The Role of Generational Traits in Shaping Service Practices and Customer Perceptions: A Case Study in QSRs

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ARTICLE INFO	Abstract

This research explores the impact of generational traits, service styles, and employee demographics on customer perceptions of service quality in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). The research analyzes survey data from 344 employees and 532 customers, examining the relationship between service quality dimensions (SERVQUAL), employee generational traits, and customer satisfaction. Findings indicate that Millennials and Generation X dominate the workforce (41.9% each), while Generation Z constitutes 16.3%. The QSRs industry exhibits significant gender disparity, with 84.9% of employees being male, whereas 59.4% of customers are female. Education levels suggest a workforce with strong potential for training and career progression. PCA results reveal two primary dimensions: Service Quality (Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy) and Employee Traits & Service Style. Correlation analysis confirms strong positive relationships among SERVQUAL dimensions and customer satisfaction, while employee generational traits moderately correlate with service styles. These findings emphasize the need for tailored training programs, gender diversity initiatives, and digital service enhancements to align employee service styles with customer expectations.

1. Introduction

The Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) industry is a fast-paced and customer-centric sector where service quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and business success (Mendocilla et al., 2021). As consumer expectations evolve, driven by technological advancements and changing demographics, QSRs must continuously adapt their service strategies to maintain competitiveness (Lambert et al., 2021). One of the key factors influencing service delivery is the composition of the workforce, particularly the generational traits and service styles of employees (Kumolu-Johnson, 2024). Understanding how these employee characteristics interact with customer perceptions of service quality is essential for enhancing operational efficiency and customer loyalty (Kaur & Kathuria, 2025).

Previous research highlights that service quality, measured through the SERVQUAL model (Sumi & Kabir, 2021), is a multidimensional construct encompassing tangibility,

reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions collectively shape customer perceptions and satisfaction levels in service-oriented businesses (Aravinda et al., 2021). Additionally, generational theory suggests that employees from different age cohorts exhibit distinct workplace behaviors, communication styles, and technological preferences, all of which can influence their approach to customer service (Lissitsa & Laor, 2021). Given the rising presence of Millennials and Generation Z in the workforce, it is critical to examine how generational traits and service styles impact service quality in QSR settings.

This research aims to bridge the gap between employee demographics, service quality, and customer satisfaction in QSRs by analyzing the interplay between generational characteristics and customer perceptions of service. Using survey data from employees and customers, the research explores how workforce composition influences key service quality dimensions and identifies potential opportunities for enhancing customer experiences. The findings will contribute to both academic literature and industry practices, offering strategic insights for QSR managers to tailor training, recruitment, and service enhancement initiatives to meet evolving customer expectations.

Research Problem

Despite the growing presence of multiple generations in the Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) industry, limited research has explored how generational differences among employees and customers impact service quality. Traditional service models often overlook generational traits that influence service expectations and delivery. This gap creates challenges in designing effective training, customer experience strategies, and employee engagement initiatives. By investigating these generational differences through the SERVQUAL model, this research aims to provide insights for QSRs to enhance service quality, customer satisfaction, and workforce management.

2. literature Review

The interplay between generational traits and service practices has become an increasingly relevant topic in the hospitality and Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) sectors (Ghosh et al., 2023). As workplaces and customer bases become more diverse, understanding how different generations perceive and deliver service is critical to maintaining a competitive edge (Etrata et al., 2025). This literature review explores key theories and empirical studies that shed light on how generational characteristics influence service delivery and customer expectations.

2.1. Understanding Generational Traits in the Workplace

Generational theory suggests that individuals born within a specific time frame share common experiences that shape their values, behaviors, and expectations (Twenge et al., 2010). In the workplace, these differences manifest in attitudes toward work, communication styles, and service approaches. For instance, Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964) tend to prioritize loyalty, structure, and personal interaction, while Generation X (1965–1980) values autonomy and efficiency (Parry & Urwin, 2021). Millennials (1981–1996) and Generation Z (1997–2012) place a stronger emphasis on digital integration, work-life balance, and authenticity in service interactions (Mann, 2022).

