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Marketing Theory and Practice - Building Bridges and Fostering Collaboration

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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED QUALITY ON EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS IN RESTAURANTS: APPLICATION OF PLS-SEM

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Abstract

Studies about service quality, image, and customers' behavioral intentions in restaurant industry gained increasing attention in the last few years. There is a limited number of studies that investigate the role of emotions on behavioral intentions in restaurants. To fill the gap in literature, this study aims at investigating the relationship between perceived quality (food quality, atmospherics, and service quality), positive and negative emotions, and behavioral intentions in restaurants during a gastro festival. This study used extended Mehrabian-Russell's Stimuli Organism-Response model proposed by Jang and Namkung (2009). Data for this study were collected in the restaurants involved in the "14. Festival of Asparagus" during April 2014. Based on the convenience sampling, 195 questionnaires were received. Partial least squares based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the collected data and the findings show that restaurant atmosphere and service quality significantly influence positive emotions, while food and service quality have positive effect on behavioral intentions. This study makes an important contribution to theory and practice. It provides useful information to restaurant managers about attributes of perceived quality that needs more attention (e.g., food quality, atmospherics, service quality) in order to increase the positive behavioral intentions.

Key words: food quality, emotions, behavioral intentions, restaurant industry, partial least squares (PLS)

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the restaurant industry is highly competitive and customers demand a high-level of service quality. Identifying the effect of perceived service quality on customers' behavioral intentions is very important for restaurants' managers. Numerous studies examined relationship between service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in restaurant industry (Fu and Parks, 2001; Kim, Ng and Kim, 2009; Kim, 2011; Canny, 2014). However, there are limited studies regarding the role of customers' emotions as a mediator or a direct factor that influences behavioral intentions. Only few studies examined the impact of emotions on behavioral intentions in restaurant settings (Jang and Namkung, 2009;Liu and Namkung, 2009; Prayag, Khoo-Lattimore and Sitruk, 2014; Chen, Peng and Norman, 2015) while no research has been conducted in restaurants during gastro festivals. Therefore, this study used restaurants involved in a gastro festival as research setting because it was expected that guests visiting restaurants during a gastro event would want to experience unique local food in pleasant surroundings.

This study used the extended Mehrabian-Russell's Stimuli Organism-Response model proposed by Jang and Namkung (2009). The relationship between three components of restaurant perceived quality (food quality, atmospherics and service quality), emotions (positive and negative), and behavioral intentions are investigated. The objectives of this study were: (1) to assess the effects of perceived restaurant quality (food quality, atmospherics, service quality) on guests' emotions and behavioral intentions, (2) to assess the effect of guests' emotions (positive and negative) during their restaurant visit on behavioral intentions.

This study is divided into five sections. The first section gives a brief review of theoretical background of the study and introduces the conceptual model of the study and hypotheses. The next section presents the methodology used in this study, followed by the research results. In the last section main conclusions, implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Restaurant perceived quality

Previous studies have suggested that food quality, atmospherics and service quality are the most important components of perceived restaurant quality (Namkung and Jang, 2007, Liu and Jang, 2009; Ha and Jang, 2010, Peng and Chen, 2015). In the following paragraphs three quality factors are explained and based on literature review hypotheses are formulated.

2.1.1. Food quality

Food quality is one of the most critical components of a dining experience (Kivela et al., 1999; Sulek and Hansley, 2004; Namkung and Jang, 2007; Liu and Jang, 2009; Ha and Jang, 2010; Kim and Lee, 2013). Sulek and Hansley (2004) investigated the relative importance of food, physical setting, and service in the context of a full-service restaurant and found out that food is the most important element in predicting overall dining satisfaction. Namkung and

Jang (2007) in their research found out that great taste and appealing presentation are significantly related to highly satisfied customer. Ha and Jang (2010) defined food quality as "quality of features associated with food that is acceptable to customers". Food quality has been measured with various items such as presentation, taste, food portion, menu variety, healthy food option, temperature, freshness, food authencity etc. In recent studies the relationship between food quality and emotions is examined (Jang and Namkung, 2009; Prayag et al., 2014.; Hyun and Kang, 2014.). Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Guests' perceptions of food quality have a positive effect on positive emotions.
H1b: Guests' perceptions of food quality have a negative effect on negative emotions.

