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Presence of servant company elements in a restaurant

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Abstract

The present study evaluated the presence of servant company elements in a restaurant. 16 managers, 109 employees and 200 customers were interviewed. Differences of opinion between staff and customers were found. The most valued and perceived attributes were: flexibility, organization, care of clients, responsibility, desire to help and usefulness.

Key words: service orientation, servant organization, servitizing organization, service management

1. Introduction

Competition in services has been identified as an increasing option for companies to differentiate themselves from their competitors, even if they are service providers or not. The indication is that companies adopt a service orientation, adding value to its core product, even if it is a good or a service.

According to Grönroos (2003), market orientation has been considered as a key strategy for successful organizations. Currently companies have sidelined the product orientation, in order to get oriented to market, with the focus on the customer's need and desire. This strategy is noted by other authors who strengthen the companies' focus on understanding the needs, desires and demands of the market and from this assumption, to adopt a service orientation as an element of competitive differentiation, in which one of the main tasks of the service manager is to have a better comprehension of the service delivery system itself. In this sense, it is important to relate to organizational behavior concepts that can add value and differentiation that enables the company to reflect on how they can incorporate and realize their practices to consolidate a competitive advantage (KOTLER and KELLER, 2006; FITZSIMMONS and FITZSIMMONS, 2005).

Moreover, there comes a new approach in the context of service studies: the strategy based on the sense of serving, which has its start in a question: what other reason could

explain the existence of an organization, unless the fact that they serve their customers and users? According to Nóbrega (2009), this is a new discussion in which serving refers to "perform activities providing benefits" by linking attributes of servant leadership through empirical research, which include responsibility, simplicity, resignation, initiative, willing to help, good practices and usefulness.

For Nobrega (2009), this is an innovative discussion, in which "serving sense" refers to activities that provide benefits, linking attributes about servant leadership through empirical research, which include responsibility, simplicity, renunciation, initiative, desire to help, practices of good and useful. This research identified the set of variables that make up a service orientation, from a theoretical framework for conceptualizing and structuring guidance for service, taking as its starting point the strategic perspectives of competition, suggested by Grönroos (2005): product image, price and services.

Among current market segments, restaurant industry falls into a segment in evolution that requires strategic perspectives of differentiation. In Rio Grande do Norte (RN), a Brazilian State, this context is quite evident, mainly because of the competition that has driven existing restaurants to seek alternatives that provide superior performance to their competitors.

This paper aims to identify the presence of "serving elements" in a restaurant, considering three dimensions: strategies, processes and server behavior.

2. Restaurant management

Several significant changes have occurred in various segments of the global economy, including change in people's lifestyles, eating habits and behavior of families in which local for eating became a reference differential, thus generating an increasing amount of people who have to make their meals outside home (STEWART, BLISARD; JOLLIFFE, 2006). The

authors mention that, in the U.S., from the end of the decade 70 to 90 years, the percentage of people who come to dine outside home increased from 18 to 32%.

This scenario can also be seen in Brazil. From the Family Budget Survey (HBS) conducted by Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), it was found that in average monthly value for the Brazilian families for food, about 24% is used for spending, with dine outside home (IBGE, 2004). With the growing demand for food outside home, investments in segments of restaurants certainly also increase, in order to meet customer needs and trends.

Oliva and Santolia (2007), investigating on restaurant management, concluded that most of these establishments show centralized management, are family businesses, and tend to be managed by their owners. To the authors several aspects must be considered in management, such as hygiene processing, storage and food handling, storage of raw materials, inventory control, production scheduling, costing and staff training.

3. Service Orientation according to some authors' view

3.1 Grönroos approach

For Grönroos (2003), service orientation is based on the need for understanding of what offer to customers. Offering a wide variety of services added to the core product, good or service, is a way to improve performance relating to its direct competitors on price and quality. He also emphasizes the perspective of the service compared with other strategic perspectives. Service perspective is based on the need to expand the company to offer more services, in order to support the processes for generating customer value besides core product. Product perspective refers to a strategy adopted by companies that focus on development of a central good or service as the primary mean for generating value to customers, while for price perspective, the company emphasizes price as criterion customers decision. Regarding image

perspective, the organization differentiates its offering through the brand around its product, influencing the minds of customers through advertising and marketing.

The logic of competition in service gives at least three reasons for the need to focus on services (Grönroos, 2003 p.22): the requirement to adopt a service perspective, and thus learn how to face competition in services is partially driven by the customer, partly driven by competition, and partly driven by technology.

