THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF RESTAURANT SERVICES IN THAILAND’S EAST COASTAL AREAS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH SERVQUAL-MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The needs assessment of restaurant services in Thailand’s east coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL has purposed 1) To study desirable conditions of restaurant services in East coastal areas. 2) To study real conditions of restaurant services in East coastal areas. 3) To assess the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL. The 400 of questionnaires were accumulated data, focusing on consumers who had experienced with service of restaurants located in East coastal areas (Chon Buri Province, Rayong Province, Chanthaburi Province and Trat Province). The analysing of this study has been carried out Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation (S.D.) and PNImodified method.

The results reveal that 1) Overall opinions of correspondents in desirable conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas are in the highest level. 2) Overall views of those customers in real conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas is in the high level. 3) The assessment of customers’ need in restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL presents that there the overall of the needs of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas as PNImodified = 0.23.

Keywords: The Needs Assessment, Restaurant Services, East Coastal Areas, COVID-19

I. INTRODUCTION

Thailand has been experiencing with an unprecedented situation of highly transmissible virus as Coronavirus (COVID-19) since emerged in late 2019. The virus affects the country in different ways such as public health, economic downturn. It can be clearly seen that the spreading of COVID-19 negatively caused service businesses, especially, domestic service sectors because it is businesses that confront with the large number of customers. According to the effected predictions, the world’s economy is carrying on recession at 3.2 percent and ASEAN shrinks to at roughly 2.1 to 5.4 percent. Thailand's economy is anticipated having more severe impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, shrinking by at least 5.4 percent. Particularly, its tourism sector that will have the huge impact by decreasing of the large group of domestic and international tourists at about 60 percent. Lacking demanded and supplied chain are playing a key role of Thailand’s economic downturn.

The firms which are in Thailand have capable of maintaining its circulations and profits, some may have significant decrease in profits and capital investment, however, companies which have ability to reserve its high liquidity in order to toughly pass on this current situation. By 2021, the firms in service businesses as restaurants, airlines and hotels are experiencing in a hard time because the entrepreneurs expect to inadequately pay the debts, rising to 39 percent from the pre-pandemic. In terms of small hotels and airlines business, the owners demand to increase their liquidities by 35 percent and 27 percent consecutively. The major provinces are speculated for having trouble with its own financial such as Samut Sakhon Province, Chon Buri Province and Chanthaburi Province as a result of those areas are the majority city in tourism. Furthermore, Bangkok city, there is a great number of companies that are encountering with financial crisis, increasing to 20.6 percent which it is a potential
sign of their default increased that it can be caused multiply negative on its economy due to reduction of employments and lowered household income. (Manprasert, 2021).

Taking place of COVID-19 crisis has directly affected on almost all businesses, restaurant is one of those businesses in Eastern region of Thailand are likewise impacted by spreading of novel virus because East Coastal Areas has significantly promoted as Thailand’s major tourism destination, the areas are able to generate a large amount of revenue to the country by tourist expended on services. In consonance with Thailand’s preventing measurement, the Government has imposed on service sectors in nearly entire country to temporarily closed for preventing infection of decease. Even though, some periods of time, service businesses allowed operating with measures on making social distancing. Including customers’ trust gained and acceptance of using restaurant services. The behaviours of customers changed from the past as enabling of new technology that they have capable of connecting in clouding network such as Food delivery ordered by smartphones. It conveniently and rapidly allows consumers to access shops or restaurant and queuing free. Moreover, applications are employed the system called POS (Point of Sell) through the internet network on smartphones, for example, Eatigo that it grants customers reviewing on restaurant’s menu and able to reserve table if desired and its customers will be offered satisfactory rate of foods or the service of restaurants itself. (Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, 2019).

The studying and assessing needs are one of research method that allows researcher capable of capturing concept of effective operating, comparing the desirably needed circumstances or opinion of stakeholders that it also able to state that the needs assessment is a process of accumulating information in order to analyze differentiation between expectations and realities and to reorder altered importance. (Wongwanich, 2007). As result of study that it is able to essentially adapt to organizational management and to create competitive advantages.

