






Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies

Journal homepage: www.jotags.org



Analysis of E-Complaints for Restaurant Enterprises in the World's 50 Best Restaurant List

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Article History

Received: 12.02.2018

Accepted: 21.03.2018

Keywords

The World's 50 best restaurants list

TripAdvisor

Complaint management

Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the problematic aspects of restaurants entering the Top 50 Restaurant List of the World expressed by customers by analyzing the complaints shared on TripAdvisor that is the hotel, restaurant and destination interpretation site. The content of 1037 complaints shared in English for the 50 restaurants on the TripAdvisor site was analyzed through descriptive analysis. It has been determined that the complaints of the customer complaints about the restaurants are mainly about "average" value, concentrating on price-quality balance, under expectation / disappointment and taste. Findings show that restaurants are inadequate in terms of price quality balance and therefore businesses need to find solutions to this issue. In line with the results obtained, recommendations are given to restaurants in the World's Top 50 Restaurant List, who are striving to enter this list and want to provide quality service.

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INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a crucial factor for businesses to sustain their commercial lives and increase their profitability. Clients exhibit different behaviors such as not choosing again, suggesting or complaining to others after positive or negative experiences they have experienced in the enterprise. Restaurant businesses, which are an important part of the service sector, need to be very careful about customer satisfaction in order to be able to create a loyal customer base.

Today, people are visiting restaurants for a delicious and enjoyable dining experience. During these visits, they communicate with the restaurant atmosphere, service personnel and other customers at the restaurant. These communications can be a very important factor for customer experience to be satisfactory, and they can also be a source of error in dissatisfaction (Özdemir, Yılmaz and Çalışkan, 2016, p.61). Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987) stated that businesses could use complaints management as a defense strategy instead of creating aggressive marketing strategies to attract new consumers in the customer market. However, when the issue is addressed from the point of view of restaurant management, the restaurant reveals dissatisfaction or complaints of a significant part of its customers directly to restaurant management (Heung and Lam, 2003). It is very important for the continuity of businesses that restaurants should try to manage complaints by detecting critical errors that occur during service.

Trips that include to eat meals of famous restaurants in gastronomic tourism activities (Şengül and Türkay, 2016) have brought about the issue that the research topic is about the restaurants that entered the world's 50 Best Restaurant List. The creation of the said list is realized by The World's 50 Best Restaurants Academy. Since 2002, in order to determine the 50 best restaurants in the world, the moving agency has taken the views of different stakeholders in order to ensure fair control. Being able to take place in this order is an important prestige element for restaurants. Within the scope of the research, it is aimed to determine the e-complaints about the listed companies. This is important in order to try to determine the problematic aspects of restaurants that are expressed by customers today, as work on e-complaints accelerates.

Within the scope of research on complaints management, it seems that the technology is moving to internet environment with the progress of technology (Yooncheong et al., 2002, Stauss and Schoeler, 2004, Coussement and Van den Poel, 2008). Due to this change process, new internet sites have begun to serve on customer complaints. The increased use of these sites by the customers has caused the businesses to give importance to the complaints in these environments and to search for solutions by responding to the complaints made through these internet environments. Qualitative research was preferred in constructing the research in this direction and customer comments were used to obtain the data, which are members of the international travel recommendation website www.tripadvisor.com.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When the research in the literature is examined, it appears that the concept of complaint is characterized as a dissatisfaction expression (Drew, 1998, Boote, 1998, Schegloff, 2005, Kevoe-Feldman, 2018). It is very critical that businesses can create satisfied customers and decrease dissatisfaction in order to increase their profitability. It is known that the concept of complaint attracts many different researchers because it affects many businesses in

different fields. As research on complaints began to emerge in the 1970s (Day and Landon 1977; Westbrook, Newman and Taylor 1978; Rabinson 1979), research on complaints evolved in the 1980s (Bearden and Teel 1983, Day 1984, Fornell 1987 and Wernerfelt, 1987; Singh, 1988), and in the 1990s it became a matter of caution in terms of businesses (Clark, Kaminski and Rink, 1992; Conlon and Murray, 1996; Tax, Brown and Chandrashekar, 1998) after a number of years it seems to have become a mandatory area to be managed by many enterprises (Davidow, 2003; Homburg and Fürst, 2005, Orsingher, Valentini, and Angelis, 2010, Grainer, Noble, Bitner, and Broetzmann, 2013; İstanbulluoğlu, 2017).