Yet, to Grönroos (2003), quality of service perceived by a customer has two dimensions: a technical dimension, which refers to <u>what</u> consumers receive in their relationships with the companies, making it important for them and their assessment of quality; and a functional dimension, which addresses the perspective of <u>how</u> the customer receives the service and how he experiences the simultaneous process of production and consumption. These two quality dimensions are ways to identify the perceived overall quality and distinguishing aspect in which the degree of customer satisfaction is compromised.

Quality is seen as the key factor under the current competitiveness, especially when it comes to the context of services, but frequently one dos not know which dimensions of quality is vital to excellence in the market. Grönroos (2003) emphasizes that the development of functional quality dimension can add substantial value to customers and thus create a competitive advantage. This does not mean that the technical quality is not necessary, it is a result of the process service, i.e., normally it's a prerequisite of good quality and it has to be at a level acceptable to the customer. The companies compete on their service processes seeking the impact of functional quality created by them, but it is recommended not to forget that if technical quality fails, the total perceived quality also fails (GRÖNROOS, 2003).

Service management needs to be developed in a unique way to understand the relationship between service firms and their clients, identifying the different categories of service quality that can be exploited and can, thus, provide a model of service quality that can measure consumer perceptions (GRÖNROOS, 2006).

3.2 Lovelock and Wright's approach

Lovelock and Wright (2001) claim that services are economic activities that create value and bring benefits to customers in times and places specific, as a consequence of performing a desired change in the recipient's objective. Service sector now constitutes the core of economy, being responsible for most of the growth of new jobs. Market orientation toward an integrated management service is fundamental to the success of a company. For this, they underscore the basic components of integrated management of services: the elements of product is the first basic structure and refers to creating value for clients, involving all performance components of the service; place and time are management decisions regarding where and how deliver customer service; process includes a particular form of operations or actions with a defined sequence; productivity and quality is another component that measures the degree of satisfaction that a service offers a checking account care needs, desires and expectations.

But people are more professional sense, and sometimes other customers involved in service production; promotion and education in this context are considered by the authors of a component that met all the activities and incentives designed to increase communication to customer preference for a particular service or supplier; physical evidence are visual aspects that provide evidence of service quality and price, and other costs of services; the eighth and final component of the integrated administration service is considered by the authors costs money, time and effort that customers incur when buying and consuming services. According to the authors, companies with this focus need to understand the implications of the eight components of integrated management services for the development of effective strategies.

3.3 Zeithaml and Bitner's approach

Using a simple argument, Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) reinforce further other authors' ideas, emphasizing that services are deeds, processes and performances. Once defined what

services are, it is important to clarify that services are not produced only by companies services, but are part of all manufacturers manufactured goods offer. The authors also emphasize there is a distinction between services and services to client. Services, as commonly defined, cover a broadly defined range of industries; customer service is also provided by all types of service firms and serves to support the group's main products of a company.

Their study is focused on service satisfaction, which is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product and price and also by perceptions of personal and situational factors. The quality of service is a focused assessment that reflects the client's perception about the specific dimensions of services: reliability, responsiveness, security, empathy and tangibles.

As argued by Zeithaml and Bitner (2003 p.49):

> Customer perceptions are subjective statements about their experiences, related to a product or service, while expectations are standards or benchmarks of performance with which service experiences are compared and formulated mostly in terms what the customer thinks it should or would in fact occur.

Emphasis on customer perception is an important parameter addressed by the authors, who focus their studies in a service economy focused on excellence with a focus on customer expectations. Understanding customer needs and transforming it into a compound for expanded services (product, square, promotion, price, people, physical evidence and process) is the proposal of the authors, who stress the recognition of the importance of these variables communication.

3.4 Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons's approach

Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2005) argue that a market orientation is focused on service, and also emphasize that service infrastructure is a pre-requisite for an economy to move towards industrialization.

Understanding the process of competitiveness in the services context, the authors highlighted competitive strategies proposed by Michael Porter, thus reinforcing the idea that services firms are able to gain the leading position with low costs by using some methods such as customer demand for low cost, standardization of personal service, reducing the interaction of service delivery, cost reductions and network operations services offline. Differently, differentiation strategy can be adopted, in which the better service can be charged at a higher price. This process allows the service to transform the intangible into tangible, customize the standard product, reducing the perceived risk, enhance staff training and perform quality control. The third option is the cited focus strategy, built on the idea of fulfilling a particular target market to meet specific customer needs. (Fitzsimmons, Fitzsimmons, 2005).