Therefore, in accordance with the states mentioned above, researchers of this research on the needs assessment of restaurant services in Thailand’s east coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL expected to be resulting of study will be benefit to restaurants in Eastern region and to promoting its higher standards of serving during Coronavirus pandemic towards creating prospect and achievement in the restaurant business operation.

II. OBJECTIVES

2.1 To study desirable conditions of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 To study real conditions of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3 To assess the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Quantitative Research was conducted in this study which cohered to the objectives of the study according to the following methods:

3.1 Population and Sample

3.1.1 Research Population

The consumers who had experienced with service of restaurants located in East coastal areas.

3.1.2 Research Sample

The 400 of consumers who had experienced with service of restaurants located in East coastal areas was accumulated through questionnaires filling, with infinite population formula of W.G. Cochran (1953), and the 95% of reliability and 0.05 of the errors were employed to verify the data. Multi-stage sampling was conducted to obtain sample size as consecutive methods:

1 This research had divided sample groups into 4 provinces where it is located in Eastern regions of Thailand, comprised of Chon Buri Province, Rayong Province, Chanthaburi Province and Trat Province.
2 The researchers had determined the area ratios in order to equally divide samples in each group. Therefore, 100 of those correspondents of each province were collected to in total 400.

3 Gathering data in 4 provinces by choosing any districts with lottery method. On account of this, the 50 correspondents were selected in each 2 districts by accidental sampling for accumulation to reach 400 sample groups.

3.2 Research Scopes
3.2.1 Scope of Research Content
The SERVQUAL-MODEL which invented by PARASURAMAN was employed to study and to assess the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic, related to concepts and theories of Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, and Assurance.

3.2.2 Scope of Research Area
The 4 provinces located in Eastern coast of Thailand were targeted as research area consist of Chon Buri Province, Rayong Province, Chanthaburi Province and Trat Province.

3.3 Research Methods
3.3.1 Research Tools
According to the quantitative research, 400 of questionnaires were carried out for collecting data from consumers who had experienced with service of restaurants located in East coastal areas. The questionnaire has 3 structures as follows:

Part 1: Correspondent’s demographic profile which it has for 7 main opened-questions such as gender, educational level, occupation, monthly salary and province of restaurant service using.

Part 2: Questions regard to desirable conditions and real conditions of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic which used the 5 Rating Scales of Likert as assessing criteria as 5 means desirable conditions or real conditions in the highest level, 4 means desirable conditions or real conditions in high level, 3 means desirable conditions or real conditions in medium level, 2 means desirable conditions or real conditions in low level and 1 means desirable conditions or real conditions in the lowest level

Part 3: Additional recommendations as opened-question.

3.3.2 Research Tool Validation
1) The experts in business sectors evaluated the correction and precision of each question.

2) The developed questionnaire was thoroughly assessed by 3 academic experts in order to consider the relation between question and research purposes, by using The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method. Each question which has its range 0.67 to 1.00 was specifically selected and amend other questions as those experts recommended.

3) As research tool’s piloting test, there 30 questionnaires were conducted to gather data with the identical research samples in order to find a reliable analysis. Therefore, the reliability of this questionnaire was 0.92.

3.3.3 Data Analysis
1) Descriptive statistics were used to describe the frequency distribution data, percentage of correspondent’s demographic profiles, mean score and standard deviation were applied to analyze the statistical data as desirable conditions and real conditions regarding restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic. The criteria for interpreting meaning of average data of Srisa-Ard (2017, p. 102-103) was utilized as 4.51-5.00 means desirable conditions or real conditions in the highest level, 3.51-4.50 means desirable conditions or real conditions in high level, 2.51-3.50 means desirable conditions or real conditions in medium level, 1.51-2.50 means desirable conditions or real conditions in low level and 1.00-1.50 means desirable conditions or real conditions in the lowest level.
2) Data analyzing on the needs of restaurant services for rearranging level of correspondent’s needs. In accordance with this state, the most of aspect is going to be developed rapidly with technique of Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI\textsubscript{modified}) by Wongwanich (2005, p. 18)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

