INTRODUCTION

Quality is instrumental in expanding the market share and return on investment (Anderson and Zeithaml, 1984; Phillips, Chang, and Buzzell, 1983) and in decreasing the expenditure of manufacturing and enhancement of efficiency (Garvin, 1983). Moreover, in the era of technology where comparisons of price of the products and services are instantly available on the web, the provision of quality in services becomes even more crucial in retaining and enticing customers (Jiang and Rosenbloom, 2005). The consumer’s tastes and needs are dynamic, implying that every brand should constantly seek ways to offer freshness in order to remain relevant in the market place. Therefore, the quality in services is critical to gain competitive edge, as well as it ensures consistency with brand loyalty and customer retention initiatives.

Service quality is generally elucidated as the overall evaluation of a service by the customers (Eshghi et. al., 2008), or the degree to which a service matches the needs and expectations of customers (Asubonteng et. al., 1996; Parasuraman et. al., 1991). Parasuraman et. al. (1985) defines service quality as the discrepancy between the perceptions of services provided and the expectations customers hold from the service organization. The perception of consumers’ results from the comparison of expectations formed before experiencing the service with the actual experiences. Parasuraman et. al. (1991) acknowledged that expectations (“what services should be”) are usually not realistic. In accordance, expectations were redefined in prognostic terms i.e. the outcome desired from a superior service. The expectations of the consumers serve as the standards against which service experiences could be appraised. Customers perceive quality in a subjective manner i.e. what is perceived as good quality for one person may be less acceptable for the other. Thus, the quality that a consumer perceives in a service is a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived service (Parasuraman et. al., 1988).

Service quality is considered as the consumer’s comprehensive opinion of the effectiveness of the establishment (Park et. al., 2004). Primarily, due to the intangible nature of services (Bateson, 1977; Berry, 1980; Lovelock, 1981; Shostak, 1977), it becomes challenging for the businesses to comprehend the manner in which consumers perceive services and appraise service quality (Zeithaml, 1981). Grilbert et. al. (2004) also stresses on that the service quality measurement need to be done frequently to obtain an accurate level of service quality.
The Indian food and beverage industry is one of the most dynamic industries that has experienced phenomenal growth over the time and has illustrated a forward moving approach which could be attributed to the changing demographics, increase in disposable incomes, urbanization and the like. As per National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI, 2016) the restaurant industry is expected to contribute about 2.1% to the total GDP of India by 2021. Further, Indian food services market will grow at a CAGR of 10 percent till 2021. Further, it also identifies that the Indian food services market will grow from INR 3,091.1 billion (2013) to INR 4,981.3 billion by 2021.

Further, with the advent of rapid urbanization accompanied with busy lifestyle and advancement in technology has notably transformed the way of life of many people which in turn have dramatically altered the tradition of cooking and eating at home. As evident, people are now more dependent on ready-to-eat meals available in the market for their daily sustenance and popular among them are fast foods. Fast food is a popular term given to the food that “can be prepared and served very quickly”. Moreover, Euromonitor (2016) in a report states that fast food segment accounts for 16.3% of the total food service industry. Further, a report by Zion Market Research (2017) also identified that global fast food market was valued at over USD 539.63 billion in 2016 and is expected to reach above USD 690.80 billion by 2022. According to the latest data revealed by ASSOCHAM (2015), the quick service restaurants (QSR) sector in India is currently growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent and is likely to touch INR 25,000 crore mark by 2020.

Moreover, the restaurant industry is no longer divided into clear-cut segments since the services offered do sometimes overlap. Further, various fast food restaurants offer similar or undifferentiated products and service quality serves to be the major discriminator between superior/inferior product or service. Therefore, measurement of service quality is essential for a fast food restaurant to evaluate and maintain the performance of the brand and enhance competitiveness.

**Measurement of service quality**

The marketing academicians Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) attempted, proposed, developed and iterated a conceptual framework to quantify service quality by a measurable scale termed SERVQUAL. The model tries to depict the effectiveness of the attributes of the service organization which subsequently influences the experiences of the customers.
Additionally, the model reflects the interaction and linkages between the activities of service establishment as considered apt for the delivery of a satisfactory level of service quality. These linkages described as “gaps” or “discrepancies” signifies the obstacles to achieving a satisfactory level of service quality (Shahin et. al., 2010). Further, the examinations of the Parasuraman et. al. (1985) research revealed a total of ten dimensions which the customers use to build their expectations about and perceptions of services received. However, later the components were abridged into five generic dimensions namely “Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness (RATER dimensions)”. Further, a more recent version of SERVQUAL takes into account the three contexts i.e. minimum and desired service expectations, and the perception of service performance. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1993) appraise the three-fold structure as suitable for the purpose of reestablishment of expectations into desired and minimum expectations and the zone of tolerance which denotes the extent to which the performance of the service would be acceptable by the customer (Boulding, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993).

