

Analysis of Service Quality and Strategies from Customers' and Franchisor's Perspectives: *A Case of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken*

Dinesh Poudel¹
Kul Prasad Pandey²

Abstract

The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken is a blooming franchise model with strategically distributed outlets in major areas of the Kathmandu valley. The purpose of the study was to probe the management strategies and regulations followed by the franchisor, and the perceived service qualities of the outlet from the customer's standpoint, further resulting in the increased brand value of the CFC. During the study, the store manager of the franchisor was interviewed to gather information about management practices and regulations mandated by the franchisor to its franchisees. Next, the customers within the outlet were selected using convenience sampling methods and were presented with a set of questionnaires to rate the perceived qualities of the CFC Sankhamul outlet. Finally, customer reviews from Google Maps were analyzed to gather customer sentiments relating to the CFC service quality. The CFC franchisor, inclusive of Mr. Basanta and the team, was found to have been actively engaged in due attainment of uniform service quality through monthly inspection, routine strategic meetings, facilitation of training, and distribution of spices and ingredients within the outlets. The study reveals that customers perceive CFC Sankhamul outlets to have higher reliability, followed by tangible factors. Similarly, CFC was perceived to have low empathetic and average responsive and assurance qualities.

Keywords: service quality, strategies, franchise model, customers, franchisor

1. Background of the problem

Fast Food, coined in 1951 by Merriam-Webster, is an umbrella term that refers to food that can be prepared and served quickly (Hossain & Islam, 2020). In plain words, any

¹ *Freelance researcher*

² *Corresponding author: kul.pandey@smc.tu.edu.np*

food items that can be prepared in restaurants with low preparation time are called fast food. The first fast-food restaurant was established in 1916 AD in the United States of America, named White Castle (Bareham, 1995), however, it was in the early 1950s fast food was first popularized in the USA (Profiling food consumption in America. Washington, DC).

In the present context, with over 200,000 fast-food restaurants and estimated sales of \$120 billion in the USA alone, the fast-food industry is considered one of the largest segments in the food industry (Bowman, Gortmaker, Perera, Ebbeling, & Ludwig, 2004). When compared with expenditures among Americans, a study shows that expenditure on fast food is more than the expenditure on new cars, higher education, or personal computers (Hossain & Islam, 2020). In a similar context, international brand chains including McDonald's, and Yum have larger portions of sales internationally (Buttle, 1986), which further elaborates the craze for fast food around the world. Multiple independent studies around the world also show an increasing trend in takeaways and consumption of fast food, especially in Europe, the USA, and Australia (Hossain & Islam, 2020).

In the context of Nepal, The Shangri-La Group, 1997, first introduced a licensed outlet of Wimpy, a British-owned fast-food chain. The arrival of Wimpy offered a new experience to the teenagers and was an instant hit for its uniquely offered chicken burgers (Adhikari, 2013). In later years, Nepal's first outlets of Pizza Hut and KFC- Kentucky Fried Chicken were set up in 2009, these outlets over the years, though through some challenges, have been successfully keeping customer traction within the city and have extended their services to multiple other outlets within the country. Currently, a wide number of fast-food franchises both national and international brands are successfully operating all around the nation. A few of such local franchises are Syanko, Bajeko Sekuwa, Pepe Pizza, Chicken Station, and Shandar Momo (Basnet, 2021).

Franchising has been a unique and distinct business format in which a franchise provider is particularly responsible to partake in actions that involves providing the way of doing business, periodic business guidance, and assistance in return for pre-arranged payment/fees or royalty (Queensland Government, 2021). The franchise modality in business among many advantages introduces an increase in brand recognition, lowers the chance of failure, provides a ready-to-use consumer portfolio, and enables easy to find financial support (Salar & Salar, 2014). However, the modality is also bound to introduce a few extra constraints on both the franchisor and franchisees. From a common standpoint, franchise businesses create a restrictive operating environment that induces limitations including little to no room for creativity and freedom, promotion of market saturation, and inducement of a profit-sharing modality (Tang, 2017). Above all, the most concerning factor for the franchise is to withstand a level of service quality among its franchises i.e. if any of the service outlets fail to maintain a bare minimum standard, the goodwill of the entire franchise will be at stake.