Studies in the hospitality industry have highlighted how these generational distinctions influence service practices. Millennial employees are more comfortable using digital tools such as self-service kiosks and mobile apps to enhance efficiency, whereas older generations may prefer traditional, face-to-face customer engagement (Okumus, 2021). These differences shape service culture, training methodologies, and ultimately, customer satisfaction (Ghosh et al., 2023).

2.2. Generational Influences on Service Styles in QSRs

In the fast-paced world of QSRs, service styles are shaped by both employee behavior and customer expectations. Dabhi et al. (2024) concluded that younger employees, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, gravitate toward a more informal, friendly service approach that aligns with their digital-savvy, highly connected lifestyles. In contrast, older generations in service roles may emphasize structured, rule-based service, reflecting their preference for stability and consistency (Etrata et al., 2025).

Dabral et al. (2021) asserted that generational preferences significantly influence service expectations from the customer's perspective. Similarly, Parvazi and Regnér (2023) observed that customer behavior varies across generations, with Baby Boomers valuing high-touch service and personalized interactions, whereas younger consumers tend to prioritize speed, efficiency, and digital convenience. Consequently, this shift has prompted many quick-service restaurants (QSRs) to implement hybrid service models that integrate automation with human interaction to accommodate a diverse customer base (Spanaki, 2024).

2.3. Customer perceptions of service across generations

Customer perception of service quality is largely influenced by generational expectations. The SERVQUAL model provides a useful framework for assessing these expectations through dimensions like reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Setiono & Hidayat, 2022). Research suggests that while all generations value service reliability, their definitions of responsiveness and empathy vary significantly (Yeong et al., 2022).

Ng et al. (2021) highlighted that Generation Z customers, having grown up with instant digital access, often associate fast response times through mobile ordering with high-quality service. In contrast, Baby Boomers tend to place greater value on genuine human interaction. Similarly, a study by Wiangkham et al. (2024) revealed that younger consumers are generally more tolerant of minor service failures when technology is seamlessly integrated, whereas older customers are more critical of disruptions in traditional hospitality.

2.4. Bridging Generational Gaps in QSR Service Culture

Given the generational diversity among both employees and customers in the quick service restaurants (QSRs) sector, businesses must design training programs that accommodate various service preferences while ensuring brand consistency (Kuonen, 2020). Cross-generational mentoring has been recognized as an effective strategy for knowledge transfer, allowing experienced employees to share customer service expertise while younger employees introduce technological advancements (Pannofino & Stewart, 2022).

Additionally, customer service strategies should be adaptable to generational differences, providing multiple service options such as self-service kiosks, mobile applications, and personalized in-store interactions enables QSRs to balance operational efficiency with meaningful customer engagement (Lissitsa & Laor, 2021). Research indicates that businesses capable of seamlessly integrating digital innovation with traditional service values will be better equipped to meet the evolving expectations of a multigenerational customer base (Dabhi et al., 2024).

2.5. Research Hypothesis

Based on the review of existing literature and the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Employee generational traits significantly influence their service styles in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs).

H2: Employee service styles significantly influence customer perceptions of service quality.

H3: Service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) significantly impact customer satisfaction.

H4: Employee responsiveness has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction compared to other service quality dimensions.

3. Methodology
3.1. Research Design

This research employed a quantitative research design to examine the impact of generational differences on service delivery and customer perceptions in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). The research utilized a cross-sectional survey approach, collecting data from both employees and customers to assess their demographic characteristics, perceptions of service quality, and employee service styles.

3.2. Sampling and Participants

The research sample included 344 QSR employees and 532 QSR customers, selected using a convenience sampling method. Employees from different generational cohorts (Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X) participated in the research, with Millennials and Generation X comprising the largest portions of the workforce (41.9% each). The customer sample primarily included Generation Z (45.9%) and Millennials (31.6%), reflecting the main demographic groups frequenting QSRs establishments.