2.1.2. Atmospherics

Atmospherics is a highly relevant tool in service industry and can be one of the factors that distinguish one restaurant from others. Kotler (1973) defines atmospherics as "the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability". Atmospherics is perceived as the quality of surrounding space (Liu and Jang, 2009). Bitner (1993) identified three dimensions of atmospherics: ambient conditions, space/function, and signs/symbols/artifact. Ryu and Jang (2008) developed a multiple-item scale, named DINESCAPE, to measure customers' perceptions of dining environments of restaurants. They identified six factors that represented tangible and intangible aspects of a dinning atmosphere, namely: facility aesthetics, ambience, lighting, table settings, layout and staff. Liu and Jang (2009) found that atmospherics influence on restaurants' guest positive and negative emotions. Out of their four dimensions of dining atmospherics (interior design, ambience, special layout, human elements), ambience had the greatest effect on positive and negative emotions. Prayag, Khoo-Lattimore and Sitruk (2014) confirmed that restaurant atmospherics has the strongest impact on positive emotions. Most recently, Chen, Peng and Hung (2015) examined how dinning environments affect customers' positive and negative emotions. Results of their study showed that restaurants' atmospherics have a significant impact on guests' positive emotions but not on their negative emotions.
Thus, this research proposes that guests' perceptions of atmospherics positively affect positive emotions and negatively affect their negative emotions:

H2a: Guests' perceptions of atmospherics have a positive effect on positive emotions.
H2b: Guests' perceptions of atmospherics have a negative effect on negative emotions.

2.1.3. Service quality

Service quality is a concept that received much attention in marketing literature in the past few decades. It is recognized as one of the most important factors that influence customers' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Service quality is usually defined as customers' judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority (Parsuraman et al., 1988). In restaurants settings service quality refers to the level of service provided by restaurants employees (Ha and Jang, 2010). The most popular instruments for measuring service quality

in restaurants are SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) and DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson and Patton, 1995). Some of the researchers investigated only expectations regarding restaurant service quality (Ribeiro, Soriano, 2002; Marković, Raspor and Šegarić, 2009) while the others measured differences between customers' expectations and perceptions (Bojanic and Rosen, 1994; Marković, Raspor, Dorčić, 2011). Various studies investigated the relationship between restaurants' service quality and guests' emotions (Ladhari, Brun and Morales, 2008; Jang and Namkung, 2009, Ha and Jang, 2010; Peng and Cheng, 2015). Ladhari, Brun and Morales (2008) found that positive and negative emotions mediate the effect of perceived service quality on satisfaction. Jang and Namkung (2009) showed that service quality has a positive impact on positive emotions, but they did not found significant impact of service quality on negative emotions. Hence, in this study we suggest the following hypotheses:

H3a: Guests' perceptions of service quality have a positive effect on positive emotions.
H3b: Guests' perceptions of service quality have a negative effect on negative emotions.

2.2. Restaurant emotional experience

In previous literature on consumer behavior emotions are identified as one of the factors that influence on future behavioral intentions. Most of the studies that incorporated emotional factors in their research applied Mehrabian-Russell model (M-R). According to this model environmental stimuli will affect on individuals' emotional state (pleasure and arousal) and consequently on individuals' response (behavior). Jang and Namkung (2009) used extended M-R model and found that positive emotions significantly influence behavioral intentions. Liu and Jangs' (2009) research showed that even negative emotions have significant negative effect on behavioral intentions. Therefore, understanding customers' emotions is very important for restaurateurs in order to have satisfied and loyal customers. Based on discussed studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Guests' positive emotions have positive effect on behavioral intentions.
H5: Guests' negative emotions have negative effect on behavioral intentions.

