole process. However, more than just technical quality alone is accountable for the total quality as perceived by the customer. Customers pay attention not only in the outcome of a service process, but also in how the service is provided, the functional quality of the service.

Another quality dimension that mentioned by Grönroos is that the image of the service provider influences both technical and functional quality of service. The public image of the service provider has weighted in both sides of the total perceived quality equation. The public image also takes part in forming expected quality in customers. Grönroos indicated that technical and functional quality are interrelated, but evaluates functional quality as more important than the quality of the service that perceived by customers. It means "How" the service is being delivered to customers that has more weight than the product itself. Also according to him, the other factors and the performance of staff in direct contact with customers can compensate for a lower technical quality if those have not been managed well.

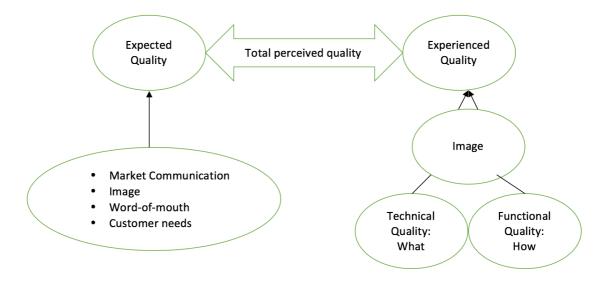


Figure 1: The Nordic model by Grönroos (1984)

As for restaurant Two Tigers, it does not belong to a popular franchise. Thus, corporate image or word-of-mouth are not one of the biggest influences to customers' perceived quality. The location at the airport makes the service quality in customers' first impression more guaranteed than as if the restaurant was located in somewhere else outside the airport. Most of all, it is technical and functional quality of the services would be the most important dimension to ensure an equal or even higher level of experienced quality for customers.

#### 3.2 SERVQUAL model

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985) made the new model of service quality measurement try to offering a new method to measure service quality and to cover the weakness of Nordic model. In SERVQUAL model, it is suggested to use the gap or difference between expected level of service and delivered level of service for measuring service quality perception with five dimensions: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurances, Empathy, and Tangibility (Figure 2).

SERVQUAL is a measuring tool that can be used to identifying the gaps between variables affecting the quality of the offering services (Seth, Deshmukh, & Vrat, 2005). This model is the most academically used by marketing researchers and scientists. However, the model does not bring a clear measurement method for measuring gaps at different levels. This model has been refined during the years. By using this model in practice, it shows the disadvantages. The factors presented in the model are inconsistent and it is not comprehensive for different applications.

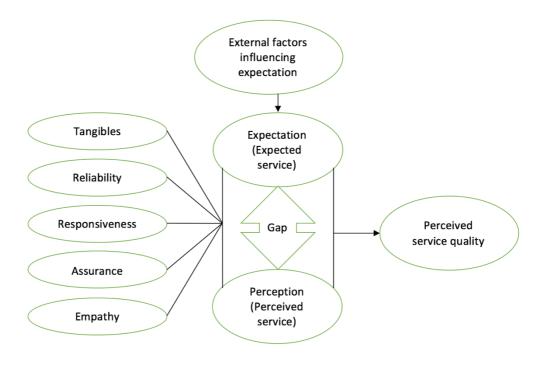


Figure 2: Determinants of Service Quality (Parasuraman et al. 1988).

# 3.3 Three-component model

Rust and Oliver (1994) proposed the Three-Component Model (See Figure 3, Panel C). This model was expanded from Grönroos' model. It suggests that the perceptions of service quality can be expanded into three smaller service quality dimensions—the service product or technical quality, the service delivery or functional quality, and the service environment. However, the authors have not empirically tested their proposed model and ever since it has been usually used in the retail banking industry.

#### 3.4 Multilevel model and Hierarchical model

There are two versions of Hierarchical model. One was formed by Dabholkar et al. (1996) and also called "The Multilevel model". The purpose of this model is to measure service quality in the retail industry. Dabholkar built this model based on a previous service quality literature. According to him and the other authors, customers evaluate the perceptions of service quality using multiple dimensions. Customers have their total judgment about the service they have interaction with, which they make contribution to the process. It shows in the model that customers develop their perceptions toward a service quality at three ordered and hierarchical levels: the overall level is the customers' overall perceptions of retail service quality, the primary dimensional level that including attributes that lead to customers' overall perceptions of retail service quality, and the sub-dimensional level that

consists of attributes that contribute to the primary dimensional level attributes (Dabholkar et al., 1996).

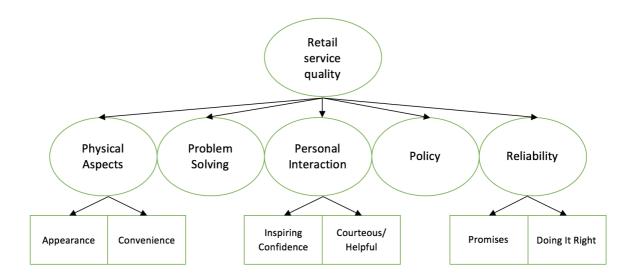


Figure 3: Multilevel Model/Hierarchical Model by Dabholkar (1996)

In 2001 Brady and Cronin, suggested a new model forming from the four models mentioned above. Customers evaluate nine sub-dimensions to structure their perception toward a certain service and how said service being performed. On each of three primary dimensions: 1. Interaction Quality (i.e., functional quality), 2. Physical Environment Quality, 3. Outcome Quality (i.e., technical quality).

There are three primary level dimensions in service quality. And following this conceptualization, they are interaction, environment and outcome with three sub dimensions for each one: Interaction (Attitude – Behavior – Expertise), Environment (Ambient Conditions – Design – Social Factors), and Outcome (Waiting Time – Tangibles – Valence). This model gives a clearer picture about quality perception and is considered a more consistent measuring tool. Although SERVQUAL measurement is a good tool, the part about service outcomes were not completely emphasized. In Brady and Cronin's model, they changed Outcome as one of the three main dimensions as can be seen from figure 3.

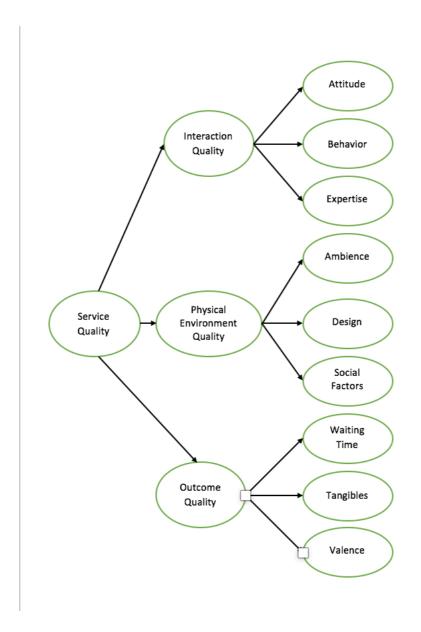


Figure 4: The Hierarchical model by Brady and Cronin (2001).

This model will help service providers to identify complication in primary stage of their delivered services - Interaction Quality, Physical Environment Quality, and Outcome Quality. Customer demands and service weaknesses can be spotted in order to improve service quality perception and service experiences of customer by delivering high quality of service. In conclusion, Brady and Cronin's model shows better understanding about customer perception of service quality.

# 4 Justification of choosing SERVQUAL model

# 4.1 SERVQUAL model in practice

The five service quality dimensions suggested by Parasuraman et al. (1988) will be used in order to examine the service quality at the restaurant Two Tigers. They are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Each dimension will be examined parallel with the elements of customer service at the restaurant, pointed out from the perspective of a restaurant's employee – who is co-author of this thesis. These points are drawn up under the author's observation. The main reason for choosing this measuring tool is that, SERVQUAL appears to be the most complete testing tool to put into practice of the case restaurant Two Tigers and to measure its service quality.

# 4.1.1 Tangibility

This dimension defines the physical evidence and representations of the service, particularly the employee's appearance, uniforms, equipment work-area on sites needs to look sharply professional.

"Appearance matters, since it is believed to be one important element that leaves impression to the guests. A fantastic restaurant experience is not just made up of the food and service but everything about the customer journey. Decor, atmosphere and indeed the appearance of the staff are all essential." (Off to work 2016.)