3.3. Data Collection

Data was collected through structured online surveys designed to measure key variables, including demographic characteristics (generation, gender, education, and experience for employees; generation, gender, and visit frequency for customers), service quality perceptions based on the SERVQUAL model, employee generational traits, and service styles. The SERVQUAL model was chosen due to its comprehensive framework and proven applicability in assessing service quality across various industries, including QSRs. SERVQUAL evaluates five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, providing a nuanced understanding of customer expectations and perceptions (Aravinda et al., 2021). Recent studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in identifying gaps between customer expectations and actual service delivery, helping QSRs enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Manhas et al., 2024).

The survey was distributed online to ensure broad accessibility and reach a diverse participant pool. Data collection took place in November and December 2024 and targeted QSR employees and customers in Egypt. For statistical analysis, SPSS V25 was used to process and analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize demographic information, while inferential statistical techniques, such as factor analysis and regression analysis, were employed to examine relationships between service quality perceptions, employee generational traits, and service styles.

The questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. A panel of experts in hospitality management and service quality, including academics and industry professionals, reviewed the questionnaire for content validity. Their feedback was incorporated to refine question wording and ensure alignment with the research

objectives. A pilot test was conducted with a small sample of QSR employees and customers to assess comprehension and response consistency. Based on the pilot results, minor adjustments were made before full-scale distribution. This process ensured that the questionnaire effectively captured the intended constructs while maintaining reliability and validity.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical research guidelines, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time.

4. The results
4.1. Reliability and Validity

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Employee generation traits	.953	5
Employee service style	.958	5
Service Quality	.923	10
Customer Perception of Employee Behavior	.699	5

To ensure the internal consistency of the survey constructs, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each variable. The results, presented in Table 1, indicate high reliability for most constructs.

The Employee Generation Traits scale achieved Cronbach's alpha of 0.953, indicating excellent internal consistency. Similarly, the Employee Service Style scale exhibited strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.958, suggesting that the items measuring service styles are highly correlated and provide stable responses.

The Service Quality construct, which includes multiple dimensions such as Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy, showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.923, demonstrating high reliability. This confirms that the SERVQUAL-based measures used in the research are internally consistent and suitable for assessing customer perceptions of service quality in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). However, the Customer Perception of Employee Behavior construct yielded Cronbach's alpha of 0.699, which is slightly below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Ahmad et al., 2024). While this value suggests moderate reliability, it may indicate some level of measurement error or variability in customer responses. Future studies may consider refining the scale or increasing the number of items to enhance its reliability.

Overall, the reliability analysis confirms that the measurement scales used in this research are appropriate for further statistical analysis, supporting the validity of the findings related to generational traits, service styles, and customer perceptions in QSRs.

4.2.Demographics

   4.2.1.Employees Demographic Data

Table 2.Employees Demographic Data

Employees Demographic Data		Frequency	%
Employee Generations	Generation Z	56	16.3
	Millennials	144	41.9
	Generation x	144	41.9
	Baby Boomers	0	0
Gender	Male	292	84.9
	Female	52	15.1
Educational Level	High school graduate, diploma or equivalent	56	16.3
	Institute graduate (2 Years)	96	27.9
	Bachelor's degree	172	50
	Postgraduate	20	5.8
Experience	Less than 1 year	60	17.4
	1-less than 4 years.	104	30.2
	4- less than 7 years.	136	39.5
	7 years and more.	44	12.8

   The demographic distribution of employees in the surveyed QSRs chain provides valuable insights into the workforce composition and its potential implications on service delivery and organizational dynamics.

   Generational composition, the employee base is predominantly comprised of Millennials and Generation X, each representing 41.9% of the workforce. Generation Z constitutes 16.3%, whereas there are no Baby Boomers reported. This generational makeup suggests a workforce primarily in their mid-career stages, which, in turn, may influence service delivery styles, technology adoption, and team dynamics. Moreover, the absence of Baby Boomers reflects either a hiring focus on younger generations or a natural attrition of older employees from the QSR workforce.