The SERVQUAL model has been theoretically and empirically studied, examined, and discussed in several academic studies. In addition, it has been implemented to measure and assess service quality across different service, industrial, commercial, and non-profit settings (Buttle, 1996; Ladhari, 2008). This includes, for example, hospitals and health-care sector, banking and financial services sector, fast food chain, telecommunications industry, retail chain, information systems, library services, hotels and leisure services, travel and tourism, car servicing, higher education, hospitality, business-to-business channel partners, accounting firms, architectural services, recreational services, airline catering, apparel retailing, and local government (Carman, 1990; Parasuraman et. al., 1994; Johns, 1993). Additionally, it has been employed to measure service quality across different countries and various cultural backgrounds as well (Ladhari, 2008).

**Service Quality and Fast Food**

The food and beverage sector has considerably evolved over the years, giving rise to new and innovative service elements. Owing to changing demographics and economy fast food has become indispensable in the lives of people across cultures. Further, research interest in perceived service quality in fast food operations is abounding. Shivani Verma (2015) measured service quality in international fast food chains in Ludhiana, Punjab namely McDonald’s, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Domino’s Pizza, Pizza Hut and Subway and
explored that on most aspects service quality did not meet the expectation of customers. The parameter empathy had the highest gap and poor internal consistency while the parameter reliability had the lowest and good internal consistency. Amongst the five dimensions, the reliability dimension was the most significant and tangibles dimension was the least significant whereas in all the five international fast food chains, the average scores for Pizza Hut were the highest on the three dimensions, namely, tangibles, reliability and empathy. Manjunath and Shireen Reginald (2016) analyzed the restaurants of Mysore to find out the essential factors or determinants of customers’ satisfaction. The findings revealed that a substantial positive association between the service quality, product quality, physical design, price, physical environment, taste, and promotion lead to customer satisfaction. Abirami (2016) conducted a study to assess customer perception of service quality towards fast food restaurants namely KFC, MC Donalds, Subway, Pizza Hut and Dominos in Coimbatore City and found that there exist a considerable gap between the customer expectation and customer perception of service quality delivered at fast food restaurants in Coimbatore city. Further, Dominos was found to be popular amongst consumers.

Thus, it could be inferred that research studies on service quality in context of fast food sector is gaining momentum to gain meaningful insights about the associations between the two.

As fast food is one of the rapidly growing sub sectors of food and beverage in India. Delhi (NCR) is considered to be one of the largest unorganized hubs of North India. In addition, it is also one of the most developed and economically sound regions of the country. Due to this, it has attracted a number of fast food outlets to invest in this region.

So, it became purposive to conduct the present study in Delhi (NCR) to explore the consumer’s perception towards service quality in fast food restaurants.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To analyze the service quality of various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).
- To compare the perceived service quality of various National & International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).
- To assess the brand popularity of various fast food restaurants based on the frequency of consumers visit.
To assess the relationship between consumer’s profile and service quality of various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

To evaluate the reasons for the growth of fast food culture in India.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis 1: Food & beverage service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H01 There is no significant association between customers’ expectation and perception towards fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H11 There is a significant association between customers’ expectation and perception towards fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

Hypothesis 2: Comparative assessment of service quality amongst national and international fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H02 There is no significant difference in service quality amongst National and International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H12 There is significant difference in service quality amongst National and International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

Hypothesis 3: Relationship between consumers profile and attributes of service quality

H03 There is no significant relationship between consumers profile and service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H13 There is significant relationship between consumers profile and service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

SAMPLE DESIGN

Sample size

The present study was confined to Delhi (NCR) which includes Delhi, Noida, Faridabad, Gurgaon and Sonepat and a total of 1000 was taken as sample. The sample is appropriate i.e. in accordance with the formula developed by Cochran (1977) to calculate a representative sample for large population whose degree of variability is not known. The sample size taken for the present study is above the parameter as assuming the maximum variability, which is equal to 50% (p =0.5) and taking 95% or 99% confidence level with ±5% precision, the
maximum sample drawn from the above mentioned formula would be 384 and 666 respectively. Further, sample size of 400 is considered adequate for population size above 5000 (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

**Sampling**

To conduct the present study stratified convenience sampling was used to select various fast food restaurants from different regions. Stratified convenience sampling is often used when the population taken in the study is heterogeneous and contains several different groups, some of which are related to the topic of the study. Such a sampling technique ensures a high degree of representativeness of all the strata in the population.