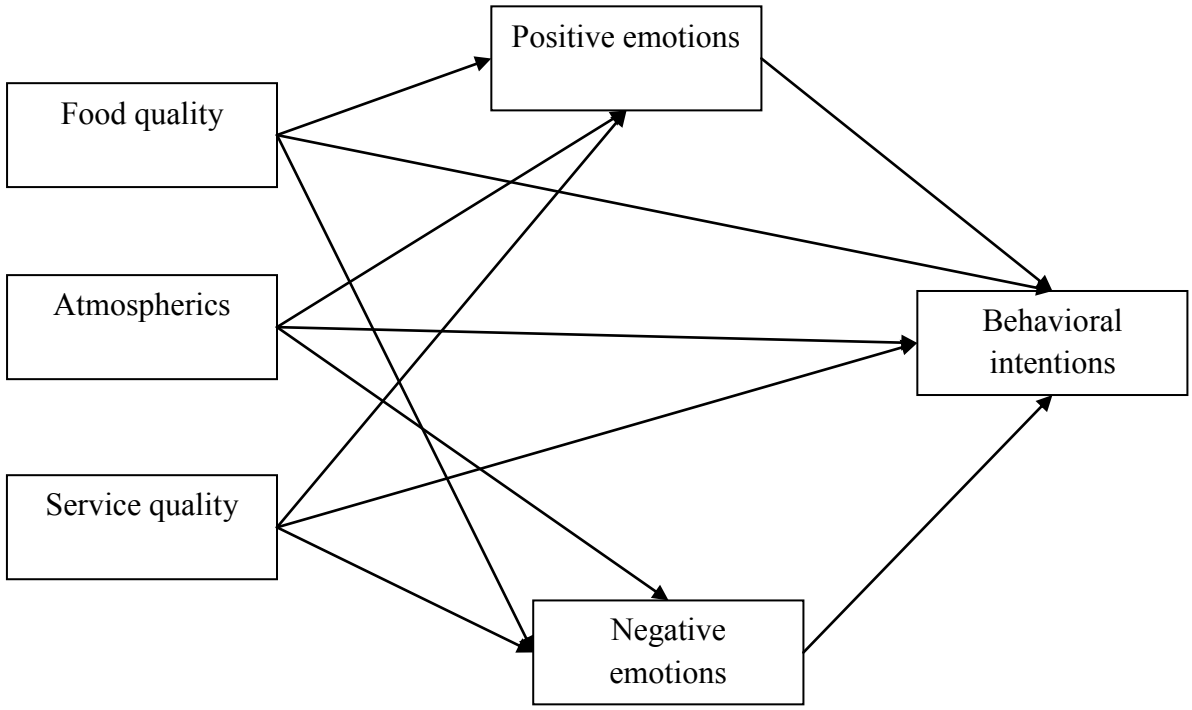
2.3. Behavioral intentions

Behavioral intentions are defined as "conscious plans to perform or not perform some specified future behavior" (Warshaw and Davis, 1985). Previous research examined behavioral intentions with attributes such as willingness to recommend, spread positive word-of-mouth, willingness to return etc. Many studies confirmed direct affect of perceived quality on behavioral intentions (Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Lui and Jang, 2009; Jang and Namkung, 2009). In order to test if there is a positively significant relationship between perceived quality and behavioral intensions we propose this hypotheses:

H6: Guests' perceptions of food quality have a positive effect on behavioral intentions.
H7: Guests' perceptions of atmospherics have a positive effect on behavioral intentions.
H8: Guests' perceptions of service quality have positive effect on behavioral intentions.