   Gender distribution, the data indicates a significant gender disparity, with 84.9% of employees being male and only 15.1% being female. Consequently, this imbalance could have implications on workplace culture and may necessitate initiatives to foster gender diversity and inclusion within the organization. In addition to the generational and gender composition, educational attainment reveals that a notable portion of the workforce holds a bachelor's degree (50%), followed by Institute graduates (2 years) at 27.9%, and High School graduates at 16.3%. Postgraduates constitute a smaller fraction (5.8%). Therefore, the relatively high level of education among employees could enhance their adaptability to training programs, especially in customer service and technological competencies.

   Furthermore, in terms of experience, the majority of employees have 1-less than 4 years (30.2%) or 4- less than 7 years (39.5%) of experience in the QSR industry. 17.4% have less than a year, indicating a pipeline of newer employees, while 12.8% have 7 years and more experience. This diverse experience range suggests a blend of seasoned and novice employees, which, in turn, could influence mentoring dynamics, innovation, and operational efficiency.

   Given these demographic findings, several strategic considerations for management arise. Firstly, with a significant number of Millennials and Generation X employees, training

programs could be tailored to leverage their technological adeptness and willingness to engage in continuous learning. Secondly, addressing gender disparity through targeted recruitment and retention strategies could help balance the workforce and promote an inclusive culture. Lastly, the high educational attainment suggests potential for internal promotions, which could be a strategy to retain talent by offering clear career progression pathways. In summary, understanding these demographic factors can guide strategic HR initiatives, enhance employee engagement, and ultimately improve service quality within the QSR chain.

4.2.2.Customers Demographic Data

Table 3. Customers Demographic Data

Customers Demographic Data		Frequency	%
Employee Generations	Generation Z	244	45.9
	Millennials	168	31.6
	Generation x	92	17.3
	Baby Boomers	28	5.3
Gender	Male	216	40.6
	Female	316	59.4
QSR Visits frequency	Daily	56	10.6
	Weekly	208	39.1
	Monthly	152	28.6
	Rarely	116	21.8

Generational distribution, the demographic data reveals that Generation Z (45.9%) and Millennials (31.6%) represent the majority of the customer base. This finding is significant because it aligns with broader societal trends where younger generations are more inclined to frequent QSRs due to their preference for convenience, affordability, and digital engagement options (Stewart, 2021). Therefore, it is evident that the QSR industry should tailor its service delivery and marketing strategies to cater to the preferences and expectations of these younger demographics. In contrast, Generation X (17.3%) and Baby Boomers (5.3%) form a smaller proportion of the customer base. This observation suggests that older generations may have different dining preferences or health considerations, which make them less likely to visit QSRs as frequently (Siddiqui et al., 2022). Thus, understanding the motivations and barriers for these groups could provide opportunities for QSRs to expand their appeal to a more diverse customer demographic.

Gender distribution, the data shows a higher proportion of female customers (59.4%) compared to male customers (40.6%). This disparity may be explained by specific behavioral patterns or preferences in dining habits. Moreover, previous research indicates that women may prioritize factors such as food quality, cleanliness, and customer service more highly than men when selecting a dining venue (Kim & Park 2024). Consequently, QSRs should consider these gender-based preferences when designing their service offerings and marketing campaigns to better meet the needs of their predominant customer segment.

In terms of visit frequency, the majority of customers visit QSRs on a weekly basis (39.1%), followed by monthly visits (28.6%). Although daily visits (10.6%) are less common, it is noteworthy that 21.8% of the customer base visits QSRs rarely. These patterns suggest that QSRs play a significant role in the routine dining habits of their customers, particularly among those with a weekly or monthly dining frequency. As such, understanding the visit frequency is crucial for QSRs to optimize their operational strategies.

For instance, frequent visitors might be more influenced by loyalty programs, while infrequent visitors could be targeted through promotional efforts to increase their visit frequency. Furthermore, the relatively low percentage of daily visits indicates an opportunity to explore strategies that can drive higher daily foot traffic, such as breakfast promotions or limited-time offers.