This interest is also seen in complaint-based research in hospitality and tourism industry (Pearce and Moscardo, 1984, Davidow, 2000, Matusitz and Breen, 2009). Because customer satisfaction is very important in the service sector, many researchers have been working on this issue. It is also known that the research carried out after the years of 2000 especially, concentrated on internet sites and social media comments due to differentiated customer behaviors (Lee and Hu, 2005; Au, Buhalis and Law, 2009; Sparks and Browning, 2010).

One of the most important parts of the service sector is the complaint-related research in restaurant businesses (Sujithamrak and Lam, 2005; Kim and Chen, 2010). In the aforementioned research, restaurant customers' behaviors regarding complaints; as well as the negative transfer to others, management complaint and transfer to third parties, are examined in four groups (Lam and Tang, 2003; DeFranco, Wortman, Lam and Countryman, 2005; Kim and Lynn, 2007).

According to Özdemir, Yılmaz and Çalışkan (2015), there are some determinants that are effective in showing customers complaints in restaurants. If the customer is experiencing high level of violence and dissatisfaction, if he / she believes that he/she can get a solution by complaining, if he / she is experienced about where and how to complain, if the customer is interested in eating at the restaurant, if the level of participation in the service process is high and if the problem he / she has encountered, the tendency of negative complaints is high. When the complaints in restaurant establishments are examined from the content point of view, complaints arising from various reasons such as atmosphere, presentation, personnel behavior, price, taste and contents of presented food and beverages, health concern, hygiene conditions and authenticity have been found (Gursoy, McCleary and Lepisto 2003; Baek, Ham and Yang, 2006, Mattila and Ro 2008, Law, To and Goh, 2008, Liu and Jang, 2009).

Not solving the problems about the customer complaints encountered in restaurants may lead to quality problems in terms of businesses. These reasons have a critical prescription in terms of determining the reasons for complaints, ensuring service quality. In this regard, this study is in an effort to determine the problematic aspects of restaurant businesses expressed by customers. It is thought that the research is important because the research is also applied in restaurant businesses which are prominent in gastronomy tourism and in the top 50 by The World's 50 Best Restaurants List and the obtained results are compared with the current literature. This research was conducted to find out how many problems in the literature (atmosphere, quality of staff, crowd, hygiene etc.) emerged in the world's best restaurants, and contribution to the literature is targeted by determining how these restaurants are different from other restaurants considering the complaints.

In this research, the contents of the complaints about the restaurants which are considered as the best of the world are taken into consideration and the complaint variables are tried to be determined. It is believed that the results of this research will contribute to the literature in terms of establishing the elements that restaurants that want to provide luxury and high quality services considering customer complaints. It is believed that the results of the research are also of unique value in terms of setting out the factors that should be considered by businesses seeking to enter The World's 50 Best Restaurants List.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the contents of e-complaints for restaurants located in The World's 50 Best Restaurants List and to compare the results with the problems encountered in other restaurant operations.

The scope of the research is constituted by fifty restaurants in the World's 50 Best Restaurants List in 2017. For this purpose, comments on complaints in the English language, which are directed to these restaurants on the website www.tripadvisor.com, have been examined. As of 09.02.2018, 1037 comments made for fifty restaurants from the average (3 points), poor (2 points), terrible (1 point) traveler ratings in the data collection activity were included in the survey and the content was analyzed.

The World's 50 Best Restaurants List in the survey is the reason for the preference of restaurant businesses. The list of businesses that are listed on the subject of gastronomic tourism in the world is attracting a lot of attention to the customers. The reason for choosing the TripAdvisor site for complaints is that it is one of the internet sites where the customers are most concerned about the comments made by the customers on this issue.