The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken (CFC) is a franchise model business and shares all relevant advantages and limitations of franchising models. The study assesses common management practices followed by CFC to attain a satisfactory service quality

amongst its franchisees. Service quality is primarily referred to as subjective, perceived quality, with the intent of reflecting customers' perception of services and excellence due to the extension of such services. Most of the CFC franchises are independently owned, and daily operations are managed by the respective outlets themselves. Furthermore, the availability of fresh ingredients and raw materials, and environmental factors including placement of outlets introduce external variables into play against attaining a uniform service quality among such outlets. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- Which factors of service quality are attributed to the CFC by its customer base?
- What management principles and strategies are followed by the CFC to maintain a uniform service expectation and reliability against its franchisees?

2. Objectives of the study

The general purpose of the study is to understand the practices adopted for quality control of the service quality of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken. Further, the specific purpose of the study is summarized as:

- To analyze the customers' perception against the tangibility, empathy, assurance, reliability, and responsiveness of CFC; and
- To assess the policy and strategies regulated by the franchisor for the attainment of uniform service quality amongst the CFC outlets.

3. Literature survey

The service quality is mostly illustrated under the four characteristics namely, intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability. Intangibility states that the services cannot be counted, measured, inventoried, tested, and verified in advance of the sale to assure quality. Heterogeneity suggests that the service, mainly in high work content, varies from one producer to another, from day to day, and even client to client. Perishability suggests that services cannot be saved to be performed at some other time.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) illustrated the gap analysis model who presented an integrated view of the customer-company relationship. The theory focuses on the premise that service quality is dependent on the size and the direction of the five gaps that can exist in the service delivery process as given.

- Gap 1: the gap between customer expectations and those perceived by management to be the customers' expectations.
- Gap 2: the gap between management's perception of consumer expectations and the firm's service quality specifications.
- Gap 3: the gap between service quality specifications and service delivery.
- Gap 4: the service delivery, external communication gap.
- Gap 5: the perceived service quality gap, the difference between expected and perceived service

The first four gaps are identified as functions of how service is delivered from the provider to the customer while gap five, connected to the customer, is considered the main actor of service quality and thus influenced by the SERVQUAL instrument. Edvardsson (1996) stated that a service organization needs to define the level of quality at which to operate i.e. relevancy of right quality is higher than that of high quality.

Conceptually, the SERVQUAL scale suggests that service quality is a gap between customers' expectation of service (E) and their perception of actual service performance (P) regarding the five dimensions of quality viz. tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Despite its widened usage for research studies, SERVQUAL however was greatly criticized in many scientific studies hence concluding SERVPERF scale (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), based only on measures of service performance, and would be more adequate to evaluate service quality. DINESERV is an adaptation of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) for restaurant industries using the knowledge learned in the development and refinement of the LODGSERV (Frietas & Candido, 2020).

Fiore and Kim (2007) present a conceptual framework that concerns the influences on the consumption experience by environmental variables such as physical elements of the service environment, individual variables, individual attributes, and person-environment variables or situations. Zeithaml and Bitner (2010) argue that customers perceive service quality in more than one way i.e. multiple factors are taken into account when quality is assessed.

Baker et al. (2002), Bitner (1990), and Minor et al. (2004) also put forward the influences of the environment on customer satisfaction. For example, the environment in a restaurant will affect customer satisfaction. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) discuss the relation of satisfaction and delight to the confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations: The terms "quality" and "satisfaction" are sometimes used interchangeably. Some researchers argue, that perceived service quality is just one component of customer satisfaction, which also reflects factors like price/ quality trade-offs, and personal and situation.

Baker et al. (2002) also describe three components that influence the service encounter elements. The first component is the physical environment and includes for example music, lightning, and external and internal environmental design, the second one is customer interactions with intangible and tangible elements in the service environment and the periods when customers interact with physical facilities and other tangible elements in the service environment.