In the study of the needs’ assessment of restaurant services in East coastal areas of Thailand during covid-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL purposed to study desirable conditions and real conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic and to assess the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL. The study has been accumulated information from primary data and secondary data. The results of the quantitative data had been retrieved as questionnaires from consumers who had experienced with service of restaurants located in East coastal areas, consisted of the following results:

4.1.1 Correspondents Demographic Data.

The result can clearly be seen that most of the correspondents were females with 246 persons at 61.50 percent. The large number of those customers had range of age between 25-30 years old (125 persons: 31.25 percent), For the part of an education, great quantities of correspondents graduated with a bachelor’s degree (310 persons: 77.50 percent). A great number of occupations of the passengers were private company officer (138 persons: 34.50 percent), Most of the correspondents earned monthly income about 25,001-35,000 Thai Baht (147 persons: 36.80 percent), they had had experienced with restaurant services in each province as Chon Buri Province, Rayong Province, Chanthaburi Province and Trat Province.

4.1.2 Results of desirable conditions and real conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic according to Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 Means and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of desirable conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic in overall and each aspect resulted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Servicing of Restaurants in East Coastal Areas</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.91</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.08</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Table 1, overall desirable conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas is in the highest level (Means = 4.92, S.D. = 0.08). Furthermore, the customers who had experiences with servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas have expectation in the highest level which can be ranked the highest average means is the Assurance (Means = 4.94, S.D. = 0.08), Empathy (Means = 4.93, S.D. = 0.11), Tangible (Means = 4.91, S.D. = 0.11), Responsiveness (Means = 4.90, S.D. = 0.16) and the lowest is Reliability (Means = 4.87, S.D. = 0.18) respectively.

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of real conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic in overall and each aspect resulted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Servicing of Restaurants in East Coastal Areas</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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18996
Referring to the Table 2, overall real conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas is in the high level (Means = 3.98, S.D. = 0.16). In addition to the customers who had experiences with servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas have expectation in the high level which can be ranked the high average means is the Assurance (Means = 4.22, S.D. = 0.38), Reliability (Means = 4.14, S.D. = 0.32), Responsiveness (Means = 3.87, S.D. = 0.33), Empathy (Means = 3.85, S.D. = 0.28) and the lowest is Tangible (Means = 3.81, S.D. = 0.29) respectively.

According to the results of desirable conditions and real conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic as are shown on Table 1 and Table 2 can be illustrated as a graph figure below.

![Graph figure](image_url)

**Fig. 1** Results of desirable conditions and real conditions of restaurant services of people who are in Eastern region of Thailand during COVID-19 pandemic.

4.1.3 Results of assessing the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL as Table 3.

**Table 3** The assessing the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Servicing of Restaurants in East Coastal Areas</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>I-D</th>
<th>PNI</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tangible</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In consonance with Table 3, results of assessing the needs of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL. The needs assessment of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL reveal that there is the overall of the needs of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas at 23.00 percent. Considering in each view found that the Tangible of quality is the highest need of customers, ranked the 1st is at 29.00 percent, Empathy of restaurant’s staffs is at 28.00 percent, Responsiveness of its staffs is at 27.00 percent, Reliability of restaurant service is at 18.00 percent, and the lowest need of restaurants’ customers is at 17.00 percent respectively.

As Table 3, the Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI\textsubscript{modified}) has been ranked from the most to the least data as the concepts of Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, and Assurance of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic.

![Fig. 2](image)

\textbf{Fig. 2} Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI\textsubscript{modified}) ranked the and the lowest data results.

The assessments of restaurant services needed of customers in Thailand’s East Coastal Areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL shown that they desired restaurants have to create tangible of service qualities, together with well-managed. The restaurants service to its customers with empathies. Furthermore, staffs of restaurants must have responsibility and can cope with problems effectively, it is able to support the business the gain reliability of customers during COVID-19 situation. Therefore, according to the data found that the new concept in terms of services called TERRA as figure 3.