In the survey, customer complaints were categorized and the four main categories "Quality", "Service Quality", "Atmospherics", "Other factors- price fairness and authenticity" were used from the study of Liu and Jang (2009). As a result of the content analysis performed, 24 complaint topics were determined and the complaints were interpreted with descriptive analysis.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As a result of evaluating the complaints received by restaurants located in The World's 50 Best Restaurants List through the negative comments found on the TripAdvisor site, a total of 1037 comments were found for 50 businesses. 511 (49.28%) were rated as "average" (3 points), 257 (24.78%) were "poor" (2 points) and 269 (25.94%) 'terrible (1 points) distributions are shown in (Table 1).

Table 1: The World 50 Best Restaurants Lists Related Reviews and Comments

The World 50 Best Restaurants Lists	Rating Score	Number of Comments
	Average	511
	Poor	257
	Terrible	269
Total		1037

In total, 1037 complaints contained 24 different complaints and 1705 complaints from 4 categories. "Food Quality" (18.18%), "Service Quality" (17%) and "Service Quality" were the second most common category in the table 2, with "Other factors- price fairness and authenticity" , (17.18%), and the fourth and last place is "Atmospherics" (2.29%).

Table 2: Complaint Categories Related to The World 50 Best Restaurants

Complaint Number	Complaint Category	Number of Complaints	percentages (%)
1	Other factors- price fairness and authenticity	1063	62,35
2	Food Quality	310	18,18
3	Service Quality	293	17,18
4	Atmospherics	39	2,29
Total		1705	100

In the survey, the complaints in the category "Other factors- price fairness and authenticity", which is the first category among the customer complaints in restaurants, are given in Table 3. In this context, while the complaint code for "fair price / expensive / not worth" is at the first place with 56,26%, the complaint code, at the last place, the "chef is not around" complaint code is at 2,07%.

Table 3: Complaints related to other factors (price fairness and authenticity)

Complaint Number	Other factors (price fairness and authenticity)	Number of Complaints	percentages (%)
1	Fair price / expensive / not worth	598	56,26
2	Under expectation / disappointment	347	32,64
3	Creativity and astonishment	96	9,03
4	Chef not to be around	22	2,07
Total		1063	100

In this category, more than half of the complaints appear to be in the "Fair price / Expensive / Not worth" code. Restaurant customers at The World's 50 Best Restaurants List have said that they pay very high price but it is not worth it. They said service never met their expectation. Some examples from the commentary on the mentioned category are as follows:

‘Ripoff--Terrible food at exorbitant price! Having lived and or travelled in over 50 countries, can state that this was the worst meal I have ever had. Cost was 1,935 soles (\$604) for four people including a bottle of water and Long Island Ice Tea (49 soles/\$15). We had the 18 'tidbits' menu consisting of unrecognizable, bad tasting food that had been transformed from something good (e.g. crab changed into a red paste) into something unrecognizable. My Peruvian stepson had made the reservation several months earlier after having an appetizer in the bar; plus another Peruvian relative said that they used to have good food. Not now! I am furious at this place. I noticed that the majority of patrons appeared to be tourists--not locals. Locals know where to go for great food, which Lima has some of the best in the world.....’

“This is not our first 3 star restaurant but it was the worst , we went for the set menu 3 dishes at 390 euro Per person double then most other 3 stars for half the dishes, a typical 3 star will put out 5-7 dishes and 2-5 deserts for about 200 euro per person

“For a 3 star Michelin restaurant that charges 390 euro per person for dinner (alcohol not included), I'm expecting to be BLOWN away. If this meal was free, I would have given it a better rating, but for what we paid we were very disappointed. “

“ Went here with 10 friends and everybody said the same! This is cheating people of their money. Totally uneatable! We said stop when we had 12 dishes left and walked away. A total dissapointment. DO NOT GO here!!! 500€ pp including wine!!!”