Based on conceptual background and suggested hypotheses, this study proposes a conceptual model shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The conceptual model of this study



* Adopted by Yang and Namkung (2009)
Source: Authors

The conceptual model shows the relationship between perceived service quality (food quality, atmospherics, service quality) as a environmental stimuli, emotions (positive and negative) as emotional state and behavioral intentions as a response. This model is adopted by Yang and Namkung's (2009) research and presents an extended M-R model.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Questionnaire design

The instrument for collecting primary data in this study was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on Jang and Namkung (2009) and Mason and Paggiaro (2012) research. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part of the questionnaire contained 16 items to measure three constructs of restaurant perceived quality: food quality, atmospherics and service quality. Each construct of restaurant experience was measured using a 7-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree). The second part of the questionnaire measured guests' positive (joy, excitement, comfort and refreshment) and negative (anger, frustrations, disgust, fear and embarrassment) emotional dinning experience. The emotional items were as well measured using 7-point Likert scale (1 = I do not feel this emotion at all in this restaurant, 7 = I feel this emotion strongly in this restaurant). Behavioral intentions (recommend, spread positive word-of-mouth, come back to this restaurant, keep coming in this restaurant, this restaurant will be the first choice in the future) were measured

with five items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree). The last part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, which included the country of residence, age, gender, marital status, education, motivation to visit this restaurant, frequency of town and restaurant visits. The questionnaire was available in the Croatian, English, Italian and German language to include both domestic and foreign restaurants' guest.

3.2. Data collection

The empirical data was collected using a self-administrated questionnaire on a convenient sample of restaurants' guest during 14th Festival of Asparagus, Lovran. The festival is held every year in April. During the Asparagus Festival, many restaurants and taverns offer meals featuring wild asparagus. From a total of 16 restaurants involved in this gastronomic event, 9 restaurants have agreed to participate in the study.

The restaurants' employees helped to distribute and collect data. Questionnaires were distributed to guests that were willing to participate in the research, after their dining experience. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed, 212 were returned and 17 of them were eliminated because of incompleteness. Therefore 195 completed questionnaires were obtained and used in this research. The response rate was 43.33 per cent.

3.3. Data analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe respondents' demographic characteristics and their evaluation of dinning experience and behavioral intentions. For this study, hypotheses were tested using the Partial Least Squares structural equation modelling method (PLS-SEM). We used the SmartPLS version 3.2.1 to conduct the analysis (Ringle, Wende and Backer, 2015). PLS -SEM is "an emerging multivariate data analysis method and researchers are still exploring the best practices of the PLS-SEM" (Wong, 2013). Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) defined PLS-SEM as "causal modeling approach aimed at maximizing the explained variance of dependent latent constructs". The object of this method is theory development and prediction. Despite critics of some scholar regarding using this method, PLS-SEM showed to be effective on relatively small samples with non-normal distribution.

The PLS model was analyzed in two-steps: the evaluation of the measurement model followed by an evaluation of the structural model. The evaluation of the measurement model was performed in order to examine the validity and reliability of the constructs. Internal consistency reliability is assessed based on composite reliability score which do not assume like Cronbach's alpha that all items have equal correlations with the latent variable. Composite reliability takes into account the individual reliability of items which is more suitable for PLS-SEM. Composite reliability should be higher than 0.70 (Nunnallly and Bernstein, 1994). Convergent validity assessment is based on the average variances extracted (AVE). AVE value for latent variable implies that, on average, more variance in the items is explained by variable than measurement errors (Huntgeburth, 2015). A sufficient degree of convergent validity achieved when the AVE value is above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). Discriminant validity is checked by the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the cross loadings.

According to the Fornell-Lacker criterion a variable should share more variance with its corresponding items than with other variables (Hair et. al, 2014).
After the evaluation of measurement model we did the evaluation of the structural model by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the level of significance of the path coefficients.

4. RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=195)

Variables and characteristics		Percentage
Country of residence	Croatia	40.5
	Italy	15.9
	Austria	11.8
	Slovenia	6.7
	Germany	10.3
	Serbia	4.6
	Others	10.3
Sex	Male	51.3
	Female	48.7
Age	Less than 20	3.1
	20 – 29	15.9
	30 – 39	24.1
	40 – 49	25.1
	50 – 59	23.1
	60 or more	8.7
Marital status	Single	19.5
	Married	56.9
	In a relationship/ engaged	23.6
Education	Elementary school	2.1
	High school diploma	47.7
	University degree	40.5
	M. Sc / Ph. D.	9.7
Frequency of town visits	First time	21.0
	2 – 5 times	25.6
	>5 times	53.3
Frequency of restaurant visits	First time	33.3
	2 – 5 times	32.3
	>5 times	34.4
Motivations to visit restaurant (multiple choice)	Hanging out	45.4
	Escape from routine / relax	31.4
	Tasting local food	23.2
	Thematic menu	7.2
	Share photos of local dishes with friends	3.6
	Other	15.5

Source: Authors

Out of 195 respondents 40.5% were domestic restaurants' guests and 59.6% were foreigners (mostly Italians, Austrians and Germans). Most of the respondents were between 30 to 59 years old (72.3%), married (56.9%), and finished high school (47.7%). The majority of the respondents had visited the town more than five times (53.3%) while 21.0% of the respondents indicated that are visiting the town for the first time. According to the results of the analysis it can be seen that more than 33.3% of the respondents are being for the first time in the restaurants, 32.2% visited restaurant 2-5 times, and 34.4% visited restaurant more than five times. The primary motivation for visiting restaurant was "hanging out with family and/or friends" (45.4%), followed by "escaping from routine / relax" (31.4%).

The results of descriptive and factor analysis, factor loadings for each item, Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability and convergent validity are presented in the following table.

Table 2: Results of descriptive, factor, reliability and validity analysis

Items and factors	Mean	Loadings	α	Composite reliability	AVE
Food Quality	**6.23**		**0.878**	**0.907**	**0.585**
Food presentation is visually attractive.	6.17	0.605			
The restaurant offers healthy options.	5.94	0.763			
The restaurant serves tasty food.	6.53	0.824			
The restaurant offers fresh food.	6.39	0.874			
The food served in the restaurant is of very good quality.	6.27	0.876			
There is also traditional food.	6.24	0.708			
There is enough variety of food.	6.08	0.662			
Atmospherics	**6.02**		**0.844**	**0.890**	**0.620**
The facility layout allows me to move around easily.	6.01	0.720			
The interior design is visually appealing.	6.10	0.845			
Colors used create a pleasant atmosphere.	6.12	0.854			
Lighting creates a comfortable atmosphere.	6.08	0.813			
Background music is pleasing.	5.78	0.689			
Service Quality	**6.50**		**0.869**	**0.911**	**0.722**
The restaurant serves my food exactly as I order it.	6.55	0.687			
Employees are always willing to help me.	6.56	0.897			
The behavior of employees instills confidence in me.	6.52	0.902			
The restaurant has my best interest at heart.	6.36	0.894			
Positive emotions	**5.99**		**0.790**	**0.863**	**0.613**
I feel joyful / pleased / romantic / welcoming.	6.36	0.846			
I feel excited / thrilled / enthusiastic.	5.44	0.777			
I feel comfortable / relaxed / at rest.	6.33	0.755			
I feel refreshed / cool.	5.81	0.749			

Items and factors	Mean	Loadings	α	Composite reliability	AVE
Negative emotions	**1.18**		**0.913**	**0.935**	**0.744**
I feel angry / irritated.	1.23	0.856			
I feel frustrated / disappointed / upset / downheartedness.	1.16	0.857			
I feel disgusted / displeased / bad.	1.18	0.949			
I feel scared / panicky / unsafe / tension.	1.16	0.874			
I feel embarrassed / ashamed / humiliated.	1.15	0.767			
Behavioral intentions	**6.36**		**0.940**	**0.954**	**0.808**
I will recommend this restaurant to others.	6.54	0.914			
I will spread positive word-of-mouth about this restaurant.	6.44	0.931			
I would like to come back to this restaurant again.	6.56	0.926			
I will keep coming to this restaurant in the future.	6.49	0.906			
This restaurant will be my first choice among other restaurants in the future.	5.75	0.811			