![Fig. 3](image)

\textbf{Fig. 3} The new concept of restaurant services during COVID-19. pandemic called TERRA.
4.2 Discussions

In accordance with the study of the needs’ assessment of restaurant services in Thailand’s East coastal areas during covid-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL can be discussed as follows:

4.2.1 The studying of desirable conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas from correspondents’ opinion, overall is in the highest level. As far as the spreading of COVID-19 noticed that is one of the world’s deadliest deceases. Hence, it has effect on Eastern consumers who visited restaurant which they expect to be safe from those business’s management that is coherent with study of Aussawariyathipat (2019, p. 80) found that customer’s decision-making on purchasing products and services whose they have choices to an individual selection. Furthermore, as Pitukmuangman (2019) researched on Factors Affecting to Success of Clean Food Delivery Store in Bangkok revealed that the factors of operating such as managing, marketing, operating and technology and financial have effects on clean food delivery stores’ management with statically significance.

4.2.2 According to real conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas from customers’ view, overall statistic’s result is in high level. Consequently, the needs of restaurant’s customers have their own view contrarily as what its service supported to be. As customers who have had ever experienced with travelling to tourist attraction places, they perceived service of restaurants managing and they also have previously studied on the Government measure to prevent COVID-19 differently. The previous study of Navaratana (2015, p. 203) stated that the excellency of service taken place when executive members of firm have capable of detecting and responding for the customers’ needs to create the most satisfied including establishment of high service standards as possible.

4.2.3 Results of the needs assessment of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL shown that there was the overall of the needs of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas at 23.00 percent \( \text{PNI}_{\text{modified}} = 0.23 \). Considering in each view found that the Tangible is the highest need of customers, ranked the 1st is at 29.00 percent \( \text{PNI}_{\text{modified}} = 0.29 \) which indicate the Eastern people rapidly needed to receive its quality. Therefore, the restaurants’ owners are capable of develop service model which enable customers’ trust in all aspects as they use of the business service. The related study of Sae-Jung (2016) on Factors Affecting Success of The Franchise Business of Thai Noodle Restaurants in Chon Buri Province regarding product, food cleanliness, good taste of food, standard taste of food, physical characteristics comprised of cleanliness of its portions and cooking equipment, no congestion inside and restaurant is neat and tidy, convenient for human physical movement. Additionally, studying of approaches to restaurant service quality development for international tourists in Hua Hin, Prachubkirikan Province presented the expectation of international tourists on restaurant services quality in mentioned area of Thailand is also in high level. (Boonprienpon, 2017). Furthermore, the study on food quality, service quality, physical environment, and health concern affecting Chinese tourists’ decision to choose Thai restaurant services in Bangkok (Song, 2016) revealed that factors regard to reliability, empathy, and responsiveness were not affected on Chinese’s making decision of Thai restaurants in Bangkok.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper presents the needs assessment of restaurant services in East coastal areas during COVID-19 pandemic with SERVQUAL-MODEL. In terms of desirable conditions of servicing of restaurants in East coastal areas that able to ensure customers on measures of preventing decease, followed by its staffs caring and provide the touchable service with their responsibility. However, to gaining restaurant trust is less reliable. On the contrary, customers who had experienced with the real conditions of those restaurants’ service regard to the certification of service during on this situation together with customers’ confidence and its employees’ accountabilities with their compassion of servicing. Nevertheless, consumers noted that restaurant tangibility serviced was subsided. Consequently, assessing the needs of customers on restaurants in East coastal areas of Chon Buri Province, Rayong Province, Chanthaburi Province and Trat Province illustrate that the urgency of restaurants’ tangibility account for prioritizing to obtain customer experiences through the guaranty of health measurement as it may be demanded to control transmission during pandemic of COVID-19.

REFERENCES


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