Bitner (1992) and Baker et al. (2002) describe how customers are influenced by the appearance, perceptions, and behavior of other customers. Baker and Cameron (1996), discuss that perception of customers is easily affected by peer perceptions or even the perception of other customers and that makes it important for service providers to be careful about the interaction between customers.

Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), under The Servuction Model, state that the Service processes usually consist of a series of encounters, such as your experience with a table reservation that consists of steps from making a reservation to checking in, serving the meal, and finally service for bill payment.

4. Research methodology

Amongst multiple franchises based fast-food chains within the city, The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken was selected as a study subject due to the blooming number of outlets despite the mixed opinion of customers regarding the customer service, deliciousness of food and minimum social rating i.e. on an average 3-4 outlets of CFC can be found within a 2-kilometer radius within the city. The CFC Sankhamul can be regarded as the source origin of the entire CFC franchise as it is both the franchisor and the first operating outlet in its entire chain of outlets. The study follows both qualitative and quantitative measures while relying on primary and secondary data. Primary data was acquired via verbal interviews, direct observation, and questionnaires conducted within the premise of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken located at Sankhamul, Kathmandu, Nepal. Correspondingly, customer reviews of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken, extracted from Google Map, by web-scraping using python script (inclusive of selenium and beautiful soup) and saved as a CSV file for further study, were taken as a secondary source. Before starting the interview session, the store manager was formally introduced to the intent of the study and asked if he was willing to provide the information required. Mr. Dimbug objected to recording the conversation, so the interview was manually transcribed at the venue. The Nepali language was used as the primary mode of communication.

Successively, customers of The Burger house and Crunchy Fried Chicken within the premises were presented with questionnaires. The questionnaire survey was conducted on October 31, 2021, from 1 pm – 4:30 pm NST using the convenience sampling method. A total of 20 respondents were recorded for the study purpose. The first part of the questionnaire, included basic demographic parameters followed by the DINESERV dimensions. Respondents were asked to rate multiple factors of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken under dimensions of DINESERV models. The response thus collected was subjected to descriptive analysis to find the central tendency of the responses. A percentile measure was used for the analysis of the questionnaire.

Microsoft Excel was used as a statistical suite to store and analyze the data thus collected from the questionnaire session. The reviews from Google were extracted through web scraping procedures. Such scraping was carried out with a base source named google maps-scrapper. Nvivo 12 was used to create and manage cases against all available data, and to create a word cloud of the most frequent words used in customer reviews.

5. Presentation and analysis of the data

Of the 20 questionnaires distributed within the CFC premise, 19 were received completely answered. *Table 1* shows that 60 % of the respondents selected were male and 40 % were female. Among the respondents, 40 % visited the outlet frequently. A fairly low number of respondents were found to visit weekly. We can also notice that number of daily respondents is 0.

Regarding the age group, the majority of the respondents were found to be between the 18-25 age group i.e. 65%, followed by the age group 25-40 i.e. 30% when compared to

other age groups the maximum number of respondents were found to be within the range of 18-40 i.e. totaling to 95% of the total respondents. The demographics of respondents may not exactly portray the demographics of the overall customer base of the CFC since the study fails to address respondents who visit the place after office hours i.e. 5 pm.

Table 1
Characteristics of respondents

Demographic Factors	Options	%
Gender	Male	60
	Female	40
Age	Below 18	5
	18-25	65
	25-40	30
	40-60	0
	Over 60	0
Frequency of Visit	Daily	0
	Weekly	10
	Bi-weekly	25
	Often	40
	Seldom	25

Tangibility

The Sankhamul Outlet, also the franchisor of The Burger House and Crunchy Fried Chicken is an underground fast-food outlet with minimalistic parking nearby. Upon observation, the outlet was found to be averagely decorated with few wall paintings, such paintings add additional value to the environment of the outlet and in some cases may present emotional triggering.

“... On top of that the painting of Late King Birendra stole my heart” - GR1629

The seating arrangement within the outlet was comfortable. The outlet is divided into sections for billing, kitchen section, general seating, and private seating. No dedicated smoking or non-smoking zone was allocated. The absence of such an area may present conflicting choices to its customers. Several people have shared their reviews on Google regarding a similar issue. They believe a small smoking-only or non-smoking zone could ease up the environment.