**Design & Structure of Questionnaire**

The primary data for the research was collected with a self-administered structured questionnaire based on the different dimensions of SERVQUAL and was prepared after thorough review of the existing literature.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

- The first section comprised a total of forty five variables measuring the respondents’ expectations and perceptions regarding service quality in fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).
- The second section comprising of ten variables examined the respondents’ frequency of visit to various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).
- The third section of questionnaire encompassed five variables which evaluated the reasons for rise in fast food culture in India.
- The fourth and the last section formed of demographic profile of the respondents in Delhi (NCR).

**DATA ANALYSIS**

To evaluate the feasibility of the study, a pilot survey was conducted to gauge the reliability, weaknesses and outcomes of the questionnaire. A Pilot Survey is conducted with few individuals of the target population or the sample of a survey; in order to test and refine the survey instruments (questionnaire and instruction manual, data processing manual and programs) before the main data collection across the target population or the full sample.
Various statistical and accounting tools have been used for analyzing the data using SPSS and have been presented through tables, diagrams and graphs. A brief outline of the same is given below:

**Descriptive Analysis**

In the present study mean was calculated in order to draw inferences about the expectations and perceptions of the consumers and for the analysis of any gap between them. Translational level given by Best (1977) was used for rating the mean score. Further, standard deviation was calculated to measure the dispersion of data from mean.

**Percentage analysis**

Percentage analysis is a method to illustrate raw streams of data as a percentage and was applied to create a contingency table from the frequency distribution and represent the collected data for better understanding.

**Inferential Analysis**

To draw conclusions from the present study the paired sample $t$-test was used which is a parametric statistical procedure used for the comparison of two population means which typically represent two different times (e.g., pre-test and post-test with an intervention between the two time points) for the determination of a statistical evidence that the mean difference between paired observations (expectations and perceptions of the consumers) is significantly different from zero. One way ANOVA or one way analysis of variance was also used to examine the relationship between consumers’ profile and service quality attributes by comparing the variance (or variation) between the data and within data.

**SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis is a business management technique meant for understanding the strengths and weaknesses, and for identifying both the opportunities and threats an organization may encounter in accomplishing its defined objectives. Strengths and weaknesses are usually internal to the organization, whereas opportunities and threats generally correspond to external factors. It helps the organization to craft a sustainable niche in the competitive business environment. Further, it helps to establish effective strategies to differentiate the business to compete successfully in the market, aids in assessment of the ever-changing environment and to respond proactively so as to keep the business on track right away. It also
helps to understand the competitors better, consequently provides insights to draft coherent and successful competitive position in the market.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Tourism, Fast Food, and Service Quality**
  The chapter provides an overview of the tourism industry in India, sectors of tourism, share of fast food sector, factors influencing the growth of fast food restaurants, emerging trends in fast food sector, service quality and any associations between them.

- **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**
  The chapter entails the work of previous research publications (books, journals, reports, documents, articles etc.) on service quality in service, tourism & hospitality, food & beverage sector and fast food restaurants and other related arenas.

- **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**
  The chapter elucidates the nature of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, scope, methodology, limitations and tentative chapter scheme of the study.

- **Chapter 4: Analysis & Interpretations**
  The chapter entails the analysis of data and the corresponding interpretations. Further, discusses various tests and statistical tools used and the inferences drawn from the same required to fulfill the objectives of the study.

- **Chapter 5: Conclusions, Findings, & Recommendations**
  The chapter covers the conclusion and findings of the study as inferred by the testing the hypotheses and provides corresponding suggestions and recommendations for the same.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**OBJECTIVE 1**

**Analysis of the food and beverage service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR) region.**

For the inference of the achievement of the objective descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis (Mean and standard deviation) and Service Quality GAP was figured which included the highest and lowest expected and perceived values for service quality. Service quality is
evaluated on the basis of GAP analysis. Further, the magnitude or extent of service quality is divided into three distinct groups i.e. negative service quality i.e. below expectations; zero GAP i.e. match between the customers ‘expectations and perceptions and positive service quality i.e. above customers ‘expectations. The outcome of the current study includes only two groups i.e. zero GAP and negative service quality.

