

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS
THAI FULL-SERVICED RESTAURANT



Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University
May 2011

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Project Advisor: Dr. U-maporn Kardkarnklai.

Full-serviced restaurant is a service business that the customers expect to see high service quality. The objectives of this study were (1) to measure the satisfaction level of international customers who visited the Thai full-serviced restaurant and (2) to identify the important dimensions of the Thai full-serviced restaurant. The survey was conducted with 50 international customers who were from Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA, dining at S&P restaurant, Suvarnabhumi Airport, in April 2010. The instruments of this study were the questionnaires, based on SERVQUAL model. The data were analyzed using a Microsoft Excel program and described in percentages and mean scores.

Overall, the findings of the study revealed that the satisfaction level of the international customers of Thai full-serviced restaurant was at the neutral level towards the 5 dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The highest satisfaction was cleanliness (3.66) and understanding specific needs (3.66). The finding also showed that tangibles and empathy were the most important dimensions of the Thai full-serviced restaurant.

ความพึงพอใจของลูกค้าชาวต่างชาติต่อการบริการร้านอาหารไทย
ประเภทบริการเต็มรูปแบบ



เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา ตาม
หลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
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ร้านอาหารประเภทบริการเต็มรูปแบบเป็นธุรกิจบริการ ที่ลูกค้าคาดหวังในด้านคุณภาพสูง สารนิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีจุดประสงค์ (1) เพื่อศึกษาระดับความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มีต่อการให้บริการของร้านอาหารไทยแบบบริการเต็มรูปแบบ และ (2) เพื่อหาด้านของการบริการ ร้านอาหารไทยประเภทบริการเต็มรูปแบบที่มีความสำคัญมากที่สุด โดยสำรวจความคิดเห็นของ ชาวต่างชาติจาก 5 ประเทศคือ ญี่ปุ่น จีน อังกฤษ เยอรมนี และ สหรัฐอเมริกา จำนวน 50 คนที่มา รับประทานอาหารที่ร้าน เอส แอนด์ พี (S&P) สาขาสยามบิณสุวรรณ์ในเดือน เมษายน 2553 ด้วยแบบสอบถามที่ใช้รูปแบบ SERVQUAL และผู้วิจัยนำข้อมูลที่ได้รับมาวิเคราะห์ผลโดยใช้ โปรแกรมเอ็กเซล (Microsoft Excel) ประมวลผลในรูปแบบค่าร้อยละ และค่าเฉลี่ย

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ความพึงพอใจโดยรวมของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติต่อการให้บริการ ใน 5 ด้าน ได้แก่ ด้านรูปลักษณ์ทางกายภาพ ความน่าเชื่อถือ การตอบสนอง ความไว้วางใจ และ ความเอาใจใส่ของร้านอาหารไทยประเภทบริการเต็มรูปแบบอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง องค์ประกอบที่ ได้รับ ความพึงพอใจสูงที่สุดคือ ความสะอาด (3.66) และ ความเข้าใจในความต้องการของลูกค้า (3.66) ผลการศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า รูปลักษณ์ทางกายภาพ และความเอาใจใส่ เป็นการบริการที่สำคัญที่สุดของร้านอาหารไทยประเภทบริการเต็มรูปแบบ

The Master's Project Advisor, Chair of Business English for International Communication, and Oral Defense Committee have approved this master's project International Customers' Satisfaction towards Thai Full-Serviced Restautant by "Jarakit Jantawej" as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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This Master's Project has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication of Srinakharinwirot University.

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(Dr. Wanee Aujsatid)

May....., 2011

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Jarakit Jantawej

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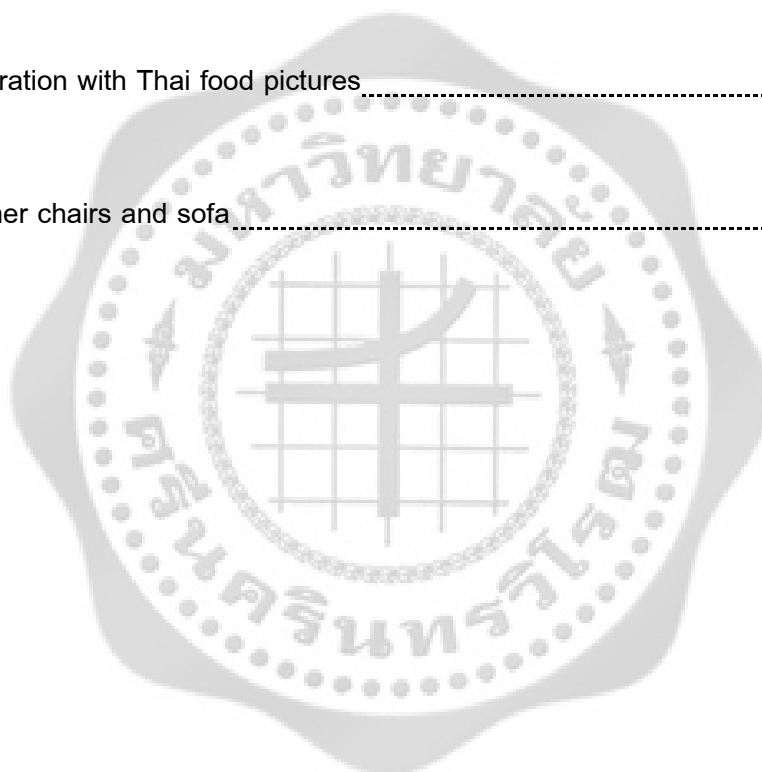
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity and one of the world's biggest businesses (Cook, Yale, & Marqua, 2006). In Thailand, tourism industry is important because it creates many jobs and public awareness of the country. Transportation and accommodations have been developed. Employment opportunities from those developments are established (Trigg, 1995). More importantly, Thailand's tourism industry still crucially relies on spending by international tourists (Bank of Thailand, 2009). Income from international tourists climbs the percentage of the nation's GDP (TAT, 2009). Tourism, therefore, should be promoted.

Among the services provided at the airport, restaurant services play a vital role. Food service is one of the essential elements of tourist experience and restaurants are highly ranked in term of what are most enjoyable on daily tourists spending (Hall, 2003). In 2009, Suvarnabhumi airport was also voted as one of the best top-three dining airports in

the world (www.worldairportawards.com). Therefore, restaurant services in Thailand impress the international tourists; they add to the positive image of the country.

Specifically, The Thai government has promoted the globalization of Thai cuisine by launching the “Kitchen of the World” project, which aims at promoting Thai food into the international countries. The goal of the project is to increase the number of Thai restaurants overseas to 20,000 by 2008 (Murrey, 2007). The government encourages Thai investors to invest in Thai restaurants overseas and provides support in the forms of training, information, and finance. The government hopes that the project will generate foreign income not only from the sales of food and service overseas, but also from adding value to agricultural and food products which have been Thailand's leading exports.

To promote Thai cuisine, restaurant providers need to improve service quality which is vital to increase the high satisfaction. In fact, pleasant memories of restaurant services enjoyed as parts of a trip often linger and are remembered more often than any other part of the travel experience (Cook, Yale, & Marqua, 2006). To satisfy the tourists, improving restaurant service quality is essential. Service quality and customer satisfaction are the keys to businesses survival (Heskett, 1997). In restaurant services, full services were expected to have the higher quality among other restaurant types (Heung et al., 2000)

because they offer fine dining with a wide selection of foods and beverages, and table service. Service dimensions in full-serviced restaurants were assessed by the customers.

Previous studies revealed the importance of service dimensions such as pricing strategy (Tam & Yung, 2003), food quality (food taste and nutrition properties), value for money, service mind, location, brand name, and image (John & Howard, 1998). Moreover, other restaurant service dimensions that contributes to customer satisfaction in restaurants include an interesting and healthy menu (hygiene, balance, and healthiness), the layout of the restaurant (layout, furnishing, and cleanliness), the atmosphere (feeling and comfort), and the service received (speed, friendliness, and care) during the meal experience (Johns & Pine, 2002)

As mentioned, these studies indicated that a restaurant service should have the quality of food, pricing, service quality, location, appearance, and atmosphere. However, before the quality of a restaurant is acceptable, the restaurants owners must develop these service dimensions in order to inspire trust and confidence to the customers and creates repeated business (Fen & Lian, 2006).