Two Tigers restaurant has a very unique eye-catching outlook that attract every passenger passing by to have a glance. First of all, the set of table and chairs are well-arranged. 3 long tables serve big group of travelers, while the rest are small ones, which serve singles, couples or four-people groups. Being made from bamboo, the appearance is unique enough to catch many Western guests to stop, touch them and discuss with their travelling companions. Disposable bamboo chopsticks are placed in a jar inserted to the tables. These tiny things are the most interesting elements that attract the guests' curiosity to step in to check the menu.

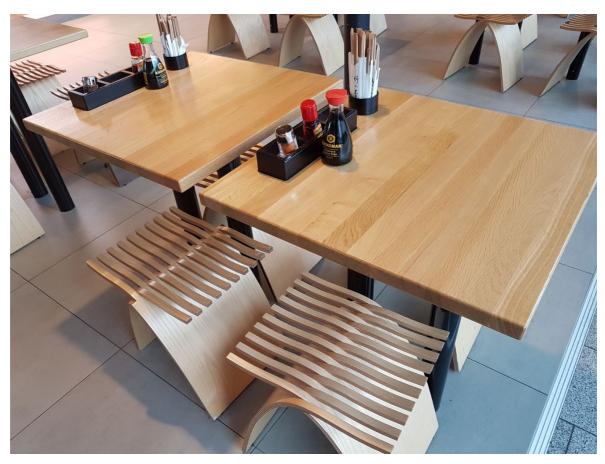


Image 3: A look of a table decoration at Two Tigers restaurant

A rectangular glass display case are placed right in the center, between the two cashier sides. It is used to display the freshly made sushi sets, in front of them name of the set and the price are displayed which help the guests to make the purchase decision. On the right corner, a small section with enough equipment are set ready for the sushi chefs. This can be considered extra point to gain trust from the guests as they can see the sushi are being made freshly right from the corner. Behind the front side, a short view behind can be seen as the kitchen function. The food will be delivered once ready on the high table in between. On the left hand side, the draft beer taps and a professional coffee machines are clearly visible to every guests.

Personnel dress professionally to their profession. Sushi chefs and kitchen cook do always wear chef hats, while waiters do not need to. The staff wear black uniform representing a culturally homogeneous society. All of the staff are of Asian descent which might draw a whole picture of fusion Asian cuisine served at the place.

# 4.1.2 Reliability

Reliability is one quality that the customers value from their providers. It means the service provider need to be able to perform the promised service dependently and accurately. The guests will be satisfied with the staff's consistency of performance and dependability of managing the service. Besides, the accuracy in billing and excellence of the service at the designated time are also highly appreciated.

The working cultural norms will be informed clearly to every staff member when firstly start the trial work. Customer care is a matter of utmost importance at the restaurant, that the guests will be served politely and food is arrived on time. Having been trained some months prior to official work, plus the experience with different customer segmentation since open, the employees need to always approach the guests in a proper polite yet friendly manner and food information are to be given correctly. The food information shall include the provision of the ingredient lists when the guests are serious with their diet. Gluten sensitivity and lactose intolerance might be two common allergies that many people have or would like to avoid, therefore when there is question with that, the guests are often suggested the alternatives. For instance, gluten free soy sauce is always available, or lactose-free milk are used mainly to make coffee to eliminate the risk of causing problems to the guests.

The menu does not display all the ingredient information of the products. It is possibly clear that it is difficult to write on the menu or to explain to the guests, especially in the rus hour. For example, the Ramen miso soup, under the bold name of the dish, there is short explanation as "Ramen noodle miso fish soup – grilled chicken and surimi". To first timer, they shall wonder what surimi is, or some will consider it contains some fish in their bowl of soup. Some might not like spring onions, but since there is no information, when getting the product, the guests shall question for alternative or have to remove the onions themselves. From this point, it will cause extra tasks for the chef or the guests will not enjoy actually the noodle soup. Either one of them shall be tiny careless detail, but if it happens many times within a day, the chef might not experience happy working hour or simply the restaurant first-timer shall not enjoy at all since it is part of their holiday trip.

Therefore, the counter employees at the unit are trained to be willing happily in providing any information related to the restaurant products or services. Other airport services are requested additional information sometimes, therefore the employees try their best when possible. The team work effort is built strong in the Two Tigers restaurant, making it one of

the friendliest food service provider (by some airport staff's and happy customers' comments.)

# 4.1.3 Responsiveness

Time is precious. The guests value the willingness from the employees to provide the service. Being readily willing to serve, guests will feel satisfied that they select the right service provider. Moreover, the ability to respond quickly, promptly and instantly will earn extra points from the guest's satisfaction level.

In the rush hour, all the seats are easily occupied. During these peak hours starting from three to six P.M., it is difficult to find a seat to have food before boarding time. Many guests show their dislike towards the airplane food, which is the reason they are willing to wait for the food. Soups is the best selling items in this restaurant. Therefore, the service time might last around three to five minutes in normal hour. In the rush hour, it is difficult to promise with exact time, therefore the chef will anticipate and tell to the cashier to inform the customers. They shall at the same time offer the alternative sushi, which are already freshly-made and available at the glass vitrine.

The table clearance is one of the most demanded importance to help the guests with space to eat. Sometimes the restaurant is too full with guests, and the space itself is tiny, therefore it is difficult to move in between, so the guests then have to themselves remove or put those dirty bowls onto the other unnecessary space or to the cashier staff. Yet at the same time, there will be staff who is trying at his best to help in clearing the tables.

Single traveler with kid, usually mother and infant who is interested in having meal at the restaurant, will receive happy friendly service to the table from the cashier. The guests will also be informed with the chopstick handling with care, as the child might be curious in drawing the chopstick out and could tick into the eyes or mouth, which is dangerous definitely. Usually the chopstick jar gets removed by the staff or the adult.

All in all, the employees are happy to give their best ability in serving the guests. Even though the guests might not be return customers because they fly to other destination or they pay simply a short visit to Finland, yet the employees pay special care to every walkins.

#### 4.1.4 Assurance

SERVQUAL research shows the importance of the service providers to be skillful in delivering the service. The knowledge and courtesy shall inspire the trust and determination towards the guests, while at the same time the staff will have the chance to perform the possessed skills and knowledge of their profession.

At Two Tigers, all the staff are from different background and cultures, however the shared ideas and information at the workplace spread from one to each other in order to keep up with the latest news in the restaurant. For instance, if chicken bites Kara Age is out of stock, the news need to spread not only from kitchen to cashiers, but also to sushi chefs and every staff because sometimes they do help with the cashier while the others on duty is doing some other tasks. Having said that, it means that all the staff at Two Tigers restaurant work as a unity.

Greeting welcome and handling out the menu to the guests are the first two gestures the cashier employees do to show their hospitality. Combining with friendly smile and suggestion, the guests will be treated with the utmost courtesy by the staff. This does affect the buying decision and spending willingness when the guest is in a good mood and the staff knows to engage them with the food and their working day story, for example. What the restaurant has in stock that day will be informed first so the guests do not have to browse to the section. For instance, after six P.M. the restaurant may have only appetizers, noodles, and sushi, the information needs to be provided right away when the guest still browse the menu. The reason is that some guests prefer to have rice with curries because they are just simply not interested in noodle soups. Therefore, it is of the employee's important concern to announce the correct messages to the walk-ins.

Since mainly the guests are from main land China, Japan and Korea, some employees speak the native languages or practice themselves with simple sentences to help guests if needed. Besides, when it comes to difficult cases when both party do not speak or understand the language, the employee will ask help from colleagues. The Chinese, usually the senior travelers, do not speak English, therefore they are frequently the ones that need help with the languages. Employees do know how to act in these cases because they have had experienced for a specific time. Usually staff or guests will point at the items in the menu, then show the price on their calculator, if accepted the transaction will be made.

In general, politeness is an important gesture that Two Tiger's staff pay attention to, regardless the guests' origin, ethnicity, appearance, language and demand. Every traveler is treated equally and being served professionally to the restaurant's concept.

# 4.1.5 Empathy

On this dimension, it demonstrates the staff's ability to understand the customer's needs and specific requirements which will be valuable assets to keep the customers. Besides, general attention might not be enough, because each guests will own individual needs. This explains that the employees need to be able to provide individualized attention, make them feel special so that the level of satisfaction will rise in their mindset.

Once stepping in the restaurant, employees will create the happy welcoming ambience to make the sales. Even though sales are of importance to every business, still providing memorable polite atmosphere do play a pivotal role in Two Tiger's restaurant service excellence. Disabled guests and family with children draw the staff's attention, because they do need help along with heavy hand luggage or baby accompanied. These cases will receive the special care, with the staff coming to the table or their offer to help. Table service is definitely provided to the disabled that would like to have their meals at the place. Single traveler with kid will be asked if needed, because some guests have their travel experience and they can manage. Usually the employee offers himself to bring the tray of food to the guest's table, make it easier to their food travel routine.