Source: Authors

The average scores for restaurant experience (food, atmospherics and service quality) ranged from 5.78 to 6.56. The highest score were noted regarding items related to ***staff*** helpfulness (M=6.56) and confidence (M=6.52); ***food*** tastiness (M=6.53), freshness (M=6.39), quality (M=6.27) and traditional offer (6.24). Respondents highly assessed that restaurant serves food exactly as order (M=6.55) and that restaurant has their best interest at heart (M=6.36). Lower rated scores are indicated in items related to restaurant atmospherics - pleasant background music (M=5.78), easy orientation and navigation in restaurant (M=6.01), lighting (M=6.08), and visually attractive interior design (M=6.10). The guests experienced positive emotions (M=5.99) and did not experience significant negative emotions (M=1.18) during the restaurant visit. All items related to behavioral intentions were highly rated, except that "restaurant will be the first choice among other restaurants" (M=5.75).

The level of internal consistency in each construct was relatively high, with Cronbach's alpha value ranging from 0.790 to 0.940. Factor loadings for almost each item were higher than 0.70. Composite reliabilities of construct were 0.907 (FQ), 0.890 (A), 0.911 (SQ), 0.863 (PE), 0.935 (NE), 0.954 (BI) are considered acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Convergent validity assessment is based on the average variances extracted (AVE). The AVE values of each construct are higher than 0.50 which shows an adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was tested by the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the cross loadings. The table 3 shows that the square roots of AVE for each construct are above the construct's highest correlation with other latent variables in the model.

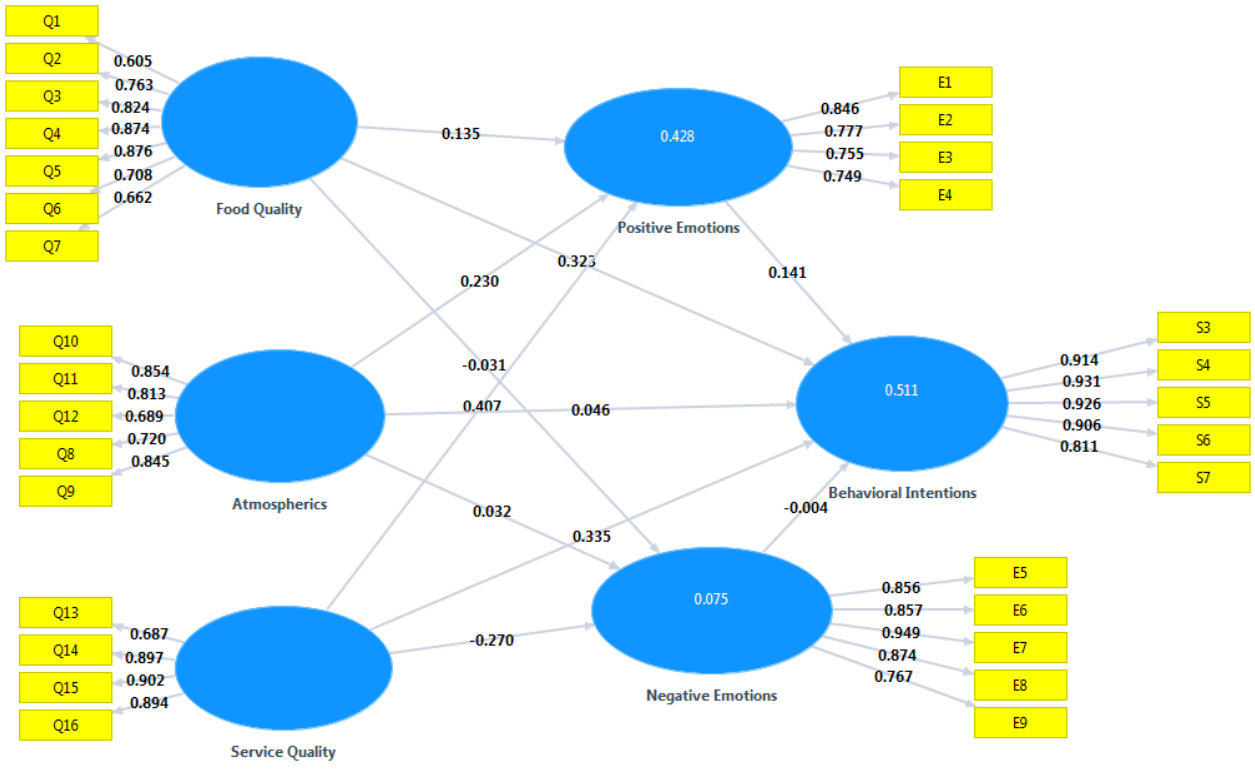
Table 3: Discriminant validity of constructs