The most popular tool used for measuring the restaurant service quality is SERVQUAL, a model developed by Parasuraman (1988). This model measures five

dimensions of service: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. For example, the use of SERVQUAL has shown the important relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction towards repurchase (Chow, Lau, Sha, & Yun, 2007).

Tangibles, responsiveness and empathy were more important dimensions in China restaurants. Chaipoo Pirutana (1998) used SERVQUAL model to compare expectations between Thais and Americans towards the fast food restaurant. The finding indicated that Americans had higher expectations than Thais. Reliability showed the strong expectation of both of the countries. Moreover, Heung et al. (2000) studied to find out the satisfaction level of traveler towards airport restaurants in Hong Kong International airport by the use of SERVQUAL. The findings showed the higher expectation to full-serviced restaurant of the travelers among other restaurant types. SERVQUAL was also used to test the full-serviced quality of the restaurant in South China (Chow et al., 2007). The findings indicated that interaction and physical environment quality were more important predictors of the quality of restaurant service.

As a result of its success, SERVQUAL dimensions are considered an appropriate tool to measure the quality of the restaurant service in this study. Moreover, previous studies have shown that customers dining in different purposes have different satisfaction

levels. Taste and food appearance are more important of patients in hospital-restaurant service quality (Sahin, Demir, Celik, & Teke, 2005), whereas the travelers reported that convenient operating hours were the most important dimension at the airport. Moreover, they had higher expectation for full-serviced restaurants (Heung et al., 2000).

As mentioned, dimensions of restaurant service reflect the image of Thailand. S&P restaurant was selected as a representative of all Thai full-serviced restaurants in the airport. The restaurant is appropriate because of its service quality. S&P branches are popular not only in Thailand, but they are also currently available overseas such as in Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and Switzerland. In 2005, the London branches were honored with the proud distinction of The Prime Minister's Export Award 2005 and have also been voted by a leading magazine as the best Thai restaurant in London (www.snpfood.com). In Thailand, S&P, Suvarnabhumi branch, is one of the largest full-serviced restaurants which can offer good services to a large number of international tourists. Considering the fame for quality of service, S&P restaurant was the best choice to conduct to their service quality.

Although the previous study has showed the satisfaction levels of international customers on restaurant service in Bangkok (Chanchiew, 2007), few studies measured

customers' satisfaction towards the airport-restaurant service quality in Thailand. This study focused on Suvarnabhumi airport as a place where a crowd of international tourists. The results of this study were beneficial to reveal the international tourists' satisfaction level towards the quality of Thai restaurant service and the most important dimension to improve and promote their dining experience.

Objective of the study

The objectives of the study aimed to:

1. measure the satisfaction level of international customers who visited the full-serviced restaurant at Suvarnabhumi airport
2. identify the important dimensions of Thai full-serviced restaurant

Research Questions

There were 2 research questions:

1. What was international customers' satisfaction level towards Thai full-serviced restaurant at Suvarnabhumi airport?
2. What were the important dimensions of Thai full-serviced restaurant?

Significance of the Study

Tourism is one of the fastest growing businesses in the 21st century. Suvarnabhumi airport is a bridge connected to international tourists. Services at the airport need to be improved, especially the restaurant services which reflect the image of the country. This study focused on international customers to find their satisfaction levels towards Thai full-serviced restaurant. The findings of the study helped the full-serviced restaurants at Suvarnabhumi airport to improve unsatisfactory dimensions of services. This was important for promoting Thai service, Thai image, and Thai tourism. Also, knowing the important dimensions of service quality enhanced the advantage for competing in the restaurant service business.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on 50 international customers who were from Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA. These countries were the top five countries arrivals at Suvarnabhumi airport in 2009. They were important in order to promote Thai restaurant service through their word of mouth. S&P Restaurant, Suvarnabhumi airport branch, was selected as a representative of the full-serviced restaurants located in Suvarnabhumi Airport. This study

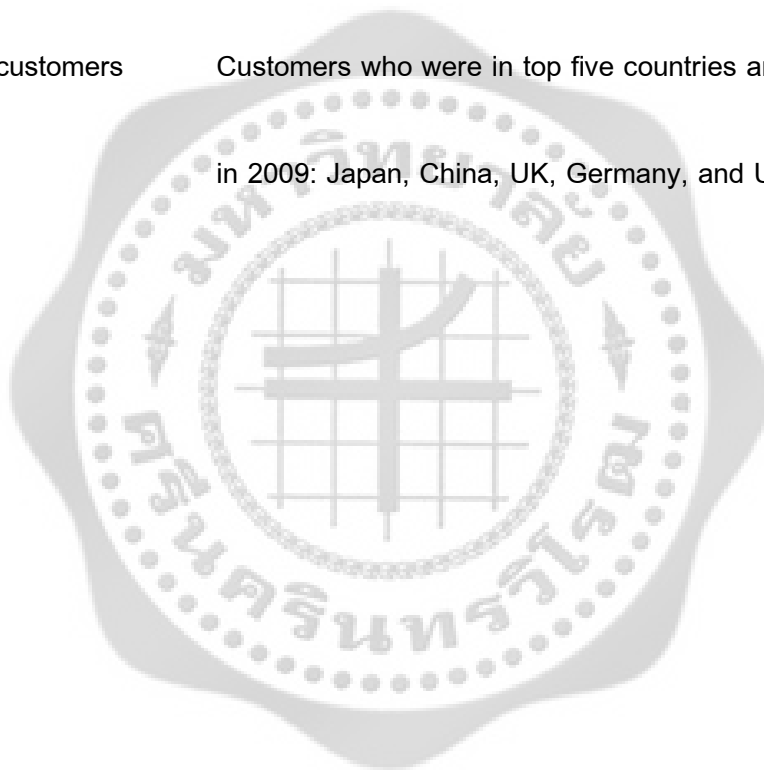
used the questionnaires based on SERVQUAL model. The questionnaires were distributed in 10 days in April 2010. The chosen month was important because it was in Songkran Festival. The number of international tourists in April had significantly increased as compared to other months (Office of Tourism Development, 2009).

Definition of Terms

Full-serviced restaurant	A restaurant which provides food and table services to customers who order and are served while seated by a waiter or waitress. In this study, full-serviced restaurant was S&P.
Service quality	A customer's perception in the quality of restaurant provided by service providers
SERVQUAL	The model that is popularly used as an instrument to measure the service quality, contained five dimensions: tangible; reliability; responsiveness; assurance; empathy. In this study the SERVQUAL model was used to measure the restaurant service quality at Suvarnabhumi airport.

Customer satisfaction The emotional perception by a customer in fulfilling his or her desires or needs to an experience with a service. In this study, customer satisfaction was a customer's emotional perception on provision of services by S&P restaurant at Suvarnabhumi Airport.

International customers Customers who were in top five countries arrivals to Thailand in 2009: Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on four sections of the restaurants service: (1) restaurant services; (2) service quality; (3) customer satisfaction; and (4) previous studies. Literature reviews on the relevant concepts were discussed.

Restaurant Service

The reason why someone pays ten times more in a restaurant for having a meal than buying it already prepared at a supermarket and eating at their table is because of the service provided to the guests (Strianese, 2003). Undoubtedly, the service plays a significant role in the restaurant industry. This section explained the definitions of service, restaurant service, and types of restaurant.

Definition of Service

Many definitions have been presented for services. For instance, it is defined as an attitude, processes and functions (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Kotler and Armstrong (1990) note that it is an act or activities, necessarily immovable and intangible, suggested by one

transaction party to another one that would lead to the ownership of external object.

Service production may attach to physical goods or not. Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1985) suggests that services and goods are not the same because service is related to intangibility, performances and experiences rather than goods that can be produced. In Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (2005), service is the serving of customers in hotels, restaurants, and shops or stores.