Whenever asked or requested for help at the table, the employee would be willing to go and give a helping hand. It has been trained on their mind that the main responsibility is to help and serve tasks related to food inside the restaurant. If something is out of staff's ability outside of the restaurant, the employees will be happily helping within their capability.

# 5 The research process

The research was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative method. A questionnaire for customers with 17 multiple-choices was built based on the five dimensions in SERVQUAL model. Another set of free-form questions was prepared to interview the restaurant's employees. During the interviews of either forms, interviewees got instruction from one of the authors in order to overcome the language barrier or misunderstanding that some question might have caused.

#### 5.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research tends to involve relatively large-scale and representative sets of data, and is often, falsely in our view, presented or perceived as being about the gathering of "facts". When in fact, quantitative research is concerned with the collection and analysis of data in numeric form. There are several types of quantitative research that can be classified as: survey research (1), correlational research (2), experimental research (3) and casual-comparative research (4). Each type has different characteristics and suitable for different purpose of study. However, in this particular research, the authors find survey research type fits with the purpose of the study, the scale of the restaurant with its style of service. Survey research enables the possibility of comparison between groups. And if the group is large enough, the sample of result from the group answer can present to the entire population, or in this case, the whole target customer group with a degree of certainty.

"For example, 57% of the population +/- 3% will answer a specific matter the same way as in the result, 95% of the time." (Sukamolson , 4.)

# 5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is an exploratory research method used to collect an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It claims to describe life worlds "from inside out", from the point of view of the people who participate. By so doing it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features. It rather makes use of the usual or the deviant and unexpected as a source of insight and a mirror whose reflection makes the unknown, thereby opening up further possibilities for (self-) recognition (Flick, U., Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. 2004, 3).

Qualitative research method answers the questions how and why to explore deeper the problem or helps to build concepts or hypotheses for future quantitative research. Qualitative data collection methods can be using unstructured or semi-structured techniques.

Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The sample size is significantly smaller than that in quantitative research (can be less than 10 respondents), and respondents are selected to fulfill a given quota.

The method has been using to delegate qualitative research method is semi-structured interview. In this kind of interview, a series of pre-designed open-ended questions will be asked by the researchers, with accompanying queries that probe for more detailed and contextual data. The expected answers are usually in-depth information. This information will help to understand the unique as well as shared context in which the revealed information has meanings that attributed to their experiences.

The authors' choice of conducting this study in both quantitative and qualitative research was a combination of personal taste and interest of finding extra in depth responds from interviewees. The authors believe each method will complete each other to investigate the level of customer satisfaction of restaurant Two Tigers.

Although using both quantitative and qualitative methods seems like it fulfills more than enough for one study, it in fact has both strength and weaknesses. To list a few:

- Data is more comprehensive. In this particular case, it can include numbers, statistics and words. It can also include pictures and narrative depends on the purpose of the research.
- As mentioned above, the advantages of one method can overcome the disadvantages of the other method.
- The results of one method can validate those of the other method and help to form a more reliable evidence for the conclusion part.
- Interesting insights that may be missed if the research was conducted with only one method. Mixed method enhances the generalizability of the results collected from both methods.

However, designing different interview sets following both methods are more challenging than conducting the research just using either quantitative or qualitative method. Also it is more time-consuming. In some cases, if the research is funded, mixed method can easily enlarge the estimated budget. Luckily in this case, the restaurant is workplace of one author therefore the study was carried without unexpected issues.

In general, strengths and weaknesses combined, mixed method was chosen because it fits the theme of the research and the author's will to innovate the traditional customer satisfaction survey. By adding some qualitative aspects with staff interviews, it gives the quantitative survey results more credit and provides some interesting insights from staff's point of view.

# 5.3 Planning the interviews

The process of interviewing customers was conducted in Vantaa Airport where the restaurant located. Around 100 detailed question papers were designed and handed to interviewees (See Appendix 1). Also interviewed customers were briefly instructed how and when they should fill in the answers. In total 100 customers were interviewed. The language used during interviews was English since customers' nationalities vary many different countries. All of the respondents were customers of the restaurant during second week of May, 2017.

The model was chosen to construct the interview questions is SERVQUAL model. In many previous researches, this model was usually used with quantitative method. However, in this research, the authors feel that the dimensions of SERVQUAL model are applicable to the topic and its purposes. Even though the authors want the interview questions to be formed following not so strict structure, they still need to be structured enough to produce valuable answers that can actually help to improve the restaurant quality of services, that is the ultimate question of the whole research.

For the qualitative interviews with the staff of the restaurant, face-to-face interviews were chosen as method. As one of the author is currently working there, access to the premise was allowed so the interviews could also happen in the restaurant. It is more convenient for both the staff and the interviewer since arranging a meeting place was not necessary. Even the interviews were face-to-face type, recording the conversations was not applied. During the conversations, interesting information was written down by the researcher and then analyzed by both authors.

#### 5.4 Questions used in the interview

Part of the research is conducted by quantitative method. The questionnaire, including 17 multiple or yes/no questions and 1 open comment section in the end, was used to interview customer can be found in Appendix part (See Appendix 1.). Also an Interview guide for the staff was designed with a total of 6 questions. Both questionnaire was constructed

using the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model. helped to build these questions has been explained with details under each question.

#### Five SERVQUAL dimensions:

- Reliability: the ability to deliver the right service on time.
- Responsiveness: the willingness of the staff to provide timely service to customers.
- Assurance: The professionalism of service personnel.
- Empathy: Show the interest and enthusiasm to guests.
- Tangibility: Costumes, appearance of personnel and equipment for service.

The authors did not expect the answers from interviewees would only fall into these five categories. It was the unexpected, in-depth responses that is the reason why the staff interviews were conducted using qualitative approach.

The following questions are designed to get the staff's overview on customer satisfaction's improvement. Each survey paper would be handed to the staff, and (s)he will have the opportunity to speak out his opinion on the current service level.

- 1 The opening question is to find out the level of experience of the staff. It is related to two dimensions including RELIABILITY and ASSURANCE
- 2 Related to ASSURANCE, this question is expected to find out about the staff professional level; specifically, if s(he) has any background concerned to the customer service.
- 3 The two dimensions RESPONSIVENESS and EMPATHY will be emphasized in this question, as to find the general idea of how (s)he perceive about "customer satisfaction."
- 4 The staff will have a chance to express objectively the overall customer satisfaction level at Two Tigers restaurant. In this question, it is believed to dig more info about dimensions such as RELIABILITY, RESPONSIVENESS, ASSURANCE and EMPATHY.
- 5 All five dimensions is expected to be received from this question. It aims to get the individual opinions related to the improvements for a better service quality and customer satisfaction.

6 – Interesting ideas, solutions etc. are expected to be given out. Once there is suggestions on improvements, it is expected that the employee shall have a brilliant idea to delegate or give the solutions for those improvements.

# 6 Results from restaurant Two Tigers

The process of interviewing was conducted in Vantaa Airport where the restaurant located. Around 100 detailed question papers were designed and handed to customers (See Appendix 1). Customers were briefly instructed how and when they should fill in the answers. The language used during interviews was English since customers' nationalities vary many different countries. All of the respondents are customers of the restaurant during the second week of May, 2017. Among exact 100 answers collected, only 83 were valid by following the "one option for each question" policy. The analysis was processed by Excel, which also results for all figures below.

#### 6.1 Restrictions

There were several limitations in collecting the information for the analysis. The utmost restriction was the language barrier. Even though the majority of the guests coming to Two Tigers restaurant was Asian, it was not easy to get questionnaires answered because they do not understand or have sufficient English language skills. Usually the Asian guests from China and Japan already have difficulties in reading the English menu, therefore there were availability of menu translation in Japanese and Chinese. The other important customer group is Korean, however the guests are usually senior travelers and they do not speak English well. The young Korean adults are able to speak good English, however during the time conducting the questionnaires, there was restrictions in timing. Therefore, a majority of Asian travelers have not been handed out the questionnaires after the question of their English skills.