Thus, the authors believe it is imperative to recognize that services activities are not merely parallel, but rather an integral part of society, being present in the center of the economy and essential for it to remain healthy and functional. Moreover, even point out that for most people, service is synonymous with servitude, it is difficult to determine the difference between product and service, once when buying a product, it always comes with some support services and purchase of a service often includes goods.

3.5 Kotler and Keller's approach

Kotler and Keller (2006) argue that the companies most likely to risk are those who cannot monitor their customers and competitors carefully, not continually improving its offerings of value. Such companies take a business vision for short-term sales driven, and tend not to satisfy all those involved in this process of exchange that is the market. In this sense, it is necessary to understand how to orient themselves to the market ahead of its competitors, showing how marketing activities can be conducted by organizations using four

different strategies (KOTLER, KELLER, 2006 p.13): production orientation, product orientation, sales orientation, marketing orientation,

Kotler (2005) has emphasized that the movement of expansion of marketing was used to improve trade relations and show its application in the aspect of services with many more activities in the relationships between companies and their customers.

3.6 Urdan and Urdan's approach

According to Urdan and Urdan (2006), organizations are motivated by the marketing orientation, and functions are integrated and work coordinately around the customer. Under market needs and desires it is cultivated the ability to make decisions, bringing together the functional perspectives and skills to resolve conflicts between departments.

The authors indicate that, beyond marketing orientation, there are four others: production, sales, product and societal marketing (URDAN, URDAN, 2006 p.17 e 18).

3.7 Parasuraman, Zeithaml e Berry's approach

Parasuraman et al (2006) argue that the constant search for excellence is a differentiation for the company, and the quality is currently one of the major competitive strategies in different organizations and different sectors. Quality is closely linked to productivity, improves results and increases profits by reducing losses and waste, people development in the company and consequent motivation. Setting the level of quality or the perception of quality, from the perspective of the client, is an important characteristic on service management, since this concept does not require previous experience with the service or the supplier and customer satisfaction is result of treatment or overcome a preconceived standard of quality, i.e., customers from past relationships, third party communications, advertising, institutional, personal needs and desires, among other factors, develop what some authors call "predictive expectations" and the level of meeting these expectations is what will determine the perceived quality and customer satisfaction. (Parasuraman et al, 1990).

However, the scope of quality is closely related to the concept of completeness in the service process, which considers such service from the viewpoint of the customer. The completion of this process is achieved when the service delivery system of a company corresponds to the typical customer in the range of their expectations. (Parasuraman et al, 2009).

According to Parasuraman et al (2006 p.104), the determinants of quality of service are: access, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, sensitivity, safety, the tangible aspects, understanding or knowledge of the client.

Some methods used for assessing the service quality are based on the paradigm of inconsistency, whereby the consumer satisfaction stems from the relationship between expectations and performance, and the inconsistency of expectations of the main causes leading to customer satisfaction and perceived quality

Parasuraman (1998) proposed a research agenda that focuses on the importance of the role and potential impact evaluation of customer service in business markets to-business, aiming to encourage research organizations in at least some aspects of customer service in business and industrial marketing and thereby understand how it can offer a customer service.

Parasuraman et al (2009) found that while the customers think of a number of service, companies focus only on a simple service and assessed the perception of service of six organizations in the four basic systems of services: (1) transaction - to implement a basic application and nothing else, (2) process - handling all business-related service requests through a point contact, (3) alliance - handling service requests through a single touch point across to join a company selecting a static alliance of service partners, and (4) agility - service requests through a single touch point manipulation through construction of a dynamic alliance of partners in selecting customer service. The objective of this study was to investigate the selection and implementation of service through strategies that meet customer expectations in the completion of the process.

3.8 Teboul's approach

Teboul (2008) argues that the service sector is the dominant part of the world economy and the services are broad and bad defined, so he proposes a classification to better understand the types of services. He reports the existence of a service business-to-business, which is companies that use services provided by other companies, such as distribution, finance and insurance. The author also records customer service as those services marketed to the public (including banking and insurance sold directly to consumers for their own use), beyond the self-service are those in which the consumer pays the service itself. Understand the difference between the industrial and service is extremely important, noting that the two sectors evolve dependently, i.e., services can not increase without the manufacturing sector and industry needs service sector. The author defines the industrial area as support and service sector as front area of economy. The argument is that, when a service or product is sold, front and areas involved in the sale, so, both have a greater or shorter participation, but they do take part.