“Nice place but it would be best if it has at least small compartment of NON-SMOKING Area” –GR142

The outlet offers two public restrooms and has limited options for hand wash. On primary observation, the cleanliness of the restroom was found to be somewhat questionable. The lack of properly clean restrooms could present additional difficulties to women, if not equal to men.

“...Most of the people coming here are regulars and manage among themselves.” Mr. Dimbug replied when asked about the availability of restrooms during busy hours.

The outlet has accustomed itself to a party place and has adopted live music over the recent years. Live performance is one of the key attractiveness of the place. The customers within the outlet were found more attentive to live music. In general, the ambiance is somewhat noisy, even without the live music, and maybe a deterrent factor, especially for people who require a peaceful place to have casual chats. Mr. Dimbug acknowledges that they receive frequent concerns regarding the loudness of the music.

“People come and enjoy our music and it’s just a matter of taste. In fact, we are using only the front speakers, we do have additional speakers but we don’t use them often. We also have a secluded cabin right next to the outer parking zone for people who want peace and come here to talk.” - Mr. Dimbug

The staff of the outlet were well dressed and looked presentable and were carrying tablets to take customers’ requests. Since food orders were taken via digital means, it is safe to believe that chance of wrong food orders is minimal. During our evaluation of Google reviews, we noted serious concerns of customers regarding the difference between the menus’ stated pricing and the actual billing amount of the outlet itself. Such complaints originate since CFC doesn’t include VAT in its menu pricing. It is advised that a menu sheet inclusive of all hidden charges is maintained within the outlet to further improve the level of customer satisfaction.

Table 2
Statistical summary for tangibles

Dimension	Factors	Mean	Median	S.D	Percentile 20	Percentile 30	Percentile 40
	Average	3.26	3.22	0.37	3	3	3.1
	T1.	2.95	3	0.837	2	2.3	3
	T2.	3.9	4	0.16	3.2	4	4
	T3.	3.35	4	0.22	2	2.3	3.4
	T4.	4.3	4	0.131	3	4	4
Tangibility	T5.	3.85	4	0.128	4	4	4
	T6.	4.15	4	0.197	3.2	4	4
	T7.	3.57	4	0.176	3	3	4
	T8.	4.26	4	0.168	4	4	4
	T9.	3.63	4	0.137	3	3	4
	Gross	29.35	29	0.747	27	27	28

Based on our questionnaire, 60% of customers believe that CFC has agreeable tangible qualities against multiple sectors except for factor T1: The CFC Restaurant has visually attractive parking areas and buildings. Similarly, about 30% of customers disapprove of the cleanliness of the available restrooms T3. *Table 2* shows the basic statistical analysis of the customers of CFC Sankhamul outlets.

Since the start of the outlet, initial investors including Mr. Dimbug, Mr. Basanta Lama, and the team have been actively engaged in the proper functioning of the CFC and have grown an attachment to the physical structuring of the outlet over the years. In our conversation regarding expansion plans and the desire to relocate to a more spacious area with a lifted decoration Mr. Dimbug replied:

“No. I am attached to how things are. See this bar, (pointing to the bar rack) this bar has been here since the start of the outlet. There was a time when we had no money to invest. We contributed personally to collect fund to establish this outlet and this bar was made out of the same seed money. Over the years, we could have changed the bar but I didn’t want to. I believe this bar is lucky for us. Same holds for the chairs and other furniture. Almost all the furniture here are in its original state since the start of first outlet. Recently we added some extra cushion to them. We did change our sofa in the party cabin (pointing to the black sofa in party cabin). I believe the furniture are lucky for us too.”

Empathy

The CFC has been consistent in its offering since the start of the venture and follows a strictly managed menu throughout its franchisees. However, it does serve special offerings upon the request of its customers. The ability of CFC to adapt to the desires of its customers does bolster its branding.