- The zero gap class of variables represents the variables whose negative gap values were below 0.1 which was considered to be as minimal and negligible. A count of seven variables in total were included in the zero gap strata which infers that the zero GAP attributes almost met the expectations of the consumers regarding the quality of service provided by the fast food restaurants.
- The negative gap class of variables highlights the variables where the level of expectations of the consumers was high and was not met by the fast food restaurant service providers. The service quality gap was measured negative for 38 variables which needs utmost consideration by the fast food restaurants.

Hence, it can be inferred from the analysis of the expectations and experiences of the consumers that the provision of service quality in the various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR) is not satisfactory provided that the majority of the consumers had comparatively higher expectations in context the provision of the quality of service.

**HYPOTHESIS 1**

From the analysis it could be concluded that null hypothesis (H01) is rejected by a few number of variables and alternate hypothesis (H11) is accepted by most of the attributes (41 variables). The detailed analysis of the first hypothesis and the corresponding testing of the hypothesis are presented in tabular form.

**Table 1 A summary of testing of HYPOTHESIS H1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer expectation and perception towards service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H01 There is no significant association between customers’ expectation and perception towards fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</td>
<td>Paired t test</td>
<td>4 variables reject while 41 variables accept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H11 There is a significant association between customers’ expectation and perception towards fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</td>
<td>Paired t test</td>
<td>41 variables accept while 4 variables reject.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, it is inferred that the hypothesis is partially accepted and partially rejected.
OBJECTIVE 2

A comparison of the perceived service quality of various National and International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

In order to compare the perceived service quality of various National and International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR) the average mean scores for service quality were measured individually for National and International fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

Further, neither international nor national fast food restaurants met the expectations of consumers towards service quality as a negative gap value was calculated. Moreover, on the comparative assessment of the service quality of restaurants the study implies that the national fast food restaurants provided better quality of service than international fast food restaurants, though the discrepancy is nominal.

HYPOTHESIS 2

The second hypothesis was to examine the significant difference in service quality amongst Indian and Non-Indian fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR) on the basis of expectation and perception of consumers.

Table 2 A Summary of testing of HYPOTHESIS H2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative assessment of Service Quality amongst International &amp; National fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho2 There is no significant difference in service quality amongst International &amp; National fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</td>
<td>One way ANOVA</td>
<td>11 variables reject while 34 variables accept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H12 There is significant difference in service quality amongst International &amp; National fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).</td>
<td>One way ANOVA</td>
<td>34 variables accept while 11 variables reject.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above analysis portrays that in case of consumers’ expectations a count of 11 variables (v8, v16, v17, v19, v22, v23, v24, v41, and v42) rejected the null hypothesis (p<.0.05) and accept alternate hypothesis, representing consumers’ expectations were different for different restaurants (refer table in chapter 4). On the other hand, all variables (except v2 and v13) reject null hypothesis (p<.0.05) and accept alternate hypothesis, resulting in different experiences at different genre of restaurants.

Thus, the above formulated hypothesis is partially rejected and partially accepted.
OBJECTIVE 3
An assessment of brand popularity of various fast food restaurants based on the frequency of consumers visit.

To evaluate the brand popularity amongst consumers of the various fast food restaurants located in Delhi (NCR) the average mean scores based on the frequency of visit of the consumers were evaluated individually for each fast food restaurant. Detailed analysis of the same is presented in the tabular form below.

Table 3. Evaluation of brand popularity of various fast food restaurants on the basis of frequency of consumers visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Name of the restaurant</th>
<th>Average Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>KFC</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dominos</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Café coffee day</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nirulas</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Haldirams</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sagar Ratna</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Gulab</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Om</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the assessment of the popularity of various fast food brands amongst consumers, the results revealed that McDonalds is the most popular international restaurant brand followed by Dominos, Haldirams, KFC, Subway, Café Coffee Day, Sagar Ratna, Gulab and Om. On the other hand, Haldirams was found to be the most popular national brand amongst consumers of fast food restaurants.

OBJECTIVE 4
Assessment of the relationship between consumers profile and service quality of various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

To assess the association between consumer’s profile and service quality of various fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR) the demographic profile was categorized into various sections such as age, gender, nationality, marital status, educational profile, annual income and occupation.