“ All the evening felt a lot like an entertainment show with jokes, ego-flattering-focused stories, some smoke and sparkles, nothing to do with fine dining. Last but most importantly the quality of the dishes was poor. The ingredients were cancelled by strong spices flavours, almost no dish was surprising in an interesting way and there was zero coherence between the dishes. All in all, this was a disappointing culinary experience and a good way to experience with my own senses how some chefs' approach to gastronomy has become a cheep joke costing a lot of money “

In the scope of the research, the complaints in the category "Food Quality" which is the second among the categories of the customer complaints in the restaurant are listed in Table 4. In the first place, the complaint code about " Tastes and flavor" is 77,41% while the last one is "Food orginality". The complaint code is available with 0.65%

Table 4: Complaints Related to Food Quality

Complaint Number	Food Quality	Number of Complaints	Percentages (%)
1	Tastes and flavor	240	77,41
2	Food and wine pairing	24	7,74
3	Size of portions	13	4,19
4	Food presentation	12	3,87
5	Appropriate cooking temperature	7	2,26
6	Menu variety	6	1,94
7	Nice smell	3	0,97
8	Food safety	3	0,97
9	Food orginality	2	0,65
Total		310	100

The first line of the complaints in this category is the "tastes and flavor" code. Here are some examples from the comments of the restaurant customers in the World's 50 Best Restaurants List regarding the complaint:

“Bad food. All you can taste most of the time is raw masala. Waste of time and money! I have been to many great Indian restaurants around the world but this place is something where the experiment has gone wrong!”

“All the evening felt a lot like an entertainment show with jokes, ego-flattering-focused stories, some smoke and sparkles, nothing to do with fine dining. Last but most importantly the quality of the dishes was poor. The

ingredients were cancelled by strong spices flavours, almost no dish was surprising in an interesting way and there was zero coherence between the dishes. All in all, this was a disappointing culinary experience and a good way to experience with my own senses how some chefs' approach to gastronomy has become a cheap joke costing a lot of Money''

''Our first course and drink pairing come out. The dish is ok - not much flavor but the presentation is pretty enough. The drink is a bit harsh, and doesn't really pair with the served dish, but we don't mind, as we still have so many things ahead of us to try...''

''A previous guest left the bathroom's toilet in a horrible shape, I even tried to flush (I don't know why I even tried) and ran away. I asked some waiter outside to fix it. No one came back with an apology and I sat back and needed to ask to use the men's bathroom because otherwise, I was about to go to next door's restaurant (which is always very clean). They replied that they had another one upstairs and of course at this point I totally regretted to be here and all the meals I tried reminded me a taste is disgusting.

Within the scope of the survey, the complaints in the "Service Quality" category, which is the third category among the customer complaints, are given in Table 5. In this context, while the complaint code for "Friendly and helpful employees" is at 31.06%, the complaint code for "Clean and well-dressed employees" is at the last rank at 0.68%.

Table 5: Complaints related to Service Quality

Complaint Number	Service Quality	Number of Complaints	Percentages (%)
1	Friendly and helpful employee	91	31,06
2	Attentive careful working	72	24,57
3	Reservation	44	15,02
4	Fast service	28	9,55
5	English proficiency of the employee	24	8,19
6	Secure consistent service	24	8,19
7	Arrival of the same meal as ordered	4	1,37
8	Employee's knowledge about the menu	4	1,37
9	Clean and well-dressed employees	2	0,68
Total		293	100

The first of these complaints in this category is the code "Friendly and helpful". Here are some examples from the comments of the restaurant customers in the World's 50 Best Restaurants List regarding the complaint:

'The service, I was shocked how bad the service was, after two weeks traveling in Peru this was by far the worse service I had experienced. In general I found the Peruvians sincere, polite and professional .. this was not the case at this restaurant. We were rushed at every course, forgotten at requests for wine and ignored when I made remarks. Again , probably the worst experience in many yearsAs I titled this review, I'm lost for words especially given some of the glowing reviews. This restaurant, my apologies perhaps I caught you on a bad day .. but bad food and lousy service is not acceptable''

“Our experience wasn’t amazing. First we were not at the main restaurant area but a side room which had little atmosphere. Second the food was interesting and presentable and thoughtful but all in all wasn’t amazing (as you would get in similar restaurants) apart from 2-4 dishes that were very good but no more. We had 11 dishes and the first 5-6 arrived very quickly. There was not this amazing experience you get in similar restaurants when some dishes hit you with pure pleasure.