The position defended by Teboul (2008) is that service orientation is converging with the other authors and runs through a composite service, that, in addition to the marketing mix, must take in count processes and people and the importance of customer relations, company and employee, thus considering an integrated function, emphasizing that process and people are essential elements of service delivery. For him, the success of a firm depends on its ability to develop a satisfactory relationship with each of its customers, and greater flexibility to the composite services. The organization not only retains customers but also sell more services to them. Therefore, the company will be able to increase their revenue and reduce costs: either by means of what might be called economies of scope, that is, sell a wider range of services at the client (cross selling), or economies of relationship, when you can reduce costs by selling the same customers regularly.

4.   Comparative of the authors' approaches

In order to make a comparison of the different approaches, Grönroos (2003) perspectives were used as a main guideline. Grönroos perspectives are based on: four key strategies: service perspective, the perspective of core product, price perspective and the perspective image in order to identify the variables that most resemble the four basic strategy, especially when it comes to service orientation. The objective was to make a detailed and deeper cut of the variables encountered in integrating the perspective of service orientation that may contribute to the sustainable implementation of competitive strategies in organizations.

Table 1 shows, for each accessed author, which elements are more emphasized in their approaches. The correspondence illustrates, according to each of Grönroos perspectives, which elements for each authors' approach relates most to Grönroos proposal. When an element is not strongly mentioned by the author, it was assigned as "not emphasized".

The right column, named "author's main elements" was used to designate the most cited elements by the accessed authors that keep relation with Grönroos perspectives. It can be seen as a resume of all the studied authors about the perspectives of product, image, price and service.

5.   Sense of serving: Nóbrega's approach

Service orientation brings to discussion a broader question, which relates to the orientation to serve or be served Nobrega (2009). This approach reinforces an aspect of service concept: services may represent the results delivered by the service provider, related to the outcome of these activities, namely the benefits that are offered to those who receive the service. But services represent also the activities executed to provide those benefits and results.

Grönroos (2003)	Lovelock e Wright (2001)	Zeithaml Bitner (2003)	Fitzsimmons e Fitzsimmons (2005)	Kotler and Keller (2006)	Urdan e Urdan (2006)	Zeithaml, Parasuraman e Berry (2006)	Teboul (2008)	Author's main elements
Service Perspective (Customer focus)	Process of developing people and quality standards	Internal Marketing Customer focus	Quality standards and organizational efficiency	Organizational Value generating Service focus Internal marketing Target market	Internal and relationship marketing People development Service focus	Customer focus Communication Access Competence Credibility	Internal marketing Service focus People and process development	- Internal marketing - Customer focus - Service focus - People development
Central product perspective (Aggregate value to product)	Value generating Productivity	Not emphasized	Value generating	Quality Innovative product	Intrinsic quality Supplementary attributes	Not emphasized	Wide range of services	- Value generation - Intrinsic quality - Aggregated value
Process perspective (Low price)	Price Tangibility	Customer focus Tangibility	High productivity Low cost	Low price Customer focus	Customer focus Information Flexibility	Tangibles Security	Customer focus Tangibility	- Tangibility - Low cost - Customer focus
Image Perspective (Brand)	Promotion and education	Not emphasized	Not emphasized	Brand value Marketing & advertising	Relationship marketing Brand value	Not emphasized	Not emphasized	- Brand value - Marketing

Table 1: Conceptualization of Comparative on authors' approach about market orientation with focus on service orientation (Source: Research)

This means that any activity that is executed can generate a benefit to someone, and that greater awareness of this benefit, the more likely the company is successful at what he does. For this reason the author argues that the organization is positioned with the adoption of strategies based on the sense of serving the market can differentiate themselves. But what "serve" means? Serve is meant as "carrying out activities that provide benefits to those we serve". Servant attributes are related through empirical research, which include accountability, simplicity, renunciation, initiative, desire to help, good practices, and usefulness. Serve is to add value to something, going beyond the commonly expected result as a consequence of a job

This way, as long as people in an organization can execute jobs having the sense of serving in mind, the possibility for making good service will increase, contributing to a service culture at all. Service culture is understood as the set of values and principles that govern the processes of service to everyone in the organization. Robbins (2005) records a common sense of organizational culture as a set of values that distinguishes one organization from another. In this context Nobrega (2009) shows that an essentially competitive feature is the sense of serving and emphasizes that market orientation is based on several attributes, generating therefore a server behavior that is endowed the following characteristics shown in Table 2