Table 3
Statistical summary for empathy

Dimension	Factors	Mean	Median	S.D.	Percentile 20	Percentile 30	Percentile 40
Empathy	Average	3.28	3.5	0.936	2.95	3.18	3.4
	E1.	3.31	3	0.154	3	3	3
	E2.	3.47	3	0.193	3	3	3
	E3.	3.47	4	0.207	3	3	3
	E4.	3.57	3	0.192	3	3	3
	Gross	13.15	14	0.837	11.2	12.3	13.4

“..., we recently offered Sushi due to customers’ requests. However, only a few customers i.e. 1-2 would request sushi during their time in the outlet.” - Mr. Dimbug.

Recently CFC Sankhamul was offering sushi as its special dish. However, they have discontinued the service due to low customer requests. Special dishes require additional human resources and thus increasing the overall operational cost of the outlet. Table 3 illustrates that 80% of respondents believe that CFC is neutrally empathetic to its customers against multiple factors except for factor E3: The CFC anticipates my individual needs and wants i.e. A large number of customers agree that CFC anticipates their needs and wants.

Assurance

The majority of the CFC staff were found to lack proper education. On similar notes, none of the staff were reportedly from the field of hospitality or management. We observed that CFC values its employee’s dedication and hard work in educational qualifications. However, the lack of education does provide some challenges to the outlet since the employees cannot answer the customer inquiries confidently. Such hesitance may adversely affect overall customer satisfaction. When inquired about the frequency of customer inquiries Mr. Dimbug stated that customers rarely inquire about the ingredients or preparation methodology of menu items.

Table 4
Statistical summary for assurance

Dimension	Factors	Mean	Median	S.D.	Percentile 20	Percentile 30	Percentile 40
Average		3.52	3.6	0.932	3.2	3.4	3.4
	A1.	3.684	4	0.171	3	3	4
	A2.	3.89	4	0.185	3	4	4
Assurance	A3.	3.15	3	0.257	2	2	3
	A4.	3.55	4	0.184	3	3	4
	A5.	4.05	4	0.179	4	4	4
	Gross	17.6	18	1.04	16	17	17

CFC considers its ingredients and preparation method a trade secret and is hesitant to share the details with its customers. CFC does maintain a listing of ingredients for common beverage offerings including blended drinks and ice-creams.

“...We have listed ingredient for blended drinks stated in the menu (Beverage sections) and refer customer to read the details if any queries about such drinks”
– Mr. Dimbug.

Based on the survey, about 60% of the respondents believe that the CFC personnel were moderately trained. Correspondingly, a similar number of the respondents agree that CFC staff do their job well. *Table 4* shows the complete statistical description of multiple factors contributing to the assurance of CFC.

Reliability

Based on direct observation, CFC was found to provide fast-paced service to its customers. However, during busy hours CFC customers may feel somewhat disappointed. Mr. Dimbug acknowledges that the level of service quality during busy hours is not on par with the expectations. A significant concern was reported regarding the service time and quality of the outlet during the analysis of Google reviews. Such reviews have mixed responses both applauding and criticizing the service quality of the CFC.

Table 5
Statistical summary for reliability

Dimension	Factors	Mean	Median	S.D.	Percentile 20	Percentile 30	Percentile 40
Average		3.95	4	0.59	3.3	3.8	3.8
Reliability	R1.	4.35	5	0.182	3.2	4	4
	R2.	3.65	4	0.2325	3	3.3	4
	R3.	3.8	4	0.186	3	4	4
	R4.	4.21	4	0.145	4	4	4
	Gross	15.8	16	0.531	13	15	15

“We can only serve 2 cups of coffee at a time... Rarely, food preparation also takes time since most of the chefs are busy.” – Mr. Dimbug

Based on our questionnaire, more than 60% of respondents agree CFC is dependable and consistent in its service offering. Similarly, a large percentage of respondents agree that CFC serves their food as they ordered. A complete listing of statistics is listed in *Table 5*.

Mr. Dimbug stated that order misplacement rarely occurs within the outlet. However, a few cases of mishaps was recorded when delivering food to respective customers. CFC has been providing delivery services since its initiation and has recently tied up with external agencies like Pathao. When in case of order misplacement, CFC takes full responsibility and tries to sort the issues either by re-dispatching the food order or by offering a complete refund of the food items.