From the analysis the following conclusions were drawn:

- **Service quality and age:** Senior people falling in the age group of 61 & above and 41-50 years perceived service quality to be higher (0.11) and (-0.11) respectively,
further followed by 31-40 years (-0.12), 51-60 years (-0.13). While younger people falling in the age group 21-30 years and below 20 years perceived service quality to be least i.e. (-0.16) and (-0.23).

- **Service quality and gender:** The females (-0.14) perceived service quality comparatively higher as compared to males (-0.17). Although the difference is marginal.

- **Service quality and nationality:** The International consumers (-0.10) perceived service quality to be comparatively higher as compared to Indian consumers (-0.16).

- **Service quality and marital status:** There was no difference in the service quality as perceived by single and married consumers, it was assessed to be similar i.e. -0.16.

- **Service quality and educational profile:** The service quality perceived by others (0.04) was high followed by doctorates (-0.11), 10th (-0.15), graduates (-0.16) while 12th and post graduates perceived service quality to be same i.e. -0.17.

- **Service quality and annual income:** The same level of service quality was perceived by middle income consumers i.e. between 2.5-5.0 lakh and 5.0-7.5 lakh (-0.16) followed by low income group i.e. below 2.5 lakh (-0.15) and people with income between 7.5 -10.0 lakh (-0.08). Further, the highest service quality gap (-0.25) was calculated from high income group with income above 10 lakh.

- **Service quality and occupation:** The lowest perceived service quality gap was computed from consumers from occupations other than as given (refer table 4.12 in chapter four) i.e. -0.06, almost negligible followed by consumers occupied in government sector (-0.11), self-employed (-0.14). The highest service quality gap was computed from the consumers occupied in private sector i.e. -0.18.

The overall service quality as perceived by consumers was found to be below expectations i.e. poor and almost similar for each attribute of consumers profile of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

**HYPOTHESIS 3**

**Relationship between consumers profile and attributes of service quality**

For the assessment of relationship between consumer’s demographic profile and the provision of service quality in fast food restaurants, one way ANOVA was used separately on each demographic dimension. The hypothesis was segregated into null hypothesis and alternate hypothesis.
H₃ There is no significant relationship between consumers profile and service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

H₃ There is significant relationship between consumers profile and service quality of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

The detailed summary of the analysis is provided in the table below.

### Table 4 Summary of Testing of HYPOTHESIS H₃

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumers profile</th>
<th>Variables accepting H₀₃</th>
<th>Variables accepting H₁₃</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis highlights that the each dimension of consumers profile reflected no association with the attributes of service quality of fast food restaurants. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

**OBJECTIVE 5**

**Evaluation of the reasons for the growth of fast food culture in India**

To assess the various reasons underlying the proliferation of fast food culture in India, the mean scores of the variables labeled as “working women force”, “rising disposable income”, “nuclear families”, “exposure to global media/ easy availability”, and “busy lifestyle” were calculated. The detailed analysis is given in table 5.
Table 5. Evaluation of the reasons for the growth of fast food culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Reasons for growth of fast food culture</th>
<th>Average Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Working women force</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rising disposable income</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Nuclear families</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Exposure to global media/ easy availability</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Busy lifestyle</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the analysis reflected that “busy lifestyle” is the major underlying reason for growth of fast food culture in India followed by “exposure to global media/ easy availability”, “rising disposable income”, “working women force”, and “nuclear families”.

**SWOT Analysis of Fast Food Restaurants in Delhi (NCR)**

SWOT Analysis is extensively acknowledged as an effective mechanism to analyze the competences of an organization at varied levels and circumstances. It is a technique especially designed to help recognize appropriate marketing approaches for a firm which can be carried out constructed on external analysis and internal analysis.

A SWOT analysis was conducted based on the analysis, personal observation and discussions with managerial and operational staff of various fast food restaurants. The analysis probes the prevailing strengths, weaknesses, and assesses by external evaluation the latent opportunities and threats in fast-food restaurants of Delhi (NCR).