Service strategy is composed of internal marketing, relationship management, access, additional services, people development, social responsibility, and focus on services. A service culture has elements like focus on results, respect, sense of service, responsiveness, commitment to others, the common good, utility and efficiency. Also according to Nobrega (2009), an illustrative sentence elements of the server company is taking as its starting point the server behavior, the concept is expanded to an organization server based on a service strategy that creates server products, produced and delivered with the server processes, a culture of service, continually promoted by a servant leadership example as described in Table 3.

Servant behavior conceptualization	
Servant behavior	Definition
Responsibility	Serving means to act with responsibility, commitment, consistency, and required performance
Simplicity	Serving means to make things simple, but necessary, in value, without fear that this causes you any feeling of inferiority
Resignation	Serving means to resign, abandoning self wishes, space or valorization, in order to take care of another
Initiative	Serving means to take initiative and act proactively, performing activities with responsiveness
Willingness to help	Serving means to act with a sense of proximity, complicity and reciprocity in order to attend and help another
Welfare practices	Serving means a pleasure, tendency and disposal to do good to people and community
Usefulness	Serving means to give meaning to activities aiming do make useful actions, providing result, value and productivity

Table 2: Conceptualization of servant behavior (Nóbrega, 2009)

Servant organization elements					
Servant Individual	Servant Strategy	Servant Products	Servant Processes	Servant Culture	Servant Leadership
Responsibility	Internal marketing	Intrinsic quality	Systematized	Focus on results	Results and persuasion
Simplicity	Good relations	Facilitates use	Careful	Respect	Educated and patient
Resignation	Access	Informative	Responsive	Serving	Listening and stewardship
Initiative	Supplementary services	Intelligent	Agile	Responsiveness	Influent and awareness
Willingness to help	People development	Customer focused	Flexible	Committed to others	Empathy and committed to people growth
Welfare practices	Social responsibility	Environmental non affective	Customer focused	Common good	Common good, building community
Usefulness	Service focus	Supplementary attributes	Informative	Usefulness and efficiency	Educator

Table 3: Servant organization elements (Nóbrega, 2009)

Nóbrega, Ribeiro and Marques (2006) described the experience of a supermarket that adopted the sense, showing improvements on direct people's behavior, customer satisfaction and revenue growth, process improvements regarding adoption of an organizational culture with organizational climate guiding change in an individual growth. Such results were beyond expectations and the project showed that the sense of serving was able to contribute effectively to the competitive strategy of differentiation.

Based on these researches about market orientation with a focus on service Table 4 reports a comparison between the approaches of the principal authors of the management of services relating to the model of servant company, proposed by Nobrega (2009).

Author's main elements	Servant organization elements					
	Servant Behavior	Service Strategy	Servant Products	Servant Processes	Service Culture	Servant Leadership
- Internal marketing - Customer focus - Service focus- - People development - Value generation - Intrinsic quality	Responsibility	Internal marketing	Intrinsic quality	Systematized	Focus on results	Results and persuasion
	Simplicity	Good relations	Facilitates use	Careful	Respect	Educated and patient
	Resignation	Access	Informative	Responsive	Serving	Listening and stewardship
	Initiative	Supplementary services	Intelligent	Agile	Responsive-ness	Influent and awareness
	Willingness to help	People development	Customer focused	Flexible	Committed to others	Empathy and committed to people growth
	Welfare practices	Social responsibility	Environmental non affective	Customer focused	Common good	Common good, building community
	Usefulness	Service focus	Supplementary attributes	Informative	Usefulness and efficiency	Educator

Table 4: Comparative between service orientations x servant company elements. (Source: Research)

Table 4 shows the relationships between the studied authors of the qualitative study of services and components of a servant company, in which, through subjective analysis, it could theoretically be seen that the dimensions: servant behavior, service strategy and process servers showed a higher theoretical relationship, indicating a stronger affinity between their

attributes and the ideas of the authors regarding the adoption of competitive strategies in view of the service.

6. Conceptual framework for analysis

From servant organization elements, in Table 4, the elements service strategy, servant processes and servant behavior were chosen to support this research. The purpose was to address the concepts of strategies, processes and behaviors in organizations for services relating them to serving sense in a systematic way, evaluating the practical adoption of these dimensions through the analysis of their corresponding attributes. The conceptualization of the three dimensions and their corresponding elements are described ahead.