Service is not about smiling and servility. It is a strategy which considers the customer while serving the interests of the establishment (Wearne & Morrison, 1996). The service culture focuses on serving and satisfying the customer. It is produced and consumed simultaneously and cannot be stored. So, a restaurant has to charge customers holding guaranteed reservations (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006). Customers rank service as one of the primary reasons for visiting a restaurant. Their acceptances will depend on the level of service offered and the operations ability to meet what customers expect (Khan, 1987).

Restaurant Service

The word “restaurant” covers a broad range of food service operations. Any public place that specializes in the sale of prepared food for consumption on-off premise can be

described as a restaurant (Powers & Barrows, 2003). In the restaurant service, excellent food and service are the priorities that the restaurant service providers need to consider.

According to Strianese (2003), the restaurant service can be defined by two key words, competence and friendliness. Competence is referred to as serving food and drink in the correct manner. A service person should serve all foods to women first. It is not noticed, but it results in a good feeling of the customers about the restaurant. Also, friendliness is another important thing a service person should have. The service person should make the customers feel that they are guests in a private home in order to make them feel welcome in the restaurant.

Types of Restaurant

Restaurant operation is a direct reflection of change in the society. Dining away from home may be purchased in a variety of restaurant types: location and terms of consumption. Khan (1987) classified the restaurant types in terms of consumer needs: fast food restaurant, mid-priced restaurant, take-out food services, food services in health-care facilities, in educational institutions, in business and industry, in community, and in the hotel or motel.

Powers and Barrows (2003) broke the restaurants in terms of demographic characteristics of customers and market segment of the industry. In terms of demographic characteristics of customers, there are fine-dining restaurant (e.g. high level income group), casual upscale and midscale restaurant (consumers on many levels), takeout restaurant (customer interests), drive-through (fast-food restaurant for many customers), and delivery restaurant (busy customers). In terms of market segments of the industry, there are chain restaurants and independent restaurants.

According to Statistics South Africa (2008), full service restaurants are “enterprises involved in the sale and provision of meals and drinks, ordered from a menu, prepared on the premises for immediate consumption and with provided seating. In comparison, take-away outlets are involved in the sale and provision of meals and drinks, ordered from a menu at a counter, prepared on the premises for take-away purposes in a packaged format (not on plates), at a stand or in a location, with or without provided seating. Take-away outlets are also referred to as quick service restaurants or QSR’S”.

A full-serviced restaurant is defined as a restaurant that offers table service as opposed to the counter service offered by fast food restaurants. In general, full service restaurants offer a wider range of food and beverage choices than their

fast food counterparts (www.businessdictionary.com).

In this study, restaurants types were categorized in terms of service: self-serviced and full-serviced restaurant. A self-serviced restaurant is a restaurant in which the customers are served themselves at a counter and carry their meals to table such as KFC, while full-serviced restaurants provide food services to customers who order and are served while seated by a waiter or waitress such as S&P's and MK restaurants. This study focused on the full-serviced restaurant.

In summary, service is generally intangible, and is a result of every performance assessed by the customers in order to make them feel warm, like their home. The service offered at a restaurant involves the effect of intangible activities including the meal preparation and the serving of those meals. Types of restaurants can be classified in terms of customers' needs, market segments, and services.

Service Quality

All businesses have to measure how much of their service quality meet their customers' needs. Quality of service often occurs during service is delivered which is the interaction between the customer and service providers.

The Definition of Service Quality

Service cannot be touched, tasted or smelled. Service is normally perceived in a subjective manner, and is decided by expressions such as experience, trust, feeling and security (Gronroos, 1990). Services are more or less intangible; however, many services include highly tangible elements. These include: the food, dining tables, chairs and equipment in a restaurant. Parasuraman et al. (1985) explained service quality as perceived by consumers stems from a comparison of what they feel service providers should offer (i.e. from their expectations) with their perception of the performance of the service providers.

Another definition of the service quality has been cited that it is a perception resulting from attitudes determined by the customers (Reid, 2001). Collier (2000) explained that service quality is a comparison by the customer between his or her expectations before experiencing the service with actual service delivery system performance. The service quality, in general, is similar to the customers' perception in services provided by the service providers. The overall evaluations of performance will be rated after the customers perceive services. These evaluations are the customers' feeling or attitudes towards the services.

The Importance of Service Quality

Understanding what customers are looking for is very important. High quality of service is what customers expect to see. Cook et al. (2006) explained that high quality can result in three important benefits for companies. First, when consumers perceive a company's service as superior in quality, they are willing to pay higher prices, which can translate into higher profits. Second, superior quality can lead to increased market share. Third, superior quality can generate truly brand-loyal customers.

According to Berry (1995), service quality is the most powerful competitive weapon for the businesses. Many firms try hard to develop their service quality in order to meet their customers' expectations. The higher service quality they serve to their customers, the higher satisfied level of the customers they gain. However, maintaining high quality service remains difficult because of the influence of various factors. When customers go to a restaurant, they will participate in service and assess the service quality such as receiving a staff's welcome manner, food serving, taking orders or even receiving bill collection. If anything goes wrong or something unexpected happens, there is someone who is prepared to make a special effort to handle the situation. The behavior of waiters, therefore,

influences the customers' view of the service. All of these are technical or outcomes of the operations and are part of the service experience.

Service Quality Measurement

SERVQUAL

The most well-known tool to evaluate service quality is SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The SERVQUAL instrument has been widely used for satisfaction measurement in food service (Fen & Lian, 2006). The model of SERVQUAL was originally identified into ten dimensions; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, credibility, security, access, communication, and understanding the customers.

Development of SERVQUAL

The refined SERVQUAL model was later analyzed and designed to measure customers' assessment of service quality. Ten dimensions were gathered into five ones based on the analysis related to a restaurant service below (Parasuraman et al. 1988):

Tangibles consist of the appearance of physical facilities, decoration, comfort and an appearance of personnel. In restaurant service, physical facilities refer to the cleanliness and readiness of equipment (e.g. dining tables, chairs, dishes, spoon and forks,

and napkin, ketchup bottles). Decoration includes dining area and food's appearance that makes customers feel pleasant. Modern look refers to the design of equipment and the well-dressed uniform. Comfort is relevant to a comfortable seat or sensation.

Reliability involves performing the promised service dependably and accurately.

In a restaurant, the dimension includes such qualities as dependability, consistency, accuracy, service at the promised time, error-free record, and value for money.

Responsiveness relates to willingness to serve customers and provide prompt service in a timely manner: This includes helpfulness, friendliness, warmth, willingness, openness, ability to service under the pressure, and welcome manner. For restaurant service, responsiveness are quickly correct mistakes, willing to handle special requests, and polite and courteous, prompt service, and ability to serve under the pressure.

Assurance refers to knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence in the customer: In restaurant services, assurance dimension means the knowledge of staff (e.g. understandable communication, knowledge about menu, and readable menus), safety from receiving payment (billing accuracy and credit card acceptance), skills and expertise (e.g. effective communication, English speaking,

courteousness, and well training), and making customers free from doubts (e.g. the safety from harm; either person or situation and privacy in dealing with staff).

Empathy involves caring and personal attention which the firm offers its customers; this includes the approach and contact, understandable communication, an understanding of customer's needs, personal attention & equal treatment, having time to suggest menu, and convenient operating hours. In restaurant service, staff care about customers; staff put customers' best interest at heart to make them feel special; understand the customers' needs, operating hours, and menu suggestion.

The assurance dimension includes competence, courtesy, credibility and security items. The empathy dimension includes access, communication, and understanding the customer (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These five dimensions have been used to measure the restaurant service quality and other service quality.

In summary, customers' satisfaction is related to the perception of the quality of service, high quality of service is a crucial concern. To give the impressive experiences to customers, five dimensions in the SERVQUAL model; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurances, and empathy, are the keys for measurement the quality of service.