Another limitation while conducting these surveys, was that there were many Asian guests could manage well in English; however, they shall be the tour guide of a travel group or they travel with their family, which shall annoy their enjoyment of the food. Especially in the rush hours, the general mood when travelling is the feeling of rushing to the gate the earlier the better. With people who do not travel often, they will wish for the safe feeling of boarding on time. For those who has a lot of airport experience, they understand that there shall be a long queue for boarding pass check and the timing info can always be reviewed at the info board. Consequently, the guests would like to finish their portion of food and then move quickly to their boarding gate. So there might be no time to spend for a survey.

Furthermore, if the guests could answer these questionnaires during their visit in the rush hours, the results might come out to be more realistic and practical. During the rush hours, guests can have the experience of seeing a whole picture of the service, from the staff to

the food in order to evaluate their customer satisfaction. Managing the service in the peak times requires the patience of the employees, along with the team work effort in delivering the fair quick service to each guests. Hence, the questions related to waiting time and general experience towards each factors might be answered honestly and clearly.

If only the surveys can be translated to languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian, the results will be much of honest reality. Besides, the numbers of answered questionnaires were 83 over 100, which shall be a good one. However, if the number of answers would range more than that, such as 200, a clearer detailed result on the customer satisfaction level at Two Tigers restaurant will be definitely drawn out. In term of overall experience and honest feedback, it would be beneficial to spend time asking face-to-face or the guests can express their real honest experience.

# 6.2 Background information of the visit customers

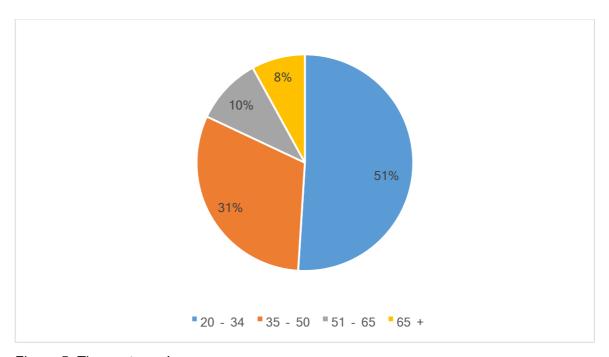


Figure 5: The customer's age group

About half of the respondents (51%) range from the age of 20 to 34 – a young adult age group. Another age group segments are guests from 35 to 50 years old, accounts for 31% of the number of 83 visits. A fair figure of 10% and 8%, respectively, shares for the senior adults and the old adults, are guests who is 51 – 65-year-old group and more than 65 years old. From here we can see that mainly the young people are the active group that likes to visit restaurant.

Gender of visit customers

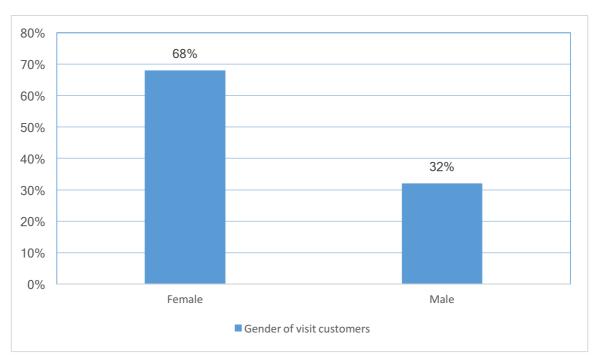


Figure 6: Gender of visit customers

The majority of respondents (67,47%) were female, while the rest (32,53%) were male who paid a visit and had a proper meal at the restaurant.

The vast majority of the respondents were from Europe (54%). The second largest customer group came to visit restaurant was from Asia (28%), while the rest divided to other guests coming from Africa, America and Australia with 7%, 7% and 4%, respectively. These numbers are figurative, since the questionnaires were conducted mainly in the quiet morning time. The explanation for this, was that the guests have more time to spend in answering than in the rush hours. During the rush hour, it was difficult to manage asking the guests since it became crowded and the guests would like to have their meals and get to their flight gates the sooner the better. That is the common feeling before fights because guests do not want to miss their flight and it makes them feel safe when they are at the gate and can hear the update information of their flight.

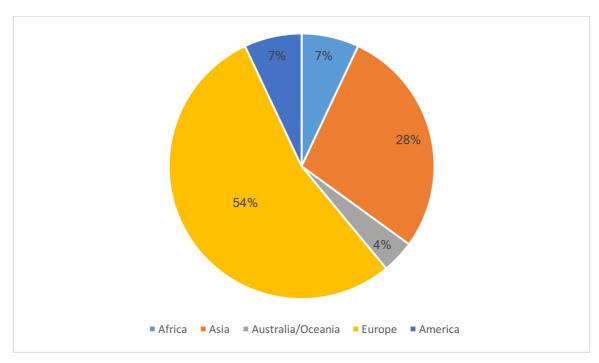


Figure 7: Where are the customers from?

Most of the people responding to the questionnaire (95%) were the first timers, while the rest (5%) have had visited the restaurants before. Reasons for this were that they were in transit to other countries, where Helsinki – Vantaa airport is known for being the transit hub in Nordic countries.

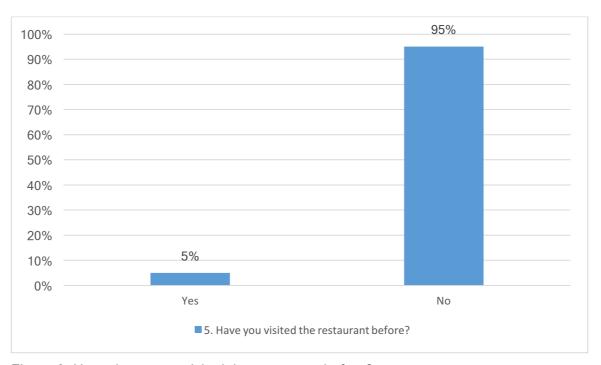


Figure 8: Have the guests visited the restaurant before?

The purpose of the visit for the majority of the respondents was casual meal before flight, 34% of the guests wanted to eat because it was time to eat. 28% of the guests found Two

Tigers as the only restaurant at this airport that serves Asian food, 27% were feeling hungry by the time they passed by and browsed the menu. 3% of the guests has smelled the nice aroma and seen the crowd gathering to check and buy the food, while another 3% found free space that they could sit and enjoy the food without worrying of leaving after eating. The remaining 5% who marked "other" purposes of their visits, some answers were: sushi wanted, noodles soup wanted, rice wanted, did not want Western food.

#### 6.3 SERVQUAL dimensions in the answers

To test the reliability, which is the ability of the staff to deliver the right service on time, customers were asked how they had felt about the waiting time. Most of them thought the waiting time had gone by fast (82%) and 15 customers (18%) felt that the waiting time reached their satisfactory level. None of the customers thought that the service time had been slow.

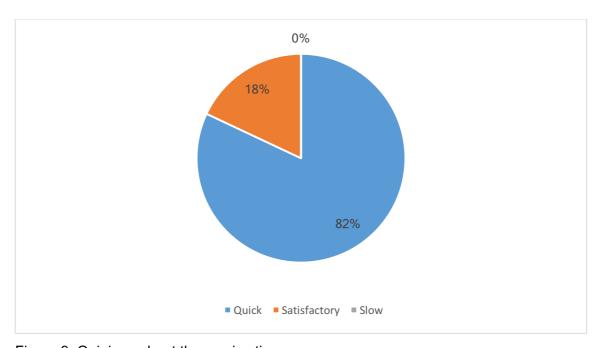


Figure 9: Opinions about the service time

The willingness to serve customers, which equals to responsiveness in SERVQUAL, is one of the most important criteria to be one member of the restaurant team. Among 83 respondents, a significant number of 52 people thought the employees' instruction and explanation on menu items/options was "carefully and knowledgably". Following are 29 customers (35%) thought that the staff's effort had made it to their satisfaction level. The rest 2% found that the menu introduction was poor and did not satisfy to persuade them to make the buying decision.

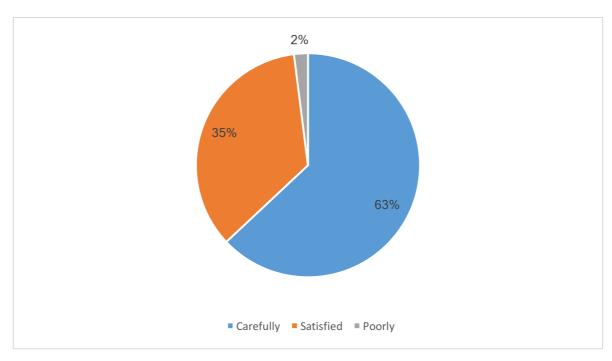


Figure 10: The satisfaction level on the staff in introducing the menu items

Customers were asked if the performance of the staff and their hospitality attitude had reached their satisfactory level, which represent assurance and empathy dimension. The vast majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that the staff were helpful and professional in general, including welcoming, introducing food and helping in making the food purchasing decision. 15 out of 83 guests, accounted for 18%, thought that they were satisfied with the professionalism and friendliness of the employees in Two Tigers. Interestingly, that none of the answers placed in the categories of being unsatisfied with the service or totally disappointed with the staff. From here it can be seen that the employees at this restaurant are doing a good job in representing a good image for their organization.