Service strategy refers to a broader concept of the actions taken by the organization, which refers to the needs and desires of customers, as customer-focused actions. To achieve success in service strategies, companies should base on the following attributes:

- Internal marketing: a widespread perception - a company with greater integration of employees in the organizational structure (service culture adopted) - facing employees;

- Good relations**:** actions relationship from the company with its customers, specially after sales**;**

- Service focus**:** value creation through a product broader concept;

- Supplementary services**:** services added to central solution;

- People development**:** continuous people development aiming adequacy of competences to organizational objectives;

- Access**:** proximity, easy access to company facilities, people and contact;

- Social responsibility**:** contribution to a more just society, through voluntary actions and ambient respect;

Servant processes defined as operations with systematic sequences, standardized, and customer focused. These processes should be based on the following attributes:

- Systematized: the act of developing the system, to operate, solving eventual problems, creating conditions do an automated operation;

- Careful: that comes with great care and attention to customer;

- Responsive: give response, to have responsive behavior, to solve, take responsibility for oneself, welcome questions and doubts in order to answer them;

- Agile: provision of services with speed and mobility;

- Flexible: act blandly, complacent, with flexible standards to satisfy customer needs;

- Customer focused: understanding and operating do fulfill customer needs;

- Informative: reports and gives information about the service or product to the customer;

Servant behavior defined as being responsible and simple, a person who has server behavior puts himself in the background, when necessary, and who takes the initiative to help by doing good to others. This dimension leads to the adoption of service as a competitive strategy and theoretically supports some attributes such as:

- Responsibility: act with responsibility, commitment, consistency, and required performance;

- Simplicity: make things simple, but necessary, in value, without fear that this causes you any feeling of inferiority;

- Resignation: resign, abandoning self wishes, space or valorization, in order to take care of another;

- Initiative: take initiative and act proactively, performing activities with responsiveness;

- Willingness to help: act with a sense of proximity, complicity and reciprocity in order to attend and help another;

- Welfare practices focused: act with pleasure, tendency and disposal to do good to people and community;

- <u>Usefulness</u>**:** to give meaning to activities aiming do make useful actions, providing result, value and productivity**;**

7. Methodology

7.1 The research

Starting with literature review it was possible to identify and describe servant organization elements, in accordance with restaurant context. With the identified elements, it was conducted a case study in one restaurant, with the objective of identifying the importance and performance of each element.

7.2 Sampling

The research scope included operational and administrative areas, as well as customers. The total of 109 employees were interviewed, as well as all the 16 leaders (managers and supervisors), while 200 customers answered the questionnaire for the research.

7.3 The questionnaire

Questionnaires were applied with questions for each of the attributes in each element (strategy, processes, and behavior). A Likert scale of 11 points was used, ranging from 0 (no importance/bad performance) to 10 (very important/excellent performance). Pre-tests were conducted, and a few adjustments were introduced aiming to make questions more clear and comprehensive. No question was abandoned.

For service strategy, an amount of 16 questions were used to identify both importance and performance. Similarly, 14 questions were used to study servant behavior, and 14 questions were selected to research servant processes.

7.4 Data collecting

Data were collected between May and June, 2011. University students were trained to act as interviewers. Employees were interviewed during work time. Customers were contacted at the restaurant entrance, between 11:00 to 15:00 and 18:00 to 21:00 on alternate days, thus aiming to bring a higher reliability of data.

7.4   Data analysis

Data were analyzed in order to identify possible flaws in the responses to invalidate the questionnaire, which resulted in 10 questionnaires discarded, leaving the total number of 325 valid questionnaires.

The research used descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Nonparametric tests were used due to of the number of subjects interviewed. Statistical tests used were Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis test for independent samples and Friedman and Wilcoxon tests for paired samples, both are used to test the hypothesis that there is significant difference between treatments (or groups). It is necessary that the variable being tested be measured in quantitative or ordinal scale (SANTOS, 2007).

8. Results

8.1   Managerial perceptions about service strategy

Results have highlighted that as perceived by the managers, the dimension service strategy showed a high degree of importance and performance, reaching averages around 9.4. No significant difference between the mean scores analyzed was found, with a confidence level of 95% ($p > 0.05$), i.e., managers perceived the same averages for both importance and performance of the restaurant service strategy.