The analysis could be achieved by way of study of pattern of customer’s perception about the restaurants, considerations of the managers, personal observation and interactions and open ended feedback from the consumers in order to draw out oblivious facets for the achievement of authentic and productive analysis of the organization. The same is presented in tabular form.
Table 6. SWOT Analysis of fast food restaurants in Delhi (NCR).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Well air conditioned sitting area</td>
<td>▪ Connection with Wi-Fi and Internet</td>
<td>▪ Young population</td>
<td>▪ Changing technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Professionally dressed employees</td>
<td>▪ Take-away and drive through counter facility</td>
<td>▪ Busy lifestyle</td>
<td>▪ Stiff competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Error-free billing system</td>
<td>▪ Fulfilment of service delivery promises on time</td>
<td>▪ Growing number of working women force</td>
<td>▪ Undifferentiated products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Delivery of the right order</td>
<td>▪ Sincerity of employees in solving the problems of consumers</td>
<td>▪ Rise in disposable income</td>
<td>▪ Mature Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Good location</td>
<td>▪ Value for money (Food)</td>
<td>▪ Shift in eating patterns of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Convenient operating hours</td>
<td>▪ Effective complaint handling Mechanism</td>
<td>▪ Globalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Courteous and polite employees</td>
<td>▪ Attractive promotional discounts and happy hours</td>
<td>▪ Liberalization of the economy to new entrants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Satisfactory portion size (Food)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SWOT analysis indicated that Indian fast food industry has immense potential for growth specifically the organized national and international fast food chains while bottlenecks could be avoided by implementing effective and efficient strategies.

**SUGGESTIONS**

The consumers are becoming more and more advanced in their dining selections embracing new horizons. Further, young generation eat out more often and pay utmost significant attention to the offered service quality in the fast food restaurants. Therefore, taking into account these aspects, food and beverage industry should be more equipped to cater to the increasing needs and expectations of the consumers. Hence, the fast food establishments should enhance market research to understand the dynamics of consumers. Further, the below mentioned suggestions could be incorporated by the management while formulating policies and strategies to enhance the quality of service in fast food restaurants.

- Appropriate parking space should be of pivotal consideration before the commencement of an outlet.
- Prices listed in the menu should be inclusive of the varied taxes.
Live kitchen could be incorporated to make the processes more appealing.
Table service could be provided to the children and old age people or the needy.
Candidates holding formal degrees of hospitality should be given preferences in the process of hiring.
There should be a provision to segregate waste on the basis of degradability like colour coding of the dustbins such as red for non-degradable and green for biodegradable.
Shift hours of the employees should be fixed and be strictly adhered to reduce staff turnover of the restaurant.
Hygiene and sanitation practices should be encouraged to build the sense of trust in the consumers.
The provision of home delivery service could be facilitated in the nearby areas.
Take away counters should be separate and more effective to avoid the delays in the service.

APPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The study is a modest and sincere effort by the researcher to investigate the perception of consumers towards service quality of fast food restaurants. Further, it also adds to the existing literature on service quality with a focus on India. However, due to the availability of the limited resources and abilities of the researcher, full justice to the theme could not be achieved, yet the trends emerging from the analysis of analysis can have important pairing for better planning of fast food restaurants and other food & beverage operations. The findings can be applied in the following areas:

The research illustrates that the fast food is one of the most emerging sectors and is a part of popular culture among the youth population.
The research highlights that majority of the customers are neutral to negative when it comes to service quality of fast food restaurants be it international or national fast food brands.
The study also suggests that majority of the fast food restaurants located in Delhi (NCR) were found to be profit oriented rather than customer-oriented.
The analysis revealed that fast food sector will keep on mushrooming in Delhi (NCR) but parking will remain to be a challenge due to heavy vehicular rush. Therefore,
planners should come up with long term planning and may focus on metro stations to overcome the parking needs.

- The research also indicates that the busy lifestyle, globalization, increasing number of working women, and rise in disposable income are the main contributing factors to the growth of fast food culture in India.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study is focused on consumer’s perception towards service quality provided by various fast food restaurants located in Delhi (NCR). As consciousness regarding quality of service amongst consumers is growing, there lies enough scope for further researches. Hence, the suggestions for further researches are as follows:

- The identification of various reasons underlying for selecting various fast food restaurants by the consumers.
- The study of positive and negative effects of fast food on the health of Indian consumers.
- Behavioural studies like association between demographic profile of fast food consumers and their buying behavior.
- A large universe and sample may also be undertaken for the further similar studies.
- The role of hygiene practices in service quality of fast food restaurants.
- A comparative study on service quality can be conducted in other similar developing countries.

REFERENCES


Bateson, J. G. (1977). Do we need service marketing in marketing consumer services: New


Lovelock, H. C. (1981). Why marketing management needs to be different for services. In J. Donnelly & W. George (Eds.), *Marketing of services* (pp. 5-9). Chicago: American Marketing.