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is essential to the survival of a business. It is very important for a service provider to know whether the customers are satisfied with your products and services because customer satisfaction is the factor resulting in a repurchase products and services. This section explain the definitions of customer satisfaction and its importance

Definition of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction involves the feeling of well-being and pleasures that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from a desired service (World Trade Organization, 1985). Hill (1996) defined customer satisfaction as the customers' perceptions that services have met or exceeded their expectation. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) said that satisfaction can be associated with feelings of acceptance, happiness, relief, excitement, and delight.

Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as a person' feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product are perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. It is important factor to lead the firms knowing their quality delivered to their customers through the products or services (Vavra, 1997).

According to Pizam and Ellis (1999), customer satisfaction becomes essential for

company's survival among the high competition in the service industry. Reisinger and Turner (2003) notes that satisfaction is the comparison of expectation with experiences in terms of performance as when experiences differ negatively from expectations, dissatisfaction occurs, when experiences are better than expectation, satisfaction occurs.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2004) state that satisfaction is a customer's evaluation of products or service to see whether that products or service have met their needs and expectations.

Failure to meet needs and expectations is assumed to result in dissatisfaction with products or service.

Importance of Customer Satisfaction

Giving impressive dining experiences might be more necessary condition for satisfaction. Restaurants should be measured customers' satisfaction level towards services they provide. According to Dutka (2003), customer satisfaction results can help:

1. *To present the current standing of customer satisfaction. These descriptive data such as mean, range, and standard deviation, can assist in identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in satisfaction dimensions, the specific items under each, as well as information about overall scores.*

2. *To identify important customer requirements. Identification of specific customer requirements for achieving satisfaction is useful at a very fundamental level. An organization is able to clearly focus efforts in those areas that are most important to customers. Moreover, service environment plays a significant role. Customers spend their time and money in service environments that prompt a feeling of pleasure.*

3. *To monitor customer satisfaction results over time. The same information gathered at different points in time can assist in identification of trends and patterns that develop as an organization evolves and changes. Collection and comparison of information allows for the restaurant to adapt and modify services to meet the changing requirements of customers.*

4. *To provide comparisons to other organizations. This includes not only structural and organizational strengths and weaknesses, but also effectiveness of service components and service delivery. This can assist in coordination of planned changes specific to each area.*

5. *To determine the effectiveness of business practices. Data gathered from customer satisfaction can provide valuable and accurate information that can assist in evaluation of service components and delivery. Services can be altered to become more*

effective, and business practices can be altered to meet the standards of excellence. High satisfaction levels are positive, while those below are in need of improvement.

In this study, customer satisfaction is a customer's personal perception to an experience with a service. Customer satisfaction results are important. They can help the service providers to reveal the current standing customers' satisfaction, important requirements of customers, comparisons to other organizations, the effectiveness of business practices, and to modify services for changes over time.

Previous Studies

A number of studies related to food services and customers' satisfaction with the use of SERVQUAL model have been conducted. A few were presented below:

Related to different perception, Chaipooirutana (1998) presented a comparison of service quality in the fast-food restaurants located both in USA and Thailand. The study used five SERVQUAL dimensions for analyzing the differences between American and Thai customers of the fast-food restaurants in the respective countries, and for considering the influence of demographics by focusing on age groups, income levels, and educational levels. Pizza Hut restaurants were selected to be the representative of such the restaurant.

The study showed that American and Thai customers had the different perception and expectation on fast food service quality. American customers had the expectation higher than perception. For Thai customers, there was a little difference between their perception and expectation of service quality. However, the perception of those with the high level income and higher educational level of both of the countries were the same. Moreover, demographic characteristics showed a significant difference in expectation and perception of service quality between American and Thai customers. Reliability showed the strong expectations and perceptions of both of countries.

A way to make customers satisfied with the service provided was to examine the providers' response to service failure. This was an important way led to improve the quality of restaurant service. Johnston (2000) studied the service failure by the use of complaint letters, provider firm responses, and report of changes in customer satisfaction. These instruments, however, were related to SERVQUAL in terms of customer complaints about timing (responsiveness), addressing of the problem (responsiveness), assurance of correction (assurance) and staff responses (responsiveness and empathy). The study showed that customers expected a response to their complaints. Their satisfaction was influenced by whether or not the provider responds.

The study to find the quality of restaurant service in Hong Kong International Airport (Heung et al., 2000) indicated that convenient operating hours were most important.

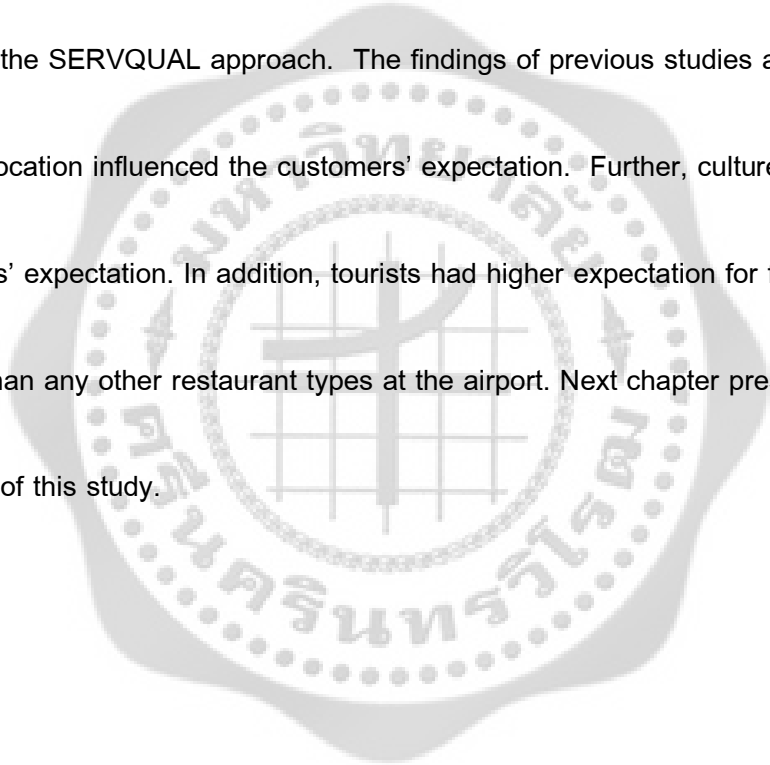
Tourists scored the attractive dining area (tangibles) as the lowest: This might be because this is the airport so the tourists were more concerned about grabbing meal and catching their flights. Moreover, the study showed that travelers had higher expectation for adequate level of service for full-serviced restaurants than other restaurant types. Also, the most important dimension for adequate service in a Chinese restaurant was an accurate guest check (staff are dependable in fixing problems). Some customers were lacked familiarity with the price range of Chinese menu items. The study also revealed the travelers were not satisfied for cleanliness in Chinese restaurants at the airport.

Sahin et al. (2005) studied the factor affecting satisfaction level with the food service in a military hospital in Turkey. The questionnaire questioned the level of satisfaction of patients with aspects of food and food services. The finding showed that the most important factors of overall dissatisfaction were the taste and appearance of food. Furthermore, the results of this study showed the negative relationship between length of stay and overall satisfaction with hospital food and food services.

Fen and Lian (2006) studied the relationship of service quality and customer satisfaction that affected customer's re-patronage intentions. The study was designed to examine the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and customer's re-patronage intentions in the context of restaurant industry. SERVQUAL model was used to develop the instrument. The study indicated that service quality and customers satisfaction had a direct positive effect on customer's re-patronage intentions. Customer satisfaction was a stronger predictor of re-patronage intentions compared to service quality. The finding showed the significance of the satisfaction level and the quality of the restaurant service towards repurchasing.

The study that referred using SERVQUAL model (Chow et al. 2007) tested the conceptual model of service quality based on five service quality dimensions of the large full-serviced restaurants in southern China. The relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, as well as frequency of patronage was investigated. Consequently, the result indicated the important link between service quality and customer satisfaction towards re-patronage. Interaction and physical environment quality were more important predictors of the quality of restaurant service. The finding has indicated that a high level of service quality relates with customer satisfaction as well as frequent repurchase.