According to managers, the company strongly encourages the adoption of service-oriented strategies to serve the customer, i.e., the same play strongly consider such strategies as values assigned to the performance (Table 5):

Table 5: Wilcoxon test for comparison of managers' perception about importance and performance of service strategy

Service Strategy	Average		p value
	Importance	Performance	
Service focus	9,38	9,69	0,102
Supplementary services	9,38	9,72	0,066
Access	9,38	9,47	0,439
Good Relations	9,19	9,31	0,330
People Development	9,44	9,53	0,785
Social Responsibility	9,00	9,38	0,182
Internal marketing	9,50	9,65	0,553

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011

8.2 Employees perceptions about servant processes

Results have highlighted that as perceived by the managers, the dimension service strategy showed a high degree of importance and performance, reaching averages around 9.4. No significant difference between the mean scores analyzed was found, with a confidence level of 95% ($p > 0.05$), i.e., managers perceived the same averages for both importance and performance of the restaurant service strategy.

For employees, both importance and performance criteria were assigned high scores, i.e., employees perceive a high importance and strongly agree that the restaurant presents a high performance in all process attributes analyzed.

It was also observed in Table 6, there is a significant difference ($p \leq 0.05$) of mean scores with regard to importance and performance of the following attributes: responsive, agile, flexible and customer focus. It was found that, for these attributes, employees consider their performance superior to importance.

Table 6: Wilcoxon test for comparison of employees' perception about importance and performance of servant processes

Servant processes	Average		p value
	Importance	Performance	
Responsive	**9,51**	**9,77**	**0,002**
Agile	**9,68**	**9,87**	**0,025**
Systematized	9,66	9,79	0,284
Careful	9,77	9,87	0,219
Flexible	**9,67**	**9,88**	**0,008**
Customer focus	**9,70**	**9,87**	**0,038**
Informative	9,78	9,89	0,146

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011

These results reinforce the idea that quality of service should be related to an assessment focused on customers' perceptions on the dimensions of specific services such as: reliability, responsiveness, safety, empathy and tangibles (Zeithaml, Bitner, 2003, Fitzsimmons; Fitzsimmons, 2005).
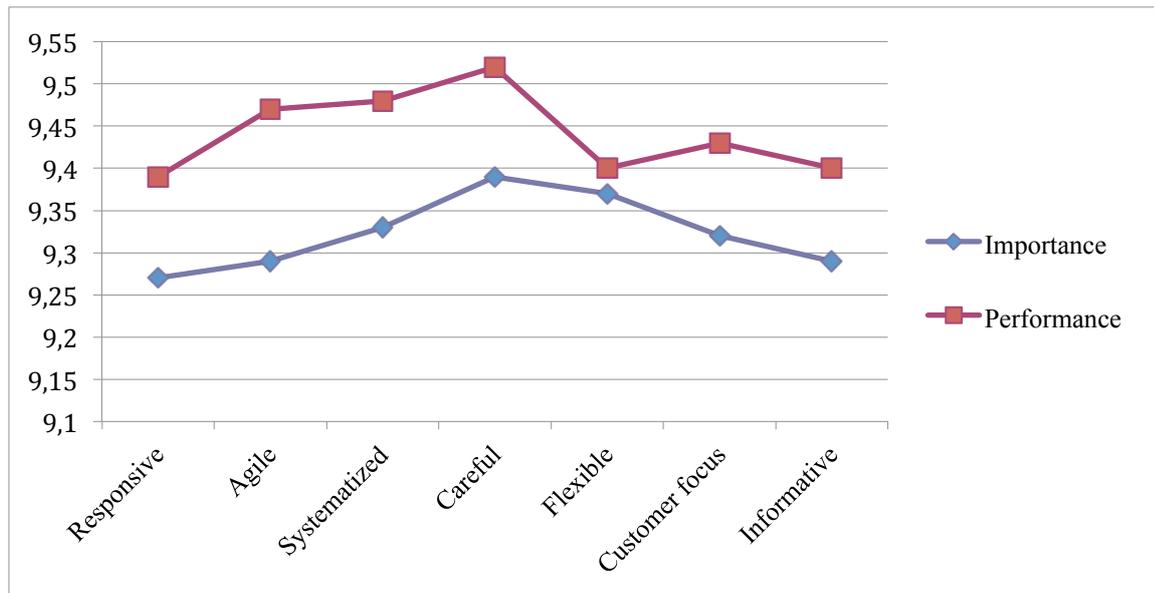
8.3   Customers' perceptions about servant processes

Results show that both importance and performance were assigned average grades, at 9.3 and 9.4 respectively, i.e., customers perceive a high importance and strongly agree that all attributes have high performance in the restaurant.