Third the waiters were kind of robotic or wooden. They were describing the dishes quickly without any enthusiasm or spark. In other similar restaurants (like maido where we went a few days before) you get much more excitement and connectivity from the waitress which affects the experience. “

“Making a reservation was, as someone else has mentioned, an incredible pain. Not just make a reservation, no - they insisted on my complete credit card information and suggested I either call them to give the information (although they supposedly never answer the phone) or send it in an email! All of my cc information (not just the number) in an email? That is just nuts, and an outrageous expectation. Well, I was eager to go so I accessed an encrypted email server and made the reservation. Annoying, to say the least. Clearly it is all about them. So, we showed up on time and were seated at a nice table, second floor, by the window”

“Where are the Stars??! Really a place NOT to go back again. Service unfriendly to rude, atmosphere minimal with ugly lights a sommelier that does not know his winelist.. And the food! 120€ for a raviolo with spinach egg yolk filling with the trace of white truffel.. I honestly do this better at home and for 240€ for 2 unexciting pasta bites. But money aside... Almost every dish with creme made..pretty presentation but on the tongue too sweet too boring. We had expected by far more than we got.. Never ever again”

The complaints in the "Atmospherics" category, which is ranked fourth among the categories of customer complaints in the scope of the research, are given in Table 6. In this context, while the complaint code regarding "Interior design" is at the first place with 87,18%, the last place is with the "Environmental cleaning" complaint code with 12,82%.

Table 6: Complaints Related to Atmospherics

Complaint Number	Atmospherics	Number of Complaints	Percentages (%)
1	Interior design	34	87,18
2	Environmental cleaning	5	12,82
Total		39	100

At the beginning of this category of complaints is the code "interior design". Here are some examples from the comments of the restaurant customers in the World's 50 Best Restaurants List regarding the complaint:

“..... The only thing interesting about this place is how they managed to get such a reputation. Food: dull; service: poor; ambience: ordinary. I wasted an evening of my life to go here,”

“ FLIES! Others have mentioned the fly situation Yes, it's a farm and if you mention it they just shrug. Meanwhile, you are swatting flies from your food while dining. At one point a fly landed in one of our dishes. When we showed the server, no reaction. And finally, the food. Everything is smoked which works better for some

courses than others. The cheeses are quite good as is the steak. The dessert course of smoked milk ice cream is also delightful. The chorizo sandwich started is also good. Unfortunately the service killed the experience and couldn't compensate for the food.’’

‘‘If you go be prepared to spend a lot of money for something that is overrated. Was chosen as one of the best restaurants in Latin America but it is really not worth it. Excellent quality products. Annoying ambiance. Don't recommend it except to say that you went to one of the best and overrated restaurants in here ‘‘

‘‘.....First of all there are too many tables in the small outer room where we were sitting. The spaces between the tables are so narrow that the waiters are almost falling over each other—there are many many waiters but not assigned to specific tables, which adds to the confusion. In order to get up from our table to use the restroom we had to disturb our neighbor’’

In the scope of the research, a general ranking is given in Table 7 in the context of the codes generated about the customer complaints in the restaurants. In this context, while the complaint code regarding "fair price / expensive / not worth" is in the first place with 35,07%, the second place is " under expectation / disappointment " with 20,35% in the third place and "tastes and flavor" in the last place with 14,07% "Food originality" and "clean and well-dressed employees" complaint codes are available with 0,12%.

Table 7: Complaint Issues

Complaint Number	Complaint Issues	Number of Complaints	Percentages (%)
1	Fair price / expensive / not worth	598	35,07
2	Under expectation / disappointment	347	20,35
3	Tastes and flavor	240	14,07
4	Creativity and astonishment	96	5,63
5	Friendly and helpful employee	91	5,33
6	Attentive careful working	72	4,22
7	Reservation	44	2,58
8	Interior design	34	1,99
9	Fast service	28	1,64
10	Food and wine pairing	24	1,41
11	English proficiency of the employee	24	1,41
12	Secure consistent service	24	1,41
13	Chef not to be around	22	1,29
14	Size of portions	13	0,76
15	Food presentation	12	0,70
16	Appropriate cooking temperature	7	0,41
17	Menu variety	6	0,35
18	Environmental cleaning	5	0,29
19	Arrival of the same meal as ordered	4	0,23
20	Employee's knowledge about the menu	4	0,23
21	Nice smell	3	0,18
22	Food safety	3	0,18
23	Clean and well-dressed employees	2	0,12
24	Food originality	2	0,12
Total		1705	100