Constructs	Correlation among constructs					
	A	BI	FQ	NE	PE	SE
Atmospherics	**0,787**					
Behavioral intentions	0,437	**0,899**				
Food quality	0,458	0,619	**0,765**			
Negative emotions	-0,120	-0,212	-0,182	**0,862**		
Positive emotions	0,502	0,526	0,488	-0,386	**0,783**	
Service quality	0,514	0,643	0,612	-0,276	0,608	**0,850**

Note: The bold values on the diagonal are the square roots of the AVE. The off- diagonal values are correlation between latent constructs.
Source: Authors

Figure 2 shows the modeling results. The R^2 value for behavioral intentions is 0.511 which shows that food quality, atmospherics, service quality, positive and negative emotions all together explain 51.1% of guests' behavioral intentions. Meanwhile, food quality, atmospherics and service quality, explains 42.8% of positive emotions (R^2=0.428). The obtained value for behavioral intentions and positive emotions could be considerate moderate, while the value for negative emotions is weak (R^2=0.075).

Figure 2: PLS-SEM model with indicator loadings and structural coefficients



Source: Authors

The results of hypotheses testing are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses path	β	t-values	Decision
H1a: Food quality → emotion (positive)	0.135	1.899	Not supported
H1b: Food quality → emotion (negative)	-0.031	0.244	Not supported
H2a: Atmospherics → emotion (positive)	0.230	3.065*	Supported
H2b: Atmospherics → emotion (negative)	0.032	0.339	Not supported
H3a: Service quality → emotion (positive)	0.407	5.322*	Supported
H3b: Service quality → emotion (negative)	-0.270	2.030*	Supported
H4: Emotion (positive) → behavioral intentions	0.141	2.077*	Supported
H5: Emotion (negative) → behavioral intentions	-0.004	0.054	Not supported
H6: Food quality → behavioral intentions	0.323	3.414*	Supported
H7: Atmospherics → behavioral intentions	0.046	0.540	Not supported
H8: Service quality → behavioral intentions	0.335	2.677*	Supported

Note: * $p<0.05$
Source: Authors

The hypotheses 1a, which hypothesized a positive relationship between food quality and positive emotion, was not supported, as well as the hypotheses 1b which predicted a negative relationship between food quality and negative emotions. For both hypotheses the signs were in the expected direction, but not confirmed. This indicates that food quality in this study did not have any effect on guests' emotions.

The prediction of hypothesis 2a, confirmed that guests' perception of atmospherics has a positive effect on positive emotion ($\beta=0.230$, $t=3.065$, $p<0.05$). On the contrary, the hypothesis 2b that hypothesized negative relationship between atmospherics and negative emotions was not supported. Hypotheses 3a ($\beta=0.407$, $t=5.322$, $p<0.05$) and 3b ($\beta=-0.270$, $t=2.077$, $p<0.05$) were supported indicating that service quality has a significant impact on guests' positive and negative emotions.