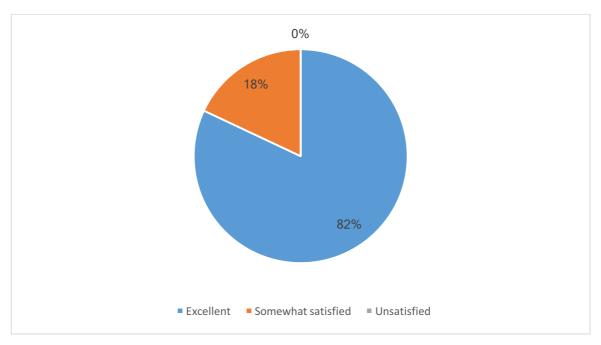


Figure 11: Opinion on the professionalism and friendliness of the staff

With the location at Vantaa-Helsinki Airport, restaurant Two Tigers has customers with international backgrounds. Questions about language instruction were included in the survey. Out of the respondents, a total of 71 people (86%) were satisfied with both the availability of the language they understand and how detailed it was presented either in the menu or at service points in the restaurant. The rest of 12 customers (14%) were not satisfied with the language instruction and demanded the appearance of other languages (which will be discussed in "open comments").

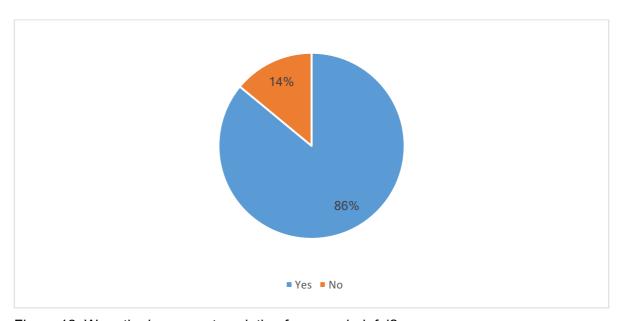


Figure 12: Were the language translation for menu helpful?

Tangibles availability is also mentioned in the questionnaire. Customers were asked how had they feel about the availability of some of the restaurant necessities. More than half of them (63%) responded with "yes", which means the necessities were enough from their point of view. One third of the group felt satisfied with the sufficiency of the condiments/spices, napkins or utensils. Only 5 customers (6%) thought that the restaurant was lacking of those. Overall, the guests seemed to be fine with the convenience of the additional necessities, since they helped with the food taste enhancement.

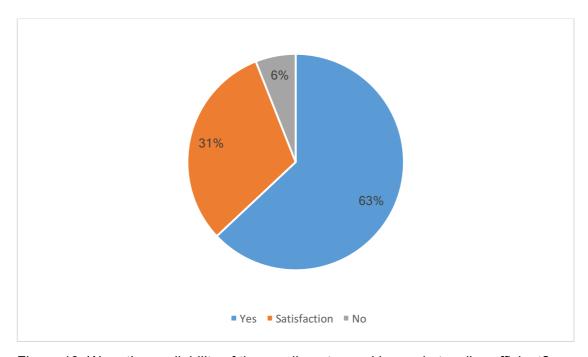


Figure 13: Were the availability of the condiments, napkins and utensils sufficient?

#### 6.4 Customer experience with the restaurant

Out of 83 respondents, 66% chose to eat at Two Tigers because of the food. 20% believed that the location was convenient which was why they decided to come to eat. Service was another factor that made the guests to come (7%), due to the moment of truth that the employees impressed the guests when they browsed around. 4% of the answered questionnaires thought that the ambience was the reason they came in. The appearance and the atmosphere of the restaurant were part of the choice for their visit. Only 2% of 83 guests thought differently, however they did not name out the other reason of their choice.

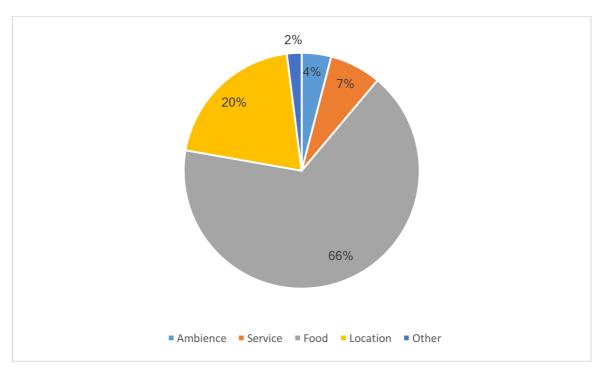


Figure 14: What made the guests choose Two Tigers?

Most of the customers (51%) found Two Tigers by airport's instruction or just by walking through it (45%). Only a small amount of guests (5%) knew about the restaurant on internet. Interesting enough, 1 one the customers emphasized she read about the restaurant on a travel discussion group, where Two Tigers was indicated as "the only Asian restaurant in Helsinki Airport". None of the respondents heard about the restaurant via friends or family.

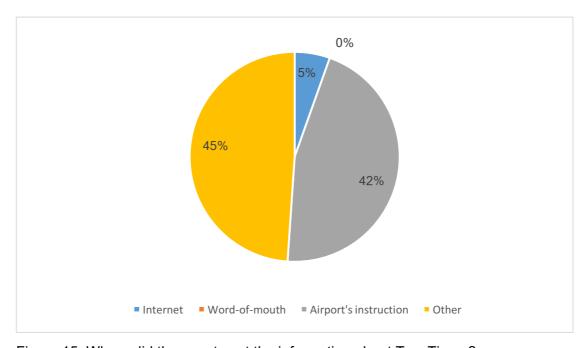


Figure 15: Where did the guests get the information about Two Tigers?

Only 11 out of 83 respondents found the choices of foods on menu was "diverse and clear". The majority of 60 customers (72%) found it "good in general". A small amount of seven respondents (8%) found the choices was "fair" and five customers (6%) thought the food variety was "poor". Among those five, one of them indicated that there should be more vegan options.

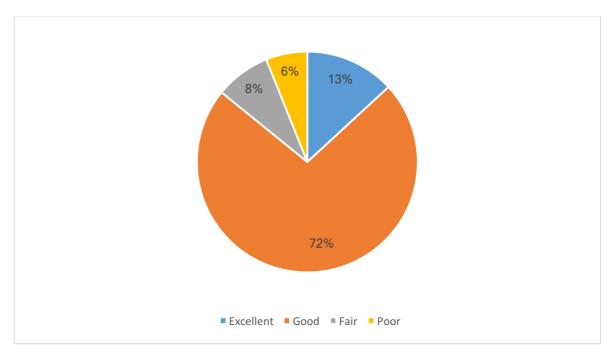


Figure 16: How would the guests describe the menu?

The vast majority of respondents (77%) was extremely satisfied with the food and thought it was "delicious". The second group of 15 answers (18%) thought the food was "okay". Only four respondents (5%) found the food was "not up to their likings".

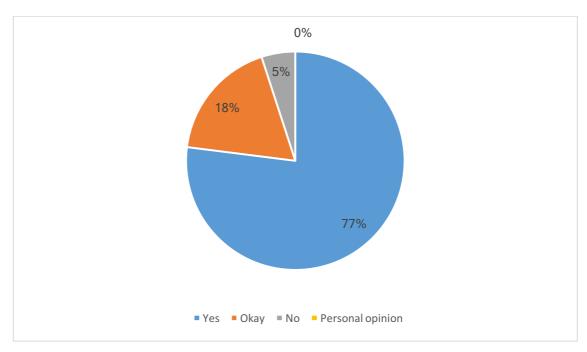


Figure 17: Are you satisfied with the quality of food?

Among 83 answer, there was only one thought the pricing did not match the value. The rest of the group thought the ratio between pricing and value was either neutral or matched each other with 48 and 34 respondents, which equals 58% and 41% respectively.