When the general ranking of the complaints is examined within the scope of the research, it is seen that with 55.42%, two complaints are more than half of total complaints. When the complaints are examined, it turns out that customers are disappointed because they do not find the price performance qualities are enough in the restaurants that they are going to with big expectations and because they are getting services under their expectation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to analyze the contents of e-complaints for restaurants located in The World's 50 Best Restaurants List and compare the results with the problems encountered in other restaurant businesses. Food quality, service quality, atmospheric and other factors - price fairness and authenticity were examined in order to compare with the literature.

This research, which is conducted through Tripadvisor, an online interpretation site, has revealed twenty-four separate complaints in four categories of customer complaints. Other factors- price fairness and authenticity were found to be the most complainant category among the categories, food quality in the second place, service quality in the third place and atmospherics in the fourth place. When the literature research is examined, it is seen that the food quality and service quality categories, which differ from the research on the ordering of the categories, appear to be in the first place (Liu and Jang, 2009, Su and Bowen, 2001). Dalgıç et al. (2016), Albayrak (2013), Taştan and Kızılcık (2017) research categories, food quality category took the first place in the complaint categories whereas in the study of Erdem and Yay (2017) it was found that the service quality category ranked as the first complaint category.

It is thought that the categorie which is in the first place in the restaurants of the World's 50 Best Restaurants List is named as other factors in studies about restaurant complaints in the literature and it is generally due to the fact that the customers of restaurants have different expectations. Especially when the comments of complaints are examined, it is determined that those who visit these restaurants consist of expert chefs, gourmets or gastro tourists in the field of gastronomy. It is thought that the complaints about the price performance balance and the frustration creation under the expectation are placed in the first place as well as the experts are among those who made these comments. In addition, it is also possible for those arriving at these restaurants to wait for long periods of time to make reservations, and to pay a high price to eat at those restaurants, which can lead to an increase in expectations from restaurants.

In addition, in many research on restaurant complaints, while the problems related to the staff were in the first place in the complaint issues (Law, et al., 2008; Su and Bowen, 2001; Namkung, et al.,2011) this complaint category accounts for 17.18% of the total complaint rate. Among the reasons for this result, it is thought that restaurants thought to be the top 50 restaurants of the world are taking care of this issue and taking their preferences in this direction.

Dalgıç et al. (2016), based on the complaints at the Tripadvisor site, examined the complaints in Mersin and Hatay province and found that the most complainant subject was the taste. Albayrak (2013) obtained a similar result in his research on first class restaurants in Istanbul. Erdem and Yay (2017) reached the conclusion that the most complaints were the personnel in the investigation of the complaints in first class restaurants in Antalya city.

One of the findings in the study and not found in the literature is the complaint that the chef is not in the restaurant. Visitors to The World's 50 Best Restaurants also travel to eat dishes of famous chefs. The fact that the customers do not see the head of the company during their visits to the restaurants was detected as a complaint as a research result. This result is thought to be mainly due to the fact that famous restaurant chefs travel many times in order to follow research development activities or competitors.

As a result, it is a critical point for restaurant operators in The World's 50 Best Restaurants List to keep their service quality and price balance at the same level they are asking for in order to increase customer satisfaction. It may be possible to overcome the frustrations and disappointments that will arise when the price performance balance is achieved. In this case, The World's 50 Best Restaurants List is an important key to remove more than 50% of the complaints against businesses. As a result of research findings, it is possible to offer some suggestions to the businesses in The World's 50 Best Restaurants List and to restaurant businesses that want to provide quality service. These:

- Performing studies to ensure price performance balance
- Finding solutions to customer complaints that create frustration by creating an effective complaints management process
- Raising awareness of the fact that the customer of the World's best restaurants are experts in the gastronomy area.
- Ensuring restaurant chefs are in business while in service
- Encourage customers to express dissatisfaction.

Research is limited to restaurants located at The World's 50 Best Restaurants List. Conducting research that focuses on restaurants that are thought to provide high-quality service in a similar way will help to improve it.

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