The CFC Sankhamul outlet is near several other fast-food restaurants including Syanko Rolls, Burger Station, and Chicken Station, and has been effectively managing its price and service quality. When asked about the market competitiveness against Chicken Station, a similar fast food franchise offering nearly the same menu items, Mr. Dimbug replied:

“We have our customer base and they have theirs. Most of our customers visit us because we provide cheap food with good quality”

The price to quality averaging followed by the ambiance of CFC has helped CFC establish itself as a go-to option among its customers base. Several Google reviews support the fact. Amongst the most positive factors of CFC, we have found that pricing and food quality are the most reported factors.

“Good food, good price... Maybe the service can be made better.” – GR1324

Since most of the staff had no formal education relevant to the service industry let alone fast-food restaurants, the service quality of the chain is somewhat questionable. When repeatedly requesting additional chili flakes and oregano along with pizza, one of the waitresses brought some ketchup sachets. The staff does seem to require knowledge related to the food they offer within the outlet.

Responsiveness

Staff personnel of CFC Sankhamul are in general responsive and behave properly with the customers. Most of the staff were soft-spoken and were somewhat enthusiastic about individual requests. However, customers may feel neglected during busy hours due to the decrease in the ratio of customers to service employees.

Table 6
Statistical summary for responsiveness

Dimension	Factors	Mean	Median	S.D.	Percentile 20	Percentile 30	Percentile 40
Average		3.35	3.33	0.752	3	3	3
Responsiveness	RP1.	4	4	0.178	3.2	4	4
	RP2.	2.94	3	0.222	2	2	2
	RP3.	3.42	4	0.192	3	3	3
	Gross	10.05	10	0.505	13	15	15

When asked regarding the responsiveness and availability of service staff within the outlet, Mr. Dimbug acknowledged that customers may have to wait longer during busy hours. CFC does not follow practices of part-time/ additional workforce during busy hours. *Table 6* illustrates the average points rated against the franchise by customers. More than 70% of respondents believe that CFC provides a quick response to their requests. Similarly, 80% of respondents either disagree or feel neutral that CFC staff show extra effort to handle special requests.

Strategies and regulations

The Burger House and Crunchy Friend chicken doesn't have strict guidelines against the applicability of an outlet desiring to act as a franchisee. Upon franchising request, Mr. Basanta and the team conduct a primary market survey including profitability analysis, market competitiveness, and brand value within the prospected locality. If all conditions are met then the CFC allocates resources to newly formed franchisees. The allocated resource includes specialized training services, business, and trade secrets including the spices and ingredients used within the CFC outlet. When asked about the franchise modality Mr. Dimbug replied:

“We don't have royalty system. Profit isn't distributed among outlets. Actually we provide franchising rights by taking an up-front fee. In some case, franchisees offer us a certain percentage share in their facility. I have come to understand that people frequently offer share to ensure we will be more motivated to provide timely services when requested. We don't force any such actions nor discriminate amongst the franchisees who choose either of the models.”

CFC provides onboarding specialization training to all employees within the chain. To further increase morale, a monthly visit is also conducted to all the franchisees wherever possible. During such training, information about spices including ingredients and quantity

is shared. Currently, CFC is importing packaged spices from India and the same is circulated throughout the chain to keep the taste constant. CFC uses fresh ingredients from the local vegetable market place and each outlet is responsible for its purchases. This does introduce some change in quality against multiple outlets. However, CFC has preferred the freshness of the vegetables and meat products since the circulation of such ingredients takes time even within the city. To further reduce the margin of error, CFC has a uniform menu offering in all its outlets, however, upon customer request, outlets also offer an additional offering to its customers. Such additional offerings are listed under a separate menu leaf.