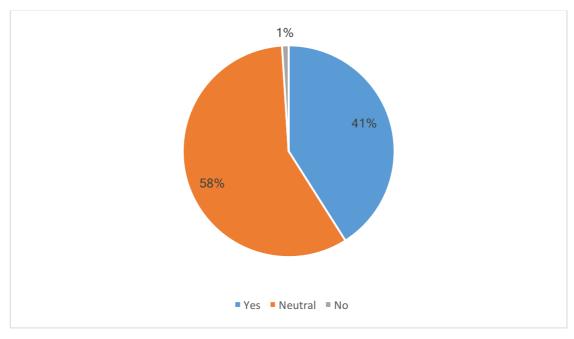


Figure 18: Does the dish pricing match its value?

Overall, a dominated number of 75 people (90%) would recommend the restaurant to their acquaintances. There was 8 "no" answers (10%) given by customers, one of them wrote in the answer sheet that "it is strange to recommend a restaurant in the airport rather than one in downtown".

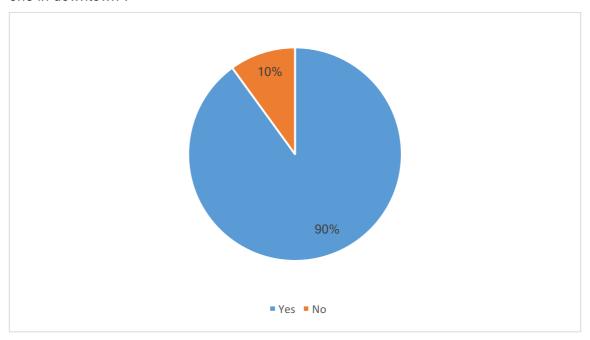


Figure 19: Would you like to recommend this restaurant to other acquaintances?

The final multiple-choice question was to discover how customers feel toward the food and staff service in general. Most of the answer (72%) agreed that both the food and the staff performance had made them satisfied. About a quarter (27%) of customers thought the staff was good but the food is average. Only one customer (1%) gave negative feedback for both the food and the employee's effort.

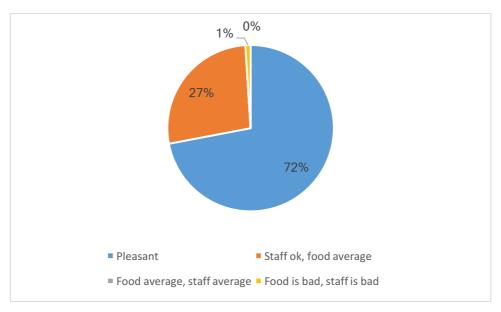


Figure 20: How would you rate the restaurant in overall?

#### 6.5 Open question

Last question was an open one, so that the guests can share their overall experience, praises or complaints or any other comments regarding their visit. There were comments about their experience towards the provision of service, food or the atmosphere at Two Tigers restaurant.

It was predicted that the guests might rarely take time to give their comments, therefore guests were encouraged when handling out the survey. Despite that, there were not much comments received. Mainly, the comments were given short and simple. Food is the most concerned factor in this open section. 13 food-feedbacks were written. The guests thought in general the food was good and delicious, by writing shortly "food was good", "best airport food before flights", "best food I have ever tried in an airport." 1 negative comment towards the vegetarian noodle soup, as commented by the guests "I didn't like the vegetarian noodle soup at all. Taste was bad!!"

The amount of feedbacks regarding the service came second after the food, there were 9 short comments, such as "very friendly service", "happy staff. Smile all the times", "very helpful staff, he helped me out because I was busy with my kids". There was two negative comment about the staff service, that "there wasn't any cashier available when I have questions" and "the staff cut sushi but don't help with my payment". These ideas are considered to be valuable because it helps the restaurant to think again of how to allocate enough staff at the right place.

3 comments about the atmosphere/ambience at Two Tigers were given. The guests found it "interesting to see so much people gathering in one small restaurant" and commented "too crowded." The last one said "funny chairs". Related to the space, during the rush hours it could become extremely crowded, since all the seats shall be occupied and there would be still guests waiting for their turn. Fortunately, there was info of the expansion of the restaurant in future, which means there will be more seats for the restaurant service.

The rest of the comments were mainly of the overall experience. One suggestion was that there "should be napkins available on the tables!". This idea has both pro and con and will be discussed in the discussion section. The other guests shared the same idea of "good place", "lovely food experience before heading to Asia", and "good service." Some took a quick appreciation by writing "thank you".

#### 6.6 Interviews with the employees

Each interview session took about 10 to 12 minutes. Among 13 employees, six of them are full-timers, the rest was all part-time. Only full-time employees were interviewed since they spend more time in the premises, therefore they get the whole picture clearer than part-time employees, who usually have working shifts in only rush hours. The number of interviewees was five since one of them was having vacation. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, in the restaurant premises during the fourth week of April, 2017.

The idea of interview was to collect opinions about personal customer satisfaction perception and their ideas for better services. Different personalities combine with work background and ideas will generate a multicultural forum for future growths and improvements.

During the analyzing process, similar opinions were put together into groups to form overall point of view about customer satisfaction and interesting ideas to improve it. The interviewees' profiles were coded so it would be easier for readers to follow researchers' intention of exposing them the way it fits the research's purposes.

Interviewee	Years of working in the	Have related background
	premise	
Α	2,5 years	Yes
В	2,5 years	No
С	3 years	Yes
D	3 years	No
Е	2,5 years	Yes

Figure 21: Interviewees' code

Employees was asked to give their own definition of customer satisfaction. In general, the common ideas of customer service were defined by everyone as of "to make customers happy", "happy about food and drinks", "happy about service". The respondents did not take more time to invest deeper picture about this definition, even though generally they do perceive customer satisfaction in a positive way of making customer satisfied with drinks and food.

When being asked to evaluate the overall customer satisfaction level at the restaurant, the first four out of the employees agreed the current level was "good", "very good" or even "super". Only the last one answer was "it has to always be higher". Currently it is believed that the service is at good level, still they also thrive to improve and develop for a more

satisfactory level. Also the interviewees were encouraged to contribute some ideas on what can be improved about the services and how would they delegate it. Respondent A and B suggested "Korean language menu", "extra foreign language instruction signs" respectively. Other than that, respondent C believes that "more proper signs in Chinese", as she explained that the majority of Chinese only speak Chinese and do not understand English, so having more instruction signs will make the job easier for both employees and customers, without causing chaos or difficulties. Respondent D thought "hiring Russian native speakers" and "a Japanese employee" would improve the quality of service performance. There was an idea of "getting to know the food" and "to create an experience for customers" from respondent E. At this point the idea sounds nice but vague. When being asked to explain more, the fifth respondent suggested "new recipe and wine tasting" could be an interesting idea. Employees would know better what they are selling and would "sell it with style", therefore would give customers better experience which result in a higher level of customer satisfaction.

#### 7 Discussion

The results from the questionnaires and the abovementioned theories in chapter 1 and 2 will be used to analyze the connection and the gap between the theory and practice. The work experience of the author shall also be put into the discussion. From that, the analysis will give a clearer overview of the customer satisfaction theories towards the case of the one and only Asian cuisine restaurant at an international airport.

Generally, it showed on the questionnaires' results a fairly happy customer satisfaction level, related to multiple aspects. The customer's opinions were considered valuable since they took time to give their feedbacks, and they were the first impressions once the guests stepped in. Even though their diversified opinions can relate to the idiom "so many men, so many minds", still those are considered a good tool to reflect and learn from for future development. From the answered surveys, it can be seen that non-English speakers suffered with this international language. Even though nowadays English is widely used around the world, compared to Chinese with more population that can speak this language, the Chinese citizens (especially Chinese senior travelers) do expect the availability of Chinese speakers and instructions signs. Those are considered helpful in delivering the quality service. The non-English speakers might expect little help from translation for the food; therefore, a catalogue with pictures of the food, attached the short definition in different well-known language will help the guests in buying decision making. Languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Russian, Spanish and French shall be considered popular. Still, these implementations should be made when there is cooperation between the restaurant management and Finavia airport operator.

A customer journey map is a good way to identify the points of sale and that is where customers form their functional quality toward the service and service provider. With restaurant Two Tigers, the journey map is 1 stage shorter since there are almost no repeated customers. Usually after having meals at the restaurant, customers can not come back unless in the future they flight from somewhere to Helsinki again. So the post-service stage hardly exists in the restaurant customer journey map.