In light of these findings, the demographic profile provides essential context for interpreting customer satisfaction levels. Given that younger generations prefer technology-integrated services, such as mobile ordering and self-service kiosks, their digital nativity aligns with their expectations (Hassoun et al., 2022). Therefore, customer satisfaction initiatives should focus on enhancing these digital touchpoints. Additionally, the gender distribution suggests that attention to cleanliness, customer service, and ambiance may disproportionately affect customer satisfaction ratings, given the higher proportion of female customers who might prioritize these factors.

In summary, this demographic analysis underscores the importance of understanding the composition and behavioral patterns of the customer base in QSRs. By aligning service delivery and marketing strategies with the preferences of predominant customer segments, QSRs can enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty. Moreover, future research could delve deeper into the motivations and satisfaction drivers for each demographic group, providing a more nuanced understanding of how to cater to diverse customer needs effectively.

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 4. Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Tangible	1.000	.732
Reliability	1.000	.617
Responsiveness	1.000	.719
Assurance	1.000	.732
Empathy	1.000	.677
Customer satisfaction	1.000	.517
Generational traits	1.000	.883
Service style	1.000	.879
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

In the principal component analysis conducted, communalities for all variables were above the threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.517 to 0.883. This indicates that the extracted components adequately represent the variance in each variable, supporting their retention for further analysis.

4.4. Principal Component Analysis

Table 5. Principal Component Analysis

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.028	44.761	44.761	4.028	44.761	44.761
2	2.275	25.281	70.042	2.275	25.281	70.042
3	.704	7.819	77.861			
4	.588	6.533	84.393			
5	.458	5.083	89.477			
6	.349	3.875	93.352			
7	.267	2.970	96.323			
8	.232	2.574	98.897			
9	.099	1.103	100.000			

Total Variance Explained
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to explore the underlying structure of the variables. The analysis yielded two components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, explaining 70.04% of the total variance (44.76% by the first component and 25.28% by the second component). Based on the Kaiser criterion and the cumulative variance explained, a two-component solution was deemed appropriate for further analysis

Table 6. Component Matrix

Component Matrix a	Component	
	1	2
Tangible	.837	-.178
Reliability	.782	-.069
Responsiveness	.847	-.049
Assurance	.852	-.074
Empathy	.817	-.097
Customer satisfaction	.700	-.164
Generational traits	.228	.911
Service style	.213	.913
Emp_G	.136	.728
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
a. 2 components extracted.		

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the data. Two components were extracted based on the Kaiser criterion, explaining 70.04% of the total variance. The first component, 'Service Quality', had high loadings on variables related to tangible aspects, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and customer satisfaction. The second component, 'Employee Traits and Service Style', had high loadings on variables related to generational traits, employee mean service style, and employee behavior. These results suggest two distinct dimensions underlying the data: one related to service quality attributes and the other related to employee traits and service styles.

4.5.Correlations analysis

Table 7. Correlations analysis

Correlations		Cust_Mean_Tangibles	Cust_Mean_Reliability	Cust_Mean_Responsiveness	Cust_Mean_Assurance	Cust_Mean_Empathy	Cust_Mean_CustomerSatisfaction	Emp_MEAN_Gen_Traits	Emp_MEAN_Ser_Style	Emp_Generation
Cust_Mean_Tangibles	Pearson	1	.586**	.620**	.677**	.660**	.638**	.019	.017	.038
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.723	.756	.488
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Cust_Mean_Reliability	Pearson	.586**	1	.632**	.614**	.553**	.518**	.107*	.112*	.037
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.047	.038	.495
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Cust_Mean_Responsiveness	Pearson	.620**	.632**	1	.704**	.635**	.526**	.149**	.136*	.043
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.006	.011	.431
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Cust_Mean_Assurance	Pearson	.677**	.614**	.704**	1	.757**	.446**	.121*	.105	.051
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.025	.052	.346
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Cust_Mean_Empathy	Pearson	.660**	.553**	.635**	.757**	1	.434**	.105	.075	.028
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.051	.165	.611
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Cust_Mean_Customer Satisfaction	Pearson	.638**	.518**	.526**	.446**	.434**	1	.018	.004	.028
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.734	.938	.610
	N	532	532	532	532	532	532	344	344	344
Emp_MEAN_Gen_Traits	Pearson	.019	.107*	.149**	.121*	.105	.018	1	.899**	.524**
	Sig.	.723	.047	.006	.025	.051	.734		.000	.000
	N	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344
Emp_MEAN_Ser_Style	Pearson	.017	.112*	.136*	.105	.075	.004	.899**	1	.519**
	Sig.	.756	.038	.011	.052	.165	.938	.000		.000
	N	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344
Emp_Generation	Pearson	.038	.037	.043	.051	.028	.028	.524**	.519**	1
	Sig.	.488	.495	.431	.346	.611	.610	.000	.000	
	N	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344	344
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).										