CFC has been providing delivery services to its customers since its establishment and doesn't mandate a minimum bill amount. In later years, CFC has taken a tie-up with food delivery service Pathao for home delivery service. CFC has been receiving general queries about the quality of delivered food. Despite the same ingredients and cooking procedure, such loss of quality is attributed to the packaging used during delivery services. In some instance, misplaced delivery packages and late delivery has also been reported to CFC. Mr. Dimbug states that such grievances are recorded often when delivery services are used when in comparison to the in-house delivery person. Since CFC has started in-house delivery, CFC has started rolling out orders from nearby outlets i.e. if a person orders food in the CFC Sankhamul outlet from Kalanki, CFC delivers food from the Kalimati outlet. Hence, CFC is confident that it provides timely delivery services to its customers. CFC considers its customer experience and has no criteria for the minimum bill amount for delivery services. Mr. Dimbug stated that since most of the CFC customers visit the place because of its price competitiveness, it would be unfair for the customer to request a minimum billing amount.

Grievances and customer complaints about outlets are in general handled within individual outlets and the CFC Sankhamul bears no responsibility for grievance management as a whole. However, upon special request, CFC Sankhamul provides additional support to its franchisees. Cases of cross outlet complaints are rarely registered with the franchisor. Such complaints are registered either via phone calls or through the Facebook social page. . Complaints registered via Facebook pages however are directly handled by Mr. Basanta Lama. Additionally, a weekly meeting is arranged in the corporate office, located at Naya Basti Kathmandu, every Friday 8 am - 9 am regarding customer grievances and prospective changes for franchises. Such meeting is attended by chefs and upper managerial staff of the CFC outlets.

6. Findings

After successive interviews with the franchisor and questionnaire sessions with the customers of the outlet, the following major observation was made:

- The franchisor was confident regarding the factors involving the tangibility of the outlet including the parking area, restrooms, and design of the outlet. Upon cross-referencing the data from the questionnaire session, as well as google reviews, it is noted that the customers however weren't satisfied with tangibility factors. There is a significant gap between the franchisor's intent and customer satisfaction in regards

to tangible factors. Meanwhile, both the franchisor and customer agree that the availability of live music has added extra value to the customers' experience while within the outlet.

- The CFC maintains a uniform service delivery through a proper strategy and execution involving the uniform menu and circulation of key ingredients from the same vendors across the country. These ingredients include the rationing of the spices and other relevant raw ingredients.
- The franchisor and the customer both converge on the perceived quality of assurance and empathy. The franchisor confirms that CFC has mainly portrayed itself as a party venue and usually people visit the outlet because of its cost efficacy.
- Amongst the five dimensions of DINESERV, customers converge on reliability as the key quality trait of CFC.

7. Conclusion

Management strategies including the selection of strategic location, competitive pricing, profitability analysis, and surveying of customer base/ brand recognition before starting a new outlet are factors influencing the success of the overall CFC franchise. The ability of CFC management to address the special needs of customers is another commendable factor of the outlet. Taking special measures to provide services completely out of the core offering is a challenging factor and the willingness to take the risk of such offering illustrates the level of dedication of CFC management towards the betterment of the overall service quality of CFC. CFC doesn't mandate a minimum billing amount for its delivery services and has been constantly monitoring the customer reviews and complaints through both social reviews and phone calls. CFC shares the same menu and preparation methods, including the quality and quantity of the ingredients i.e. spices and raw materials, and thus has limited the number of factors against the attainment of uniform service experience amongst its outlets. Even so, upon receiving a large number of customer complaints, a physical inspection is done on the respective outlet. Taste, smell, color, and quality consistency are measured during such inspection. A routine inspection is also carried out against the outlets within the Kathmandu valley. The strategies followed by CFC have not only enabled customers to receive a fairly good service quality but also preserve the brand reputation since the establishment of the outlet.

The reliability of CFC has been a key factor for the overall brand reputation followed by tangible qualities. Customers perceive CFC to have average responsiveness, assurance, and low empathetic qualities. Tangible factors like ambiance inclusive of the live music have enabled additional customer inflow to the CFC. However, the music at the outlet can be too loud at times, to a point where the same ambiance could deter the customers' trust. In a similar context, hidden pricing on menu items, availability of sufficient and clean lavatories, and lack of service training and knowledge of menu items among employees can be regarded as adverse quality traits for the operation of the outlet.

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