In summary, previous studies revealed dimensions for improving the quality of restaurant service. Cleanliness was the priority of customers' requirement. Convenient operating hours was one of the most important dimensions in airport-restaurant service. The restaurant providers' response to a customer complaint was a way to improve the quality of restaurant service. Many of the previous studies on restaurant service quality have applied the SERVQUAL approach. The findings of previous studies also showed that restaurant's location influenced the customers' expectation. Further, culture differentiated the customers' expectation. In addition, tourists had higher expectation for full-serviced restaurants than any other restaurant types at the airport. Next chapter presented the methodology of this study.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology, which includes the respondents of the study, instrument of the study, procedures of the study, and data analysis.

Respondents of the study

The respondents in this study ($N = 50$) were international customers from Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA, dining at S&P restaurant, Suvarnabhumi airport from April 20th to 30th, 2010.

Instrument of the study

The instrument for collecting customer satisfaction data in this study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part was about the personal information of the respondents: gender, age, country of residence, and education. The second part examined the level of satisfaction with the restaurant services in Suvarnabhumi airport according to the five dimensions (tangibles,

reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) consisted in SERVQUAL, the model used to assess the service quality. The Likert format rating from 1 to 5 scales was used to classify the satisfaction levels of the respondents. The third part evaluated the respondents' overall satisfaction and the intention to revisit towards the S&P restaurant at Suvarnabhumi airport.

To obtain the validity, all items contained in the questionnaire were checked by one expert in restaurant service (restaurant manager), and two native speakers (American teachers). After consulting with the expert and native speakers, the researcher adjusted the content of the questionnaire and asked for the advisor's approval before applying the questionnaire in the actual survey.

Procedures of the study

Initially, the researcher sent out a letter with a brief paper describing the project, an explanation of the objectives and the proposed respondents of the study, and a copy of the questionnaire to the S&P president for the permission to collect the data at the restaurant. After receiving a favorable response from S&P, the field survey was performed from April 1st to 30th, 2010 at S&P Restaurant, Suvarnabhumi airport branch. The researcher asked

the staff of S&P restaurant working at the branch to help collect the completed questionnaires. The staff had been contacted earlier to help the researcher gather the data. The international customers, who were from Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA, were requested to fill in their real and honest responses to the questionnaire. After receiving 50 completed questionnaires, the staff contacted the researcher.

Data analysis

After collecting the data, the study used descriptive statistics to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the satisfaction levels of international customers regarding the service were analyzed by the use of a Microsoft Excel program, which calculated percentages and mean scores. In addition, this study used the 1-5 Likert scale where 1 = “very low” satisfied, 2 = “low” satisfied, 3 = “neutral” satisfied, 4 = “high” satisfied, 5 = “very high” satisfied. The numbers from 1 to 5 were treated in the interval scales. Using the interval scales helped to interpret the mean scores into levels of satisfaction (Poonlabtawee: 1987).

According to Srisaard (1992), the assistant professor in research, the appropriate criterion for interpreting satisfaction levels would be the intervals shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Intervals of Satisfaction Levels

Rating Scale	Mean Score	Satisfaction Level
5	4.51- 5.00	Very high
4	3.51 - 4.50	High
3	2.51 - 3.50	Neutral
2	1.51 - 2.50	Low
1	1.00 - 1.50	Very low

This study used the intervals for interpreting the levels of satisfaction. After selecting the intervals of levels of satisfaction, the researcher interpreted the values of the mean scores: high mean scores express high satisfaction; low mean scores represent low satisfaction.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of this study which were organized into three sections: the personal data of respondents, the satisfaction levels of respondents towards the five dimensions, and the overall satisfaction and the intention to revisit.

1. Personal data of the respondents

This study aimed to (1) measure international customers' satisfaction with the dining experience at S&P restaurant, Suvarnabhumi airport, and to (2) identify the important dimensions of Thai full-service restaurants. The questionnaires were distributed to 50 international customers who were from the top-five countries arriving in Thailand in 2009:

Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA, dining at S&P restaurant, Suvarnabhumi airport.

The data were gathered from the 20th to 30th, of April, 2010. Table 2 displayed the personal data of the respondents:

Table 2 The personal data of international customers

Gender		Age		Country		Education	
Category	(%)	Category	(%)	Category	(%)	Category	(%)
Male	52	21-30	48	Japan	12	Primary	2
Female	48	31-40	22	China	22	Secondary	6
		41-50	20	UK	13	Post-secondary	12
		Over 50	10	Germany	17	University	60
				USA	36	Other	20

The personal data of the international customers indicated that 52% males and 48% females participated in this study. The highest percentage (48%) of the respondents fell into the 21- 30 year of age, while the lowest percentage (10%) of respondents fell into the over 50 years of age category. The largest group of international customers (36%) was from the USA (36%), whereas the smallest group (12%) was from Japan. In terms of level of education, a large percentage (60%) of respondents received a university degree as their highest academic education, while only 2 % had a primary school level of education.

2. The satisfaction levels of international customers towards the five dimensions

In this study, the questionnaire based on SERVQUAL model was designed to measure five dimensions which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy in the S&P restaurant at Suvarnabhumi airport. The international customers rated their satisfaction in each dimension.

Tangibles

Table 3 illustrates the findings of international customers' satisfaction with the "tangibles" dimension of the S&P restaurant. In this study, "tangibles" involves the restaurant supply and equipment (e.g. dining room, front desk, lighting, and dining area decoration, tables, utensils, design, and furniture), and appearance of personnel (staff uniform). The equipment in the restaurant, the staff uniform, and the dining area were "modern-looking". "Cleanliness" (equipment, uniform, and the dining area), "decoration" (the dining area and the food's appearance), and "comfort" (seating, aisle, space, and temperature) were also included.

Table 3 International customers' satisfaction level towards "tangibles" dimension

Items	Mean scores	Level of satisfaction
Modern-looking	3.56	High
Cleanliness	3.66	High
Decoration	3.52	High
Comfort	3.54	High
Overall	3.57	High

The international customers rated their satisfaction level as "high" towards the "tangibles" dimension of this S&P restaurant (overall = 3.57). The findings showed that "cleanliness" was a strong feature of this S&P restaurant (mean = 3.66). This might be explained by the fact that the S&P restaurant is committed to cleanliness as evidenced by the "Clean Food Good Taste" award by the Ministry of Public Health (S&P, 2004).

The satisfaction levels towards the "tangibles" dimension among other features was not much different. The customers rated "decoration" at the "high" satisfaction level (mean = 3.52). It might be because of the beauty of the furnishings and the layout in the restaurant. In addition, the choice of colors in the restaurant might be one of the "decoration" features

that influenced customers' satisfaction. As the S&P restaurant uses yellow walls, the color tends to be bright and catches the customers' eyes. The restaurant uses dark chairs which generates a pleasant mood for the customers (Baker et al., 1994). Furthermore, the appearance of the food possibly influenced the customers' satisfaction. S&P is committed to presentation of their dishes as they instruct their staff to decorate their menu items before serving them.

The "modern-looking" features of the restaurant were rated at the "high" satisfaction level (mean =3.56). The restaurant selected the modern shaped furniture such as curvy forms of chairs made from leather. Dazkir and Read (2011) pointed out that curvy furniture causes positive emotions such as feeling relaxed, happy, and hopeful. Moreover, modern staff uniforms might influence the customers' preference. According to Stone (2007), the customers might get the impression of modernity when they see the staff come to the table in his or her white and well-fitted uniform. In the S&P restaurant, the staff uniform consists of black pants with a white pressed shirt and a black vest, which is clean and appropriate to wear.

The "comfort" feature was rated at the "high" satisfaction level (mean =3.54). This might have been caused by the restaurant seating arrangement. The customers in a full-

serviced restaurant sit for a long time. Hence, making comfortable seating is another important feature of the physical setting. Seats that are too close to each other can cause customers to feel crowded and cramped: they lack privacy (Joanne et. al., 2004). The S&P restaurant spaces the dining tables so that customers can comfortably walk and sit.