The hypothesis 4 that predicted a positive influence of positive emotions on behavioral intentions was supported ($\beta=0.141$, $t=2.077$, $p<0.05$). Unexpectedly, the hypothesis 5, which proposed that negative emotions have negative effect on behavioral intentions, was not statistically significant. This finding could be interpreted that positive emotions may are a better indicator for predicting guests' behavioral intentions than negative emotions. The same finding was confirmed by Jang and Namkung (2009) research.

The positive effect of food quality on behavioral intentions ($\beta=0.323$, $t=3.414$, $p<0.05$) is confirmed by hypothesis 6. Meanwhile, the hypothesis 7 which predicts a positive relationship between atmospherics and behavioral intention was not supported. Finally, as expected, the hypothesis 8 that predicted a positive relationship between service quality and behavioral intentions is confirmed ($\beta=0.335$, $t=2.677$, $p<0.05$).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study attempted at understanding the effects of perceived restaurant quality on guests' emotions and behavioral intentions in restaurants that participated at agastro festival. Generally, our respondents indicated high scores regarding perceived quality, especially regarding service and food quality. Lower scores are noted regarding atmospherics, which indicates that restaurateurs need to pay more attention to restaurants' music, lighting, interior design and other aspects of restaurant surrounding. High scores are noted in positive emotions while guests mostly did not feel negative emotions during a restaurant visit. According to the mean scores for behavioral intentions it could be concluded that respondents are satisfied since they indicated that they will recommend the restaurant, spread positive word-of-mouth and are planning to visit that restaurant again.

Since the conceptual model of this study is based on the model proposed by Jang and Namkung (2009) it is interesting to compare their results with ours. Unlike their study, we did not confirm the effect of food quality on guests' emotions. On the other hand, the results of our research confirmed their findings regarding the impact of atmospherics on guests' emotions. These findings confirm the importance of atmospherics on positive emotions. Jang and Namkung (2009) did not find the relationship between service quality and negative emotions. Meanwhile, the results of our study showed that service quality has a positive impact on positive emotions and negative impact on negative emotions. Results regarding relationship between emotions and behavioral intentions are consistent with a previous study. Out of three components of perceived quality, we found a statistically significant relationship between food quality, service quality and behavioral intentions. Unexpectedly, the impact of restaurants' atmospherics was not significant.

This study provides several practical implications for restaurateurs. The findings suggest that restaurateurs need to pay more attention to service quality and atmospherics in order to achieve positive guests' emotions. Although the relationship between food quality and emotions was not significant in this study, restaurant managers should not ignore the importance of food quality attributes such as presentation, taste and freshness. The importance of food quality is highlighted in this study since this dimension had the strongest impact on behavioral intention. The restaurant staff can inform guests about served food more, such as to enhance their perception of food quality. Since service quality is also one of the factor that influence guests' behavioral intentions, restaurants managers need to train staff to be knowledgeable, willing to help and confident in direct contact with guests. Although the effect of atmospherics was not significant in this study, the importance of this factor should not be ignored.

This study has several limitations. First, the study considered only restaurants involved in a gastro event. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study to examine the relationship between perceived quality, emotions and behavioral intentions in different types of restaurants. Since we used restaurants that participated in a gastro event we could more explore some more guests' reasons and motivation for visiting restaurant. For that purpose

additional questions should be added in the questionnaire asking them if the primary reason for visiting restaurant was tasting wild asparagus meals offered during the festival. The study used convenience sample and the results cannot be generalized. Since restaurant staff helped in collecting data, there is a possibility that they influenced guests. In our study direct effect of negative emotions on behavioral intentions was not confirmed. Probably, guests avoided answering questions about negative emotions sincerely. Therefore, future research could use trained interviewers to interview guests while leaving the restaurant. Furthermore, additional research is needed about guest emotional state before entering, during the restaurant visit and after leaving. Especially, more research should be undertaken regarding negative emotions.

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