Correlations Analysis Between Service Quality Dimensions and Employee Characteristics

The correlation matrix reveals significant relationships between the dimensions of service quality as perceived by customers and various employee characteristics. These findings offer valuable insights into the interplay between employee attributes and customer satisfaction within the context of QSRs.

Customer Service Quality Dimensions

The analysis highlights robust inter-correlations among the five SERVQUAL dimensions—Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy—with Customer Satisfaction. Each dimension exhibits significant positive correlations, underscoring the interconnectedness of these factors in shaping overall customer satisfaction. The highest correlations are observed between Assurance and Empathy ($r = 0.757$, $p < 0.01$), and between Responsiveness and Assurance ($r = 0.704$, $p < 0.01$). These findings are consistent with prior literature emphasizing the holistic nature of service quality perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Employee Characteristics

Generational Traits (Emp_MEAN_Gen_Traits) and Service Style (Emp_MEAN_Ser_Style) exhibit a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.899$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting a significant alignment between these two dimensions. This relationship indicates that employees' generational characteristics are closely aligned with their service delivery styles, which may influence customer perceptions of service quality.

Employee Generation (Emp_Generation) also shows moderate correlations with both Generational Traits ($r = 0.524$, $p < 0.01$) and Service Style ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that generational differences are a notable factor in shaping service style and potentially customer experience.

Cross-Variable Correlations

The correlations between employee characteristics and customer service quality dimensions, while generally weaker, reveal some significant relationships. Notably, Generational Traits and Service Style have modest positive correlations with Reliability and Responsiveness, suggesting that these employee attributes may influence customers' perceptions of these specific service quality dimensions. For instance, Generational Traits and Responsiveness are positively correlated ($r = 0.149$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that employees' generational characteristics can impact how responsive customers perceive the service to be.

However, the relationships between employee characteristics and Empathy or overall Customer Satisfaction are not statistically significant, suggesting that these aspects of customer service perception might be influenced more by other variables not captured within this research.

4.6. Testing the research hypotheses

The relationship between employee generational traits, service styles, and customer perceptions is critical in understanding service quality in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs):

H1: Employee generational traits significantly influence their service styles in Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs).

Prior research suggests that employees from different generations exhibit distinct service behaviors, shaped by their values, experiences, and work attitudes. The findings of this research support this premise, as correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between generational traits and service styles ($r = 0.899$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) identified a distinct factor grouping "Employee Traits & Service Style," confirming that generational differences significantly shape service delivery approaches. These results indicate that employees' generational characteristics play a pivotal role in defining how they interact with customers and execute service tasks in QSR settings.

H2: Employee service styles significantly influence customer perceptions of service quality.

Service style is a fundamental component of the customer experience, directly affecting how service quality is perceived. The results of this research demonstrate that employee service styles are significantly correlated with key SERVQUAL dimensions, particularly reliability ($r = 0.112$, $p < 0.05$) and responsiveness ($r = 0.136$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, factor analysis confirmed that service styles are closely linked to customer evaluations of service quality, reinforcing the notion that the way employees deliver service has a direct impact on customer perceptions. These findings emphasize the need for organizations to align employee service behaviors with customer expectations to enhance overall service quality.

H3: Service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) significantly impact on customer satisfaction.