In spite of the importance of the “tangibles” dimension for restaurants in an airport, the results of this study were inconsistent with the study of Heung et al. (2000) in terms of “cleanliness” and “decoration”. They did not attend to “decoration”. The customers scored “attractive surrounding area” as the lowest priority for a full-serviced restaurant. Furthermore, for “cleanliness”, their study on tourist satisfaction levels towards the quality of four types of restaurant service: full service, casual dining, quick service, and Chinese restaurant, in Hong Kong International Airport showed that the tourists would not be pleased with a Chinese restaurant if it is not clean. The inconsistent results of “attractive surrounding area” might be caused by the different culture of respondents. This study did not focus on the tourists who might be more concerned with grabbing a quick meal and catching their flights. Some international customers in this study might be regular customers of S&P or intend to visit the restaurant and relax a bit more.

Empathy

As mentioned in Table 4, the customers also rated their levels of satisfaction towards the “empathy” dimension of the S&P restaurant. In this study, “empathy” refers to caring and individualized attention towards its customers such as “personal attention” (e.g. individual welcome and seating), “understanding specific needs” (e.g. international language ability, chopsticks for Chinese diners, special chairs for kids, and private seating), “operating convenient hours”, and “having time to suggest various menus items”.

Table 4 International customers’ satisfaction level towards “empathy” dimension

Items	Mean score	Level of satisfaction
Personal attention	3.52	High
Understanding specific needs	3.66	High
Operating convenient hours	3.52	High
Having time to suggest menus	3.40	Neutral
Overall	3.53	High

The international customers’ satisfaction with the “empathy” dimension of the S&P restaurant were at the “high” level (overall = 3.53). The customers were satisfied with the

staff “understanding specific needs” (mean = 3.66). This might be because staff put the customers’ best interest at heart. To help raise the outlet’s staff performance, S&P emphasizes staff training schemes during the year and also adds in special courses to improve management skills at all levels (S&P, 2004).

The international customers’ satisfaction with “convenient operating hours” was at the “high” level (mean = 3.52). At Suvarnabhumi airport, S&P restaurant offers 24-hour service. Staff provide food and prompt service and were ready for all groups of customers whose flight arrivals were at different times during the night. Customers received prompt service, courteous manners of smiling S&P staff, as well as convenient place to relax no matter what time of day or night it was.

In addition, “personal attention” was rated “high” satisfaction level (mean = 3.52). The “high” satisfaction score might be due to the greeting process. S&P restaurant has greeters or hosts at the door, more formal standing postures and friendly smiles. The language used is also formal, for example, addressing customers by Mr. and Madam, and “table for how many?” The staff direct customers to their seats and as well as pull the chair out for lady customers. They always say “Welcome to S&P restaurant”. The formal manners

of the S&P staff were possibly interpreted as the service provider caring about the customers.

Responsiveness

Table 5 shows the customers' satisfaction levels towards the "responsiveness" dimension of the restaurant. In this study, "responsiveness" includes the "prompt service", "willingness to help customers" (willing to handle a special request, friendliness and helpfulness), "ability to service under the pressure", and "welcome manner" (initial greeting and taking orders).

Table 5 International customers' satisfaction level towards "responsiveness" dimension

Items	Mean score	Level of satisfaction
Welcome manner	3.52	High
Prompt service	3.44	Neutral
Willingness	3.44	Neutral
Ability to serve under the pressure	3.46	Neutral
Overall	3.47	Neutral

The findings showed that international customers' satisfaction with the "responsiveness" dimension were at the "neutral" level (overall = 3.47). The only aspect that was rated "high" satisfaction was the "welcome manner" (mean = 3.52). This might have been caused by the restaurant's strategy of staff development. S&P restaurant has a policy of training staff to be courteous (S&P, 2004). The politeness of staff is encouraged. Furthermore, it is a prominent Thai characteristic. Staff smile at the initial greeting and invite customers to select dining tables, as mentioned in the "personal attention". This characteristic might be recognized as an attractive manner of the staff. Noypayak (2009) confirms that smiling, friendliness and courteousness are important characteristics of Thai staff.

According to Hofstede (1991), Asian countries such as Thailand have a power distance type of culture that might influence the "high" satisfaction level of "welcome manner". Hofstede defined Power distance as the power of member institutions and organization within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1991) such as with different member positions. In the Asian countries such as Japan and Thailand, the staff will tend to be respectful to their customers because they

consider themselves in a lower position (Bianchi, 2001). In the S&P restaurant, the respectful characteristic of Thai staff might be interpreted as a polite and welcome behavior.

Assurance

Table 6 displays the results of levels of satisfaction towards the “assurance” dimension of the restaurant. In this study, “assurance” involves the “knowledge of staff” (e.g. understandable communication, knowledge about menu, and readable menus), “safety from receiving payment” (billing accuracy and credit card acceptance), “skills and expertise” (e.g. effective communication, English speaking, courteousness, and well trained), and “making customers free from doubts” (e.g. the safety from harm; either person or situation and privacy in dealing with staff).

Table 6 International customers' satisfaction level towards "assurance" dimension

Items	Mean score	Level of satisfaction
Knowledge of staff about menu	3.46	Neutral
Feel free from doubts	3.52	High
Staff skills and expertise	3.40	Neutral
Safety from receiving payment	3.40	Neutral
Overall	3.45	Neutral

The international customers' overall satisfaction with the "assurance" dimension was at the "neutral" level (overall = 3.48). The only aspect that received the "high" satisfaction rating was "making customers feel free from doubts" (mean = 3.52). Its "high" satisfaction rating might be explained by the fact that S&P restaurant staff were ready all the time to take orders. Staff asked the customers if they need more water or special drinks. They regularly checked that ketchup bottles, salt and pepper shakers, and paper napkins holders were full.

Furthermore, the front desk always has staff available when the customers needed something. The customers could walk to the front-desk and request for assistance if there

were no staff standing close to their tables. In addition, the customers' suitcases were stored in a supervised and visible area. This service might impress the customers, who felt that the staff help them secure their suitcases from thieves and other unauthorized persons. Moreover, the front wall structure of the restaurant is a lattice design (see the picture in the Appendix II), which was possibly one of the elements in assuring the customers. The structure allows the customers who sit inside the restaurant see what is happening outside the restaurant.

Reliability

Table 7 shows the international customers' satisfaction levels towards the "reliability" dimension of the S&P restaurant. In this study, "reliability" refers to "service at the promised time", "error-free records" (e.g. complaint papers, questionnaire, feedback checklist), "dependable handling" (accessibility) and "reasonable prices".

Table 7 International customers' satisfaction level towards "reliability" dimension

Items	Mean scores	Level of satisfaction
Serving at the promised time	3.22	Neutral
Error-free records	2.82	Neutral
Dependable handling	3.26	Neutral
Reasonable prices	3.56	High
Overall	3.22	Neutral

The international customers' overall satisfaction with the "reliability" dimension was at the "neutral" level (overall = 3.22). The only aspect that received the "high" satisfaction rating was "reasonable prices" (mean = 3.56). The findings indicated that the S&P restaurant offered the services that made the international customers feel they got value for their money. Thailand is a competitive destination for foreigners: they perceive tourism in Thailand to be rather cheap. Therefore, "reasonable prices" is an attractive aspect for the foreign customers (Pongsirirushakun & Naewmalee, 2003). In the S&P restaurant, the "high" satisfaction of "reasonable prices" might be because all kinds of ingredients are available throughout the year. Therefore, the restaurant could offer menu options with low

prices for all seasons. The “high” satisfaction rating of “reasonable prices” of this study confirmed the findings of Chanchiew (2007) on foreign customers’ satisfaction and expectation the Thai restaurant on Khao Sarn road.

3. The overall satisfaction and the intention to revisit

Overall satisfaction

Table 8 illustrates the findings of international customers’ overall satisfaction. In this study, the respondents were asked to review their overall satisfaction towards service quality of the S&P restaurant.