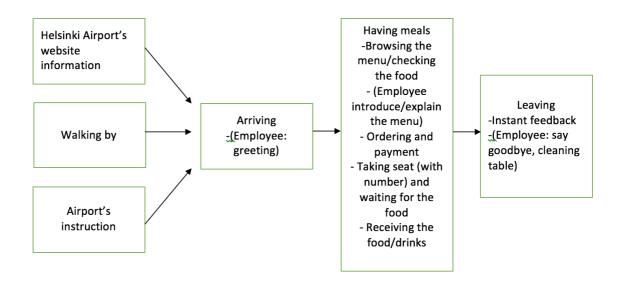


Figure 22: Restaurant Two Tigers customer journey map

People coming to the restaurant mainly are walk-ins, that they have a flight and pass by and see the restaurant. A small number of guests check on Helsinki-Vantaa airport page in advance so they would plan their travel meals in the restaurant they want. In the case of walk-ins, one big menu placed at the entrance on two side of the restaurant, or attached on the walls, would make convenience for browsing menu items and make decision to eat. Because during the rush hours, guests concentrate mainly at the tiny hall and look around for the menu. It makes a chaos picture of guests in the restaurant.

When using SERVQUAL model, it is common to compare the "expected quality" of customers to their "perceived quality" after they experienced the service. Considering the special location of the restaurant: in the airport and there are some restrictions to access the premise which makes only a small percentage of customers repeated customers (5%). The expected quality customers got about Two Tigers is from narrowed sources such as: the information from a section of Finavia's website. The external factors that influence the expected quality are: the reputation of high standard quality of Finland and the airport it-self makes all the restaurants' quality secured. However, first-time customers do not have a clear picture of the restaurant's milieu or it can be said that word-of-mouth in this case is not as powerful as it supposed to be if the restaurant located in the city center. Therefore, focusing on the perceived quality of customers in this case is more valuable for the restaurant.

Service time should always be informed and suggested for guests. Once the info of waiting time is introduced, the guests will do their math to organize their time to the boarding gate. One scenario happens usually, that the guests could not make it to eat during the

rush hours because the seats are occupied completely, therefore they wait until the number of guests reduce. When they arrive and without notice of the service time, the guests will push the staff to make quicker in order to catch the flight. The fact is that, food requires time to get cooked, if the chefs are pushed to make the food, the uncooked food will cause health problems such as stomach ache or digestive issues. From here the blame will place on the restaurant side. It is not a win-win situation because guests pay but they are not happy about the final products and it affect their travel experience. It is also contrary to the satisfaction definition. Therefore, having the service time introduced, it will decrease the situation of customers waiting in their hurry. Plus, this will leave impression that guests can see a systematic process of food delivery from the service provider. The reliability dimension from SERVQUAL is emphasized in this service time aspects. It is the communication between the kitchen staff and the seller. The two side in this operation manage to provide information, contributing in delivering the right service on time.

Will it be feasible to train the willingness of serving to the staff? It shall lie on the ability to motivate the staff from the management team and the organization has the impact on influencing the good news regularly. On the received survey, there was two negative comment about the staff service, that "there wasn't any cashier available when I have questions" and "the staff cut sushi but don't help with my payment". These ideas are considered to be valuable because it helps the restaurant to think again of how to allocate enough staff at the right place. The staff shall be busy in clearing the table, which explains why (s)he was not available at the counter. From this point, the other staff in kitchen or sushi side should notice and pay attention to be willing to come help the staff at the cashier service, or else there should be enough employees available in their own tasks, such as clearing tables or noodle soups making, so that the cashier employee will always be present at service. The confirmation of working as a whole unity with the aim of serving customers should be regularly introduced to everyone. Stated clearly that each staff has his own responsibility, however when there is a customer seeking help, the staff shall need to approach right away. There should not be the pointing of waiting at the cashier but the willingness to come and serve is essentially more necessary. Moreover, the top management shall need to influence the core value by reminding on regular basis to everyone, on weekly or monthly letter. The middle management who has chance to see employees frequently, may also positively motivating the staff to provide timely service to guests. The international airport has nice ambience, making the motivation to work in a dynamic multicultural has more influence on guests. By praising the good work of staff from the sales, the incentive rewards need to be an important factor. Being incentivized from the great sales and performance, the employees will be empowered to do excellent job in future.

Besides, the co-workers will also get influenced by working with active employees and influential managers. The incentive will mean a lot for personal growth, and the thrive for future individual development. For the new comers, the slow service might happen for being strange. Therefore, the supervision is required, and the need to ensure effective service needs to be assisted and supervised. Learning from the mistakes and from co-workers help to get better every day. The quality of being motivated and happy at work is of importance.

In the assurance aspect mentioned in SERVQUAL, the professionalism of service personnel is emphasized. From the questionnaire results, the quality of professionalism and friendliness has been rated at excellent level. Still, regular training or new information of updating products should frequently be informed for better service quality. Food ingredients, food allergies and dietary restrictions should be of prioritized in selling the products, especially when there are requirements from guests. Knowledge in beverages is also essential, especially the alcohol training and principals of serving needs to follow accordingly the Finnish law. Being educated about food and drinks will help a smoother control in service, leading to satisfaction. Besides that, proper language skills do help in service excellence. The help from instruction signs in different languages shall minimize the risks in misunderstanding the service journey. These draw a picture of quality profession of the employees, giving a polite impression of the restaurant. Furthermore, upselling and cross selling skills should be spread and trained to sellers, in order to generate revenues for the company. The more experience the sellers gain, the more confident they are in serving guest. It will help to meet the needs of the travelers in choosing different offers and options.

Relating the tangibility dimension, it says about equipment for service and appearance for personnel. Only a small amount of the guests found it dissatisfactory of the availability, without specifying the lack of their needs. One suggestion was that there "should be napkins available on the tables!". This idea has both pro and con. The pro relates to the convenience of the guests, while the con is that there is not much space to place on the table and it is difficult in the rush hour to arrange space and clear the tables for other customers. Some of the guests found it "interesting to see so much people gathering in one small restaurant" and commented "too crowded." Related to the space, during the rush hours it could become extremely crowded, since all the seats shall be occupied and there would be still guests waiting for their turn. Fortunately, there was info of the expansion of the restaurant in future, which means there will be more seats for the restaurant service. There has always been frequently requests from guests, mainly the Chinese, for vinegar. Understanding the Chinese food cultures, vinegar has been used in cooking for such a long time

of 3000 years (Wan, L. 2016). Rice has always been an important ingredient in Chinese cooking, and it has been used to make vinegar to add to different dishes to enhance the flavor. Therefore, the availability of important condiments or sauces will add an extra point in customers' food experience. The restaurant shall invest more oriental condiments on request of guests, as one example of suggestion. It will lead to the satisfaction in meals.

### **HMSHost Core Values**

Each of us, all over the world, has the same goal: feel good and make the travellers feel good. Be passionate, be open, set the pace, be reliable and keep it simple are the values which guide us in our work.



We are real people with one common virtue: empathy. We work hard and intelligently to consistently achieve concrete results. Simple, right?

Figure 23: HMSHost Core Values (HMSHost International 2017)

As part of the big company, Two Tigers restaurant staff do follow and keep it up with the 5 defined values by the founders and management team of HMSHost. They are: be passionate, be open, set the pace, be reliable and keep it simple. The primary attention the employees pay to is the guests and their satisfaction. To make a great workplace and provide quality products, the team work effort plays an important role. The management team motivate and encourage the employees, get them involved in achieving the set goals, help them to seek best ability or talent that they are good at. Moreover, the employees play the role as active people by showing their enthusiasm and passion at work, so that it matches with the effort the management team try to connect within organization. Together as a unity, every staff are equally encouraged to speak out their mind. Sharing ideas, questioning from curiosity, listening to other's opinions and showing respect to everyone are a few respectable elements that make it a great place to work. The contribution is needed from every single entity. Asking and learning from each other is recommended, especially when there are newcomers. From this point, the communication shall be growing effectively since the discussion. Working together happily as a team can bring the great international

atmosphere at work, at the same time it enhances the employee's mood to provide excellent service to the air travelers. Time is precious, therefore working hard together brings out sufficient and outstanding level of service. Lastly, providing the excellent service promptly and responsibly will spread the image of the company further, which creates a reliable memorable image on the guests' heart.