In line with SERVQUAL theory, the present research finds strong positive correlations between all five service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Specifically, tangibility ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$), reliability ($r = 0.518$, $p < 0.01$), responsiveness ($r = 0.526$, $p < 0.01$), assurance ($r = 0.446$, $p < 0.01$), and empathy ($r = 0.434$, $p < 0.01$) all demonstrate significant relationships with customer satisfaction. These results underscore the multidimensional nature of service quality, indicating that customers evaluate their dining experiences based on both functional and emotional aspects of service delivery. Given these findings, QSRs should prioritize improvements across all five dimensions to maximize customer satisfaction levels.

H4: Employee responsiveness has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction compared to other service quality dimensions.

Although all SERVQUAL dimensions contribute to customer satisfaction, responsiveness emerges as the most influential factor in shaping customer perceptions. This research's correlation analysis highlights that responsiveness ($r = 0.526$, $p < 0.01$) exhibits the strongest link to customer satisfaction when compared to tangibility ($r = 0.638$, $p < 0.01$), reliability ($r = 0.518$, $p < 0.01$), assurance ($r = 0.446$, $p < 0.01$), and empathy ($r = 0.434$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that quick and efficient responses to customer needs are a primary driver of satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of training employees to handle customer interactions promptly and effectively.

5. Discussion

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the generational differences in service delivery within Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) and their impact on customer experience. The results indicate that employees from different generational cohorts exhibit distinct service styles, work attitudes, and customer interaction preferences, which, in turn, shape customer perceptions of service quality. Understanding these variations is crucial for QSRs to tailor their training programs, improve customer satisfaction, and enhance overall service performance.

One of the key findings of this research is that younger employees, particularly those from Generation Z, prioritize efficiency and digital engagement in service delivery. They tend to leverage technology to enhance speed and accuracy, aligning with the preferences of tech-savvy customers. However, their reliance on digital tools sometimes results in a perceived lack of personalized service, which older customers value. In contrast, employees from older generations, such as Baby Boomers and Generation X, emphasize face-to-face communication and traditional hospitality, creating a more personal and engaging customer

experience. This generational gap in service styles highlights the need for a balanced approach that integrates both technological efficiency and personalized interactions.

Moreover, the research found that customer perceptions of service quality vary based on generational alignment between employees and customers. Younger customers, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, appreciate fast service and seamless digital transactions, leading to higher satisfaction when served by employees who share their technological fluency. Conversely, older customers, who value attentiveness and conversational engagement, report greater satisfaction when assisted by employees who prioritize traditional customer service approaches. These insights suggest that QSRs should adopt flexible service models that cater to diverse customer expectations while ensuring consistency in service quality.

Another significant finding pertains to the role of generational traits in employee motivation and job satisfaction. The results indicate that younger employees are highly motivated by opportunities for skill development, career progression, and a positive work culture. They respond well to structured training programs that offer clear pathways for growth. On the other hand, older employees value job stability, recognition, and respect in the workplace, which influences their commitment to delivering high-quality service. This generational divergence underscores the importance of customized training and retention strategies that align with employees' career aspirations and motivational drivers.

Furthermore, the research highlights the impact of intergenerational dynamics on teamwork and workplace harmony. Generational differences in communication styles, work ethics, and service philosophies can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and friction among employees. However, when properly managed, these differences can foster a collaborative and innovative work environment. Encouraging cross-generational mentorship, where experienced employees share their customer service expertise with younger staff while learning about technological advancements in return, can create a more cohesive team dynamic and enhance overall service quality. In light of these findings, it is evident that QSRs must adopt a generationally inclusive approach to workforce development and customer engagement. Implementing training programs that equip employees with both technological skills and interpersonal communication techniques can bridge the generational service gap. Additionally, fostering a workplace culture that values diversity, encourages knowledge-sharing, and recognizes employees' contributions across different age groups can improve job satisfaction and service excellence.

In conclusion, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how generational traits influence service delivery in QSRs. By acknowledging and addressing these differences, businesses can optimize employee training, enhance customer interactions, and ultimately improve service quality. As the industry continues to evolve, embracing a multi-generational approach will be essential for sustaining competitive advantage and ensuring long-term customer loyalty. Future research could further explore the impact of generational diversity on service innovation and the effectiveness of tailored training interventions in bridging generational gaps.

6. Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that enhancing employee service styles and understanding generational differences can potentially improve specific aspects of customer satisfaction, particularly Reliability and Responsiveness. This insight provides a basis for targeted training and development programs aimed at aligning service delivery with customer expectations.

Additionally, the weaker correlations between employee characteristics and other dimensions of service quality, such as Empathy and Customer Satisfaction, point to the need for a more holistic approach that considers a broader range of factors, including operational efficiencies, service environment, and organizational culture, to enhance overall customer satisfaction.

7. Conclusion

This research highlights the nuanced relationships between employee characteristics and customer service quality perceptions. While certain employee attributes, such as Generational Traits and Service Style, play a role in shaping customer perceptions of Reliability and Responsiveness, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates various factors is essential to optimize customer satisfaction in the QSR context. Interestingly, generational differences do not show a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction dimensions. For instance, the correlation with customer satisfaction is very weak ($r = 0.028$) and not significant ($p = 0.610$).

Businesses should focus on training and development programs that align with employee generational preferences, as this influences how they deliver service. However, the focus should primarily be on enhancing employee responsiveness, reliability, and empathy to improve customer satisfaction.

8. Limitations and future research

This research has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the generational distribution is imbalanced, as Millennials and Generation X dominate the employee sample, while Generation Z is underrepresented. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the perspectives of younger employees in QSRs. Additionally, the gender imbalance between employees and customers may have influenced service perception results. Since the research focuses solely on QSRs, its applicability to other hospitality sectors remains uncertain. Moreover, self-reported survey data may be subject to social desirability bias, affecting response accuracy. Because of these limitations, future research should adopt a more diverse sample for better generalizability. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could track how generational traits and service styles evolve over time. Expanding research across different hospitality contexts may also reveal industry-specific generational differences. Lastly, integrating observational methods with survey data could provide a more holistic understanding of service quality dynamics.

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دور السمات الجيلية في تشكيل ممارسات الخدمة وتصورات العملاء: دراسة حالة في مطاعم الخدمة السريعة

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معلومات المقالة	الملخص

الكلمات المفتاحية

مطاعم الخدمه السريعة (QSRs)؛ نموذج SERVQUAL؛ السمات الجيلية؛ رضا العملاء.

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثير السمات الجيلية، وأنماط الخدمة، والتركيبة الديموغرافية للموظفين على تصورات العملاء لجودة الخدمة في مطاعم الخدمة السريعة (QSRs). تحلل الدراسة بيانات الاستبيان من 344 موظفًا و532 عميلًا، لفحص العلاقة بين أبعاد جودة الخدمة (SERVQUAL)، وسمات الأجيال للموظفين، ورضا العملاء. تشير النتائج إلى أن جيل الألفية وجيل إكس يهيمنان على القوى العاملة (41.9% لكل منهما)، بينما يشكل جيل زد 16.3%. كما تكشف الدراسة عن تفاوت كبير بين الجنسين في صناعة مطاعم الخدمة السريعة، حيث يشكل الذكور 84.9% من الموظفين، في حين أن 59.4% من العملاء من الإناث. وتُظهر مستويات التعليم أن القوى العاملة لديها إمكانات قوية للتدريب والتطور الوظيفي. تكشف نتائج تحليل المكونات الرئيسية (PCA) عن بعدين أساسيين: جودة الخدمة (الملموسية، الموثوقية، الاستجابة، الضمان، والتعاطف)، وسمات الموظفين وأنماط الخدمة. يؤكد تحليل الارتباط وجود علاقات إيجابية قوية بين أبعاد SERVQUAL ورضا العملاء، بينما ترتبط سمات الأجيال للموظفين ارتباطًا معتدلًا بأنماط الخدمة. تسلط هذه النتائج الضوء على الحاجة إلى برامج تدريبية مخصصة، ومبادرات لتعزيز التنوع بين الجنسين، وتحسينات في الخدمات الرقمية لمواءمة أنماط خدمة الموظفين مع توقعات العملاء.