Table 8 International customers’ overall satisfaction towards S&P restaurant

Overall Satisfaction	Number of respondent	Percentage
Very high	8	16
High	13	26
Neutral	24	48
Low	5	10
Very low	0	0

The findings showed that 48% of the international customers rated their overall satisfaction at the “neutral” level towards service quality offered by the S&P restaurant. This might be because the international customers expected to see quality service in a full-serviced restaurant higher as opposed to non-full serviced restaurants (Heung et al., 2000). The S&P restaurant was challenged by the customers’ high expectation. In addition, since this study was conducted with international customers, they might assess the restaurant service quality by English communication skills of staff.

The intention to revisit

Table 9 displays the findings of the international customers’ intention to revisit the restaurant. In this study, the intention to revisit is defined as the customers’ intention to return to the S&P restaurant.

Table 9 International customers’ intention to revisit S&P restaurant

The intention to revisit	Number of respondent	Percentage
Yes	44	88
No	6	12

Most respondents (88%) would like to revisit the restaurant. This might be because the full-serviced restaurant was one of the customers' choices that they would select. As mentioned, the customers expected to see high service quality in full-service restaurants (Heung et al., 2000). Therefore, they will possibly select a full-serviced restaurant if they were pleased with it previously.

Summary of the findings

The international customers' overall satisfaction with the services of the S&P restaurant in this study was at the "neutral" level. The aspects that were rated "high" satisfaction were "cleanliness", "modern-looking", "comfort", "decoration", "reasonable prices", "welcome manner", "personal attention", "understanding specific needs", "operating convenient hours", and "having time to suggest menus". The findings indicated that "tangibles" (cleanliness) and "empathy" (understanding specific needs) were the strongest dimensions leading to the international customers' satisfaction with S&P.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions, implications, limitations of the study and the recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

As restaurants play an important role in the service industry, they reflect the image of the country. Gaining international customers' satisfaction at a high level shows the restaurant service achievement and positive attitudes of its customers towards Thailand. Although the research on the relationship of international customers' satisfaction towards Thai restaurants has typically shown high satisfaction results, few studies explored the international customers' satisfaction towards full-serviced restaurants, particularly at the airport. The objectives of this study were to measure the satisfaction levels of international customers towards a Thai full-serviced restaurant, and to identify the important dimensions of this restaurant among the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The instrument used in this study was

a questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model. The study was conducted with 50 international customers who were from Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA, dining at S&P restaurant, Suvarnabhumi Airport, from 20th to 30th, April, 2010.

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that, in the “tangibles” dimension, physical surroundings; more specifically the furniture and atmosphere of the dining area, were considered an important aspect attracting international customers. The cleanliness of the restaurant, equipment and the appearance of the personnel were crucial for the international customers’ satisfaction. More specifically, the modern look of both the furniture and staff uniforms, decoration of the dining area, and the comfortable seating arrangement could be successful in attracting the customers.

This study also suggested that, in terms of the “empathy” dimension, caring and individualized attention such as accompanying the customers to their seats, orders taking, brief appropriate conversation with customers, and answering customers’ questions, was essential in increasing the customers’ satisfaction. Moreover, convenient hours such as the 24-hour service provide at this S&P restaurant was also an important aspect responsible for the high level of satisfaction. In addition, understanding the customers’ specific needs was an important aspect in the customers’ satisfaction in their dining experiences, for example,

by accepting special dietary menu requests or by being sympathetic towards customers' problems.

Other important aspects from the analysis could also be seen in the "responsiveness", "assurance" and "reliability" dimensions. In the "responsiveness" dimension, Thai characteristics such as smiling, friendliness, and courteousness were important to the satisfaction of the international customers. In the "assurance" dimension, inspiring customers to have trust and confidence did influence their satisfaction. The examples of assuring customers were that staff easily approached, readily available and helped to provide a secure place for the customers' suitcases. In the "reliability" dimension, this study indicated that the appropriate price was a success key of this Thai full-serviced restaurant. The international customers were happy with the price level at this restaurant. This showed that this Thai full-serviced restaurant offered a menu that was competitive and acceptable to the international customers.

This study provided evidence that the important dimensions of Thai full-serviced restaurants were "tangibles" and "empathy". More specifically, the aspects with the highest satisfaction ratings were "cleanliness" (tangibles) and "understanding specific needs" (empathy). In spite of the large number of "high" ratings in the satisfaction aspects, the

customers rated their overall satisfaction at the “neutral” level. The next section presents the implications based on the findings of this study.

Implications of the study

The satisfaction levels of the international customers in this study led to the suggested improvements below:

1. Promoting the highest satisfaction dimensions

International customers were satisfied with the “tangibles” and “empathy” dimensions: The most attractive aspects were “cleanliness” and “understanding specific needs” .These two dimensions are prominent points that restaurant owners should promote since the research aimed to find out the satisfaction levels of international customers in order to promote Thai restaurant services.

2. Prompt service

In this study, the two aspects related to promptness: “service at the promised time” and “prompt service”, were rated at a “neutral” satisfaction level. S&P should be concerned with the aspects that the customers were not satisfied with. A reason for the “neutral” satisfaction levels with “service at the promised time” and “prompt service” might be

because there was not enough staff. Every day, the S&P restaurant at Suvarnabhumi airport has to provide service to many domestic and oversea customers. The restaurant needs to supply a sufficient number of staff to ensure prompt and efficient service, especially during busy times, and they should be stationed close to the dining tables. Sometimes, customers had to wait to be seated. It would have been better if staff could have always provided immediate contact.

3. Well-trained staff

The analysis of the “responsiveness” dimension identified service staff behavior: “willingness to help customers” and “ability to service under the pressure”, as the important components of service quality of the restaurant in this study. Well-trained and possess excellent interpersonal skills, are important in the customers’ satisfaction of a restaurant dining experience. Therefore, the Human Resource Officer of the restaurant should put a strong emphasis on staff training to ensure that they are service minded and are willing to deliver high-quality service. The standard performance assessment of staff can be set with these qualities in mind and reviewed regularly such as staff have a good knowledge of the menus and effective communication so that they are able to clarify any unfamiliar menu items or ingredients to customers, and take extra care when calculating the total bill by

rechecking the menu prices, for example, received menu items and not charging for returned menu items.

In addition, a way to improve the staff is to check the customers' feedback (Johnston, 2000). In the "reliability" dimension, international customers were not satisfied with the lack of feedback options because the restaurant did not provide them with questionnaires or a complaint checklist. Therefore, in order to receive the helpful customers' feedback, questionnaires asking for the satisfaction and need for improvement of restaurant services are necessary.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

Limitations

This study has limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its results. Some of these limitations can be seen as fruitful avenues for further research under the same theme:

1. This study was conducted with customers from five different countries: Japan, China, UK, Germany, and USA. Some respondents whose English is not their first language

may have problems in answering the questions because only an English version of the questionnaire was provided.

2. Since the respondents of this study were Asians, Europeans and Americans, some of them may have an artifact of response bias towards service quality of the full-serviced restaurant. For example, relating to prompt service, American customers may expect to see a higher level of prompt and fast service than others because they expect fast service offered by fast food restaurants (Chaipooirutana, 1998). In contrast, full-serviced restaurants offer table service that needs preparation before serving. The fast service in the S&P restaurant may not meet the American customers' expectation.

Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations for further research are as follows:

1. This study was conducted with international customers from five different countries arriving in Thailand. Focusing on the five countries in this study was not entirely thorough. Nowadays, the number of international customers visiting Thailand is from various

countries around the world, changing throughout the years. Further research should be conducted with customers from other countries that have high arrival rates.

2. This study was conducted with the international customers, however, research questions did not mention to intercultural perceptions. Further research should extend the research questions to intercultural perceptions towards Thai full-serviced restaurants because a person's culture will influence his or her interpretation and perceptions of the service quality components (Baker & Hartel, 2004). For example, relating to bill collection in a restaurant, informing American customers when they are ready for the bill means the staff pays attention to the customers' needs and is prompt and reliable in his or her service. In contrast, informing a Chinese customer about that their bill is ready will most likely be taken negatively. This may be interpreted as asking the customers to leave (Teo, 2010).