According to Wendy (2013), core values clarify the identity of the organization, making it a competitive advantage to differentiate from others. Core values support the decision-making processes, help to shape the cultures in the company. They reflect what the company values, show the dynamic cultures, principles and beliefs of the organization that everyone looks up to and follow accordingly. Each firm has its own core values, and focus on them in order to run smoothly by establishing competitive advantages externally and internally. In HMSHost Finland, the 5 values are influenced by management team to remind and together take actions with the employees. Be passionate value tells a picture of a great team work, where there is commitment, involvement and the enthusiasm of the employees. These facts are emphasized more in the value of being open, which there will be no boundaries of the cultures, background or people. Any ideas of any employees will be respectfully listened and shared in the group, so that together, a new future and clear visions will be set. Setting the pace value is of important, it is stated that time is preciously meaningful and valuable for travelers. Therefore, the employees together will need to pay attention in providing appropriate service time, contributing in making the guests' travel smooth. Besides that, HMSHost do not only pay special care to the travelers, but also to their stakeholders, such as the landlords, suppliers and brands. Owning vast experience through years and years, the company vision to act responsibly and promptly to make a reliable image. Finally, moral values are essential within the organization. Of utmost importance, the company believes that its staff will put themselves into the guest's feelings and experience, so that they know how to act in each situation.

Do the core values take part in improving the service quality and leading to great customer satisfaction? All in all, the core values that has been set at HMSHost play an essential role in shaping the cultures in different subsidiaries. The HMSHost in Finland do follow and influence the set of values every day, making it beautiful and active cultures within organization. From there the staff will have the motivation to together contribute to the service excellence, sharing the goals of ensuring great service quality and leading to happy customer satisfaction.

Employees engagement is an essential factor in excellent service contribution. An effective communication between co-workers at Two Tigers will result in a great customer satisfaction. The communication helps to engage the staff with spread information, inspiring each of them to put more effort in the team work. The supervisor is responsible for motivating and engaging the staff. It reflects a good leadership skill. Fun twist at the work place is essential, so that the staff will feel good and energizing in working. The contribution at the workplace needs to spread and set equally, so that everyone do not feel that they have to work harder than others. By sharing the job and motivating the co-workers by asking for help, it will result in quality service. The guests will see happy teamwork when the place is fun and together cooperative. Finally, happy teamwork and job sharing will eventually contribute in the satisfaction of the customers. It leaves a positive image of the company, spreading widely to guest's network.

Intercultural training is one idea to help the staff learn more about other cultures. Two Tigers is an Asian themed restaurant, therefore promoting and advertising the charm of Asia and Asian is very interesting and unique in a western land, especially in the environment of dynamic airport. The training in intercultural competences will give employees perspective in serving different segments of guests, but the core character of the service should always be emphasized as courteous. Learning together about the cultures, the employees knows how to act timely in handling situations.

All in all, the theory part might define clearly the service and its form, and the practice supports the theories and give the readers a bigger picture of general ideas of this thesis.

Both are important to learn for future research and development.

#### 8 Conclusion

The purposes of this thesis are:

- 1) To evaluate the current level of service quality and as a result, customer satisfaction.
- 2) To spot out complexes that now appears in the restaurant and collect opinions on improvements from both customer survey and employees' interviews.
- 3) To create customer journey map based on the research results and ideas. The map is believed to help improve service quality and create a pleasant experience to customers, which will eventually increase customer satisfaction.

As discussed in the previous part, it can be reported that most of all customers are satisfied with the experience they had in Two Tigers and are willing to recommend the restaurant to their acquaintances (if they had a chance to visit Helsinki Airport). This can be considered a success for the working team of the restaurant. The efforts they gave have resulted in a positive outcome.

However, as mentioned in the Restriction part, because most customers who did the survey are either Westerners or understanding English well, it is necessary to find a way to communicate with non-English-speakers, to be more specific: Asian customers, mostly Chinese and Japanese. It does not show in the results that the restaurant had a significant customer group of these nationalities, but through observations the authors estimated more than half of customers the restaurant welcomes a day belong to this group. Hiring people from every nation is not a possible solution. Instead following the suggestions proposed above seems to be more practical. The bottom line is not only to sell the technical quality like food or drinks, but also for customers to see the efforts from the restaurant as known as the functional quality. By creating a customer journey map, it is easier to add more dimension to service touch points, especially language instructions considering the international environment of the restaurant.

The process of writing a thesis with multiple authors were challenging. Forming ideas, building structure and contents of the thesis were difficult to reach agreeable terms due to different thinking. However, since there were more than one perspectives, it helped to create a more objective picture of the scenario and therefore, a more reliable research results. By conducting this thesis, the authors got familiar with the terms using in service quality and customer satisfaction research and had a chance to bring the theories into practice. Also by going through the procedure of both quantitative and qualitative method, the authors have improved the ability to approach a problem and this would be helpful in future career.

The thesis has provided a boarder theoretical background about service quality and customer satisfaction. SERVQUAL model can be applied for many customer satisfaction study in different fields. At the moment, restaurant Two Tigers is expanding in size and there would be longer opening hours due to customer's demand. Also there has been one more restaurant Two Tigers with the similar concept opening in Oslo Lufthavn Airport, Norway. It is possible in the future the restaurant's concept becomes an interesting idea that specifically locates in airports. Further study on potential of the restaurant or other service quality aspects as a chain should be considered as an interesting topic and valuable for the company.

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# **Appendices**

## Customer satisfaction survey: your experience at the Two Tigers restaurant

The following questionnaire contains a few questions about your overall experience and the satisfaction that you have had at restaurant Two Tigers. The answers will be handle anonymously. It will take a maximum of 3 minutes to answer. Please kindly tick only 1 option for each question.

1)	Your age group	is		
□ 20	- 34	□ 35 - 50	□ 51 – 65	□ 65+
2)	Gender:			
□Ма	ale	☐ Female		
3)	You are from			
	rica ıstralia/Oceania nerica (either Northe	☐ Europe	Asia merica)	
4)	What made you	choose Two Tige	ers?	
□ Se	nbience ervice her, what?		☐ Food Location	
5)	) Have you visited	the restaurant b	pefore?	
□ Ye	es 🗆 No			
6)	) Where did you զ	get the information	on about Two Tigers?	
☐ Air	ernet ord-of-mouth rport's instruction her, from where?			
7)	) What is the purp	ose of your visit	?	
☐ Fe☐ It s☐ Th☐ It's	asual meal before flig eling hungry seems crowded and ere is free space the sthe only restaurant her, what?	nice aroma at I can sit, eat an	d rest before flights. n cuisine.	

8) How would you describe the variety of foods on menu?			
<ul><li>□ Excellent, the choices are diverse and clear</li><li>□ Good</li><li>□ Fair</li></ul>			
☐ Poor, should include more dishes			
9) Are you satisfied with the quality of food?			
<ul> <li>☐ Yes, it was delicious</li> <li>☐ It is okay, I was just hungry and looking for something to eat.</li> <li>☐ No, it was not up to my likings.</li> <li>☐ Personal opinion:</li> </ul>			
10) Does the dish pricing match its value?			
☐ Yes ☐ Neutral ☐ No			
11) The professionalism and friendliness of the staff were			
<ul> <li>□ Excellent, very helpful</li> <li>□ Somewhat satisfied</li> <li>□ Somewhat unsatisfied</li> <li>□ Totally unsatisfactory</li> </ul>			
12) The employee introduced and explained menu items/options:			
□ carefully and knowledgably □ satisfactorily □ poorly			
13) Waiting time was			
☐ quick ☐ satisfactory ☐ slow			
14) The availability of the condiments/spices, napkins and utensils were sufficient			
□ yes □ satisfactory □ no			
15) Would you like to recommend this restaurant to other acquaintances (friends, family members, etc.) when they travel through the Non-Schengen area, and why?			

restau	rant works helpful?
□ yes, be	cause
□ no, bec	ause
17) How w	vould you rate the restaurant overall with your experience?
☐ I'm very	pleasant with the service and the food
	as professional but the food was average
	as good but staff was not friendly and professional t enjoy the food at all and the staff was not courteous
erall expe	ience, further comment, or what improvements, if any:

This questionnaire is part of a thesis made for HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences. All answers are being appreciated and will be treated in confidence.

Thank you for your time and opinion!

# Interview Guide for Employees at Two Tigers Restaurant

The following questions are designed to get the staff's overview on customer satisfaction's improvement.

1.	How long have you been working here?
2.	What's your academic/vocational background?
3.	What's your personal definition of customer satisfaction?
4.	What do you think about the overall customer satisfaction level at our restaurant
5.	What can be improved on our service?
6.	Would you mind to delegate?