3. This study was conducted to measure the international customers' satisfaction levels towards S&P restaurants only at one location at the airport. Further research should be conducted to measure S&P restaurants located in other areas: such as in the Bangkok and Pattaya areas that have plenty of international people in order to confirm the results of this study.

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APPENDIX



Questionnaire

International Customers' Satisfaction towards Thai Full-Serviced Restaurant

This questionnaire is part of a master project on the topic of "International Customers' Satisfaction towards Thai Full-Serviced Restaurants" for the Master of Arts Program in Business English for International Communication, Srinakharinwirot University.

The information in this questionnaire will be used only for educational purpose. We assure you that any information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence and will not have any effect on you and your company. Your cooperation in answering this questionnaire is highly appreciated.

Part 1: Personal Data

1.1 Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

1.2 Age: ☐ 20-30 ☐ 31-40
☐ 41-50 ☐ 51 or more

1.3 Country of residence

☐ USA ☐ China
☐ UK ☐ Germany ☐ Japan

1.4 Education

☐ Primary

☐ Secondary

☐ Post-secondary

☐ University

☐ Other, (please specify)

Part 2: International Tourists' Satisfaction Measurement

Directions: Please tick one ($\checkmark$) for each item. The number of each item that shows your satisfaction level towards the restaurant service has 5 levels where 1 = very low satisfaction, 2 = low satisfaction, 3 = neutral satisfaction, 4 = high satisfaction, 5 = very high satisfaction.

Restaurant Dimensions	Level of Satisfaction				
	5	4	3	2	1
Tangibles					
1. The restaurant has modern-looking and necessary equipment (e.g. tables, dishes, lighting design, furniture).					
2. The restaurant provides cleanliness (e.g. floor, table, equipment, staff uniforms).					
3. The restaurant is decorated appropriately (e.g. the entrance, atmosphere).					
4. The restaurant provides comfortable and private seating (e.g. big table, private corner, space)					
Reliability	5	4	3	2	1
5. The staff provide service at the promised time.					
6. The staff maintain the error-free records (e.g. complaint paper and questionnaires)					
7. The staff have dependability in handling customers' problems (accessibility and readiness).					
8. The staff provide food and service at the reasonable prices.					
Responsiveness	5	4	3	2	1
9. The staff greet customer in a welcome manner (e.g. initial greeting and asking order).					
10. The staff provide prompt service to customers.					
11. The staff are willingness to help customer (willing to handle special requests, friendliness, helpfulness).					
12. The staff are flexible to customers, requests and feedbacks (e.g. ability to service under the pressure and solving the problems at hand, readiness to response to customers, questions, and having the customers' best interest at heart).					

Assurance	5	4	3	2	1
13. The staff have knowledge to answer customer questions.					
14. The staff assure customers of free from doubt (e.g. private section, the security of staff from harmful persons, or privacy in dealing with staff)					
15. The staff have skills and expertise (effective communication; English speaking, courteousness, and well training)					
16. The staff make customers feel safety from receiving payment (billing clarity, receiving payment and giving change, and credit card availability)					
Empathy	5	4	3	2	1
17. The staff give personal attention to customers and treat customers equally (e.g. individual welcome to the seat, asking orders with politeness, and family and individual attention).					
18. The staff understand specific needs of customers (e.g. international language used, chopsticks for Chinese, special chairs for kids, private seat, hurry time).					
19. The staff provide service to different customers (e.g. individual, family, or businesspersons)					
20. The staff have time to suggest the various dishes for different customers (e.g. different need between women and men, nationality, or even nutrition of food).					

Part 3: The Overall Satisfaction

3.1 How would you rate the overall satisfaction towards the restaurant service?

5	4	3	2	1

3.2 Would you return to the restaurant again?

☐ Yes

☐ No

**** Thank you very much ****

Figure



Figure1 Lattice design



Figure 2 Modern packages designed by S&P



Figure 3 Decoration with Thai food pictures



Figure 4 Leather chairs and sofa

Permission Letter



ที่ ศษ 0519.12/ ๖๖ ๕๔

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เรื่อง ขออนุญาตเผยแพร่ผลการวิจัย

เรียน กรรมการผู้จัดการใหญ่ บริษัท เอส แอนด์ พี ซินดิเคท จำกัด (มหาชน)

เนื่องด้วย นายจรัลกิจ จันทะเวช นิสิตระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสาร นานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ได้รับอนุมัติให้ทำสารนิพนธ์ เรื่อง “ความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มีต่อร้านอาหารไทยแบบบริการเต็มรูปแบบ” โดยมี อาจารย์ ดร.อุมพร คาคการณ์ไกล เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์ ในการนี้ นิสิตมีความจำเป็นต้องเก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย โดยขอให้นักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มาใช้บริการร้านอาหาร S&P สาขาสนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ ที่มาจาก 5 ประเทศ คือ ญี่ปุ่น จีน อังกฤษ เยอรมนี และสหรัฐอเมริกา จำนวน 80 คน ตอบแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มีต่อร้านอาหารไทยแบบบริการเต็มรูปแบบ ในระหว่างเดือนเมษายน 2553

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อขออนุญาตเผยแพร่ ได้โปรดพิจารณาให้ นายจรัลกิจ จันทะเวช ได้เก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย และขอขอบพระคุณเป็นอย่างสูง ณ โอกาสนี้

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

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7 เมษายน 2553

เรื่อง ขออนุญาตเก็บข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัย

เรียน กรรมการผู้จัดการใหญ่ บริษัท เอส แอนด์ พี ซินดิเคท จำกัด (มหาชน)

- สิ่งที่ส่งมาด้วย 1. จดหมายขอความอนุเคราะห์เพื่อการวิจัยจากบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย
2. แผ่นพับแบบสอบถามความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติ

เนื่องด้วยข้าพเจ้า นายจรัลกิจ จันทะเวช กำลังศึกษาระดับปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจ เพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ กำลังทำสารนิพนธ์ภายใต้หัวข้อ “ความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่มีต่อร้านอาหารไทยแบบบริการเต็มรูปแบบ” โดยมี อาจารย์ ดร.อุมาพร คาคการณ์ไกล เป็นอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์ ในการนี้ ข้าพเจ้ามีความจำเป็นต้องเก็บข้อมูลจากนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติ และได้เลือกร้านอาหารเอส แอนด์ พี สาขา สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ ร้านอาหารของท่านเป็นร้านอาหารของประเทศไทยที่มีชื่อเสียงได้รับการยอมรับทั้งในและต่างประเทศมาโดยตลอด ข้าพเจ้าจึงมีความประสงค์ขอเก็บข้อมูลจากนักท่องเที่ยวที่แวะมาใช้บริการร้านอาหาร เอส แอนด์ พี ในสาขาดังกล่าว โดยการออกแบบสอบถามดังตัวอย่างที่แนบมาพร้อมจดหมายฉบับนี้ในระหว่างที่รอรับประทาน อาหาร ในช่วงเดือนเมษายน 2553

ในการนี้ เพื่อให้ไม่เป็นการรบกวนลูกค้าของทางร้าน ข้าพเจ้าได้จัดทำกล่องพลาสติกเล็กๆ สำหรับใส่แบบสอบถามไว้มุมโต๊ะอาหารสำหรับให้ลูกค้าเลือกหยิบตามความสมัครใจ หากท่านต้องการทราบรายละเอียดอื่นๆเพิ่มเติม สามารถติดต่อข้าพเจ้าได้โดยตรงที่เบอร์โทรศัพท์หมายเลข 080-6214106

ท้ายนี้ข้าพเจ้าหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความอนุเคราะห์จากท่าน และขอขอบคุณมายังท่าน ณ โอกาสนี้ด้วย

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ขอเชิญคุณ

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