In Chart 1, according to Kruskal-Wallis test, significant differences were observed for the following criteria: agile, systematic, careful and customer focus (level of significance 5%, with p values $\leq 0, 05$).

These results are similar to employees' and managers' perceptions about servant processes, and analysis reveals that the restaurant has been able to identify and deliver customers' needs. Data obtained reinforces Teboul (2008) argument, that organizations should take into account the processes and people and the importance of relations with customers, company and employee, thus considering an integrated function, emphasizing that the process and people are essential elements of service delivery.

Chart 1: Wilcoxon's test about customer's perception on importance and performance of servant processes

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

8.4   Integrated analysis of customers', employees' and managerial perceptions about servant processes importance

By comparison of mean scores of clients and managers, it is found that all respondents consider important server processes with averages above 9.0. It was noticed that customers average, for most results, are lower than managers' averages. There is significant difference between the importance attached by customers and managers on the following attributes: responsive, systematic and careful, all being significantly different at 5%, $p \leq 0.05$, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison of managers' and customers' perceptions about servant processes importance

Servant Processes	Average		P value
	Customers	Managers	
Responsive	**9,27**	**9,63**	**0,017**
Agile	9,29	9,47	0,140
Systematized	**9,33**	**9,67**	**0,020**
Careful	**9,39**	**9,73**	**0,004**
Flexible	9,37	9,53	0,135
Customer focus	9,32	9,60	0,115
Informative	9,29	9,27	0,242

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

It can be seen that the attribute was careful was best assessed in its degree of perceived importance for both customers and managers with averages of 9.39 and 9.73 respectively. According to Martins (2008), problems caused by lack of service may be related to several factors inherent to concurrent service (services operated in the presence of customer), including the lack of concern of the employee to serve the client with care, promptness and attention on them frustrated their expectations. Thus, it is apparent that the studied restaurant is highly evaluated for both managers and customers, reaffirming its server feature.

When evaluating the perception of employees and managers about the server processes can be seen that all the attributes received grade point averages above 9.0 (table 8). Employees and managers attribute high importance to adoption of servant processes in a company. It was also found that the average grade of the employees for the assessment criteria for attributes responsive and systematized were lower than the average grade for managers.

Table 8 shows that there is only significant difference between the importance attributed by employees and managers regarding attribute informative (confidence level 5%). This result could be explained due to the perception of the operating staff at the expense of strategic awareness of managers, working with planning and ordering of processes, while employees have a practical experience of operating the process already systematized. It is

suggested therefore that this is the reason for the discrepancy, even short, between the two groups.

Table 8: Comparison between employees and managers perceptions about servant processes importance

Servant Processes	Average		P value
	Employees	Managers	
Responsive	9,51	9,63	0,586
Agile	9,68	9,47	0,193
Systematized	9,66	9,67	0,996
Careful	9,77	9,73	0,601
Flexible	9,67	9,53	0,546
Customer focus	9,70	9,60	0,508
Informative	**9,78**	**9,27**	**0,058**

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

Relatively to the attribute informative, it was verified that employees consider this attribute of high importance, with average (9.78), higher than that of managers (9.27). Oliveira (2002), in her research on service recovery during the service in a restaurant, Oliveira (2001), showed failure of communication between the front office and back office sectors, suggesting that this failure is apparent to customers, since they identify the relationship between service failure to bring the food and service. Efficiency in determining and implementing processes are significant for the performance of a company, especially regarding information. It is based on information that a company can prevent or block failure.

8.5 Integrated analysis of customers', employees' and managerial perceptions about servant processes performance

By analyzing the combined perception about performance, one can observe that managers, employees and customers strongly agree of a high lever of performance, with averages above 9.4. This allows do affirm that the restaurant adopts all the attributes related to servant processes, reinforcing the practice of serving sense. Despite the high scores in some

attributes, such as customer focus and informative, some employees attributed note 7.0. Although this fact, its frequency was not significant to impact on the average found (Table 9).

Chart 2 shows, through statistical test of Kruskal-Wallis test, that there is significant difference, on servant processes dimension, among customers, employees and managers perceptions.

Chart 2: Comparison between employees and managers perceptions about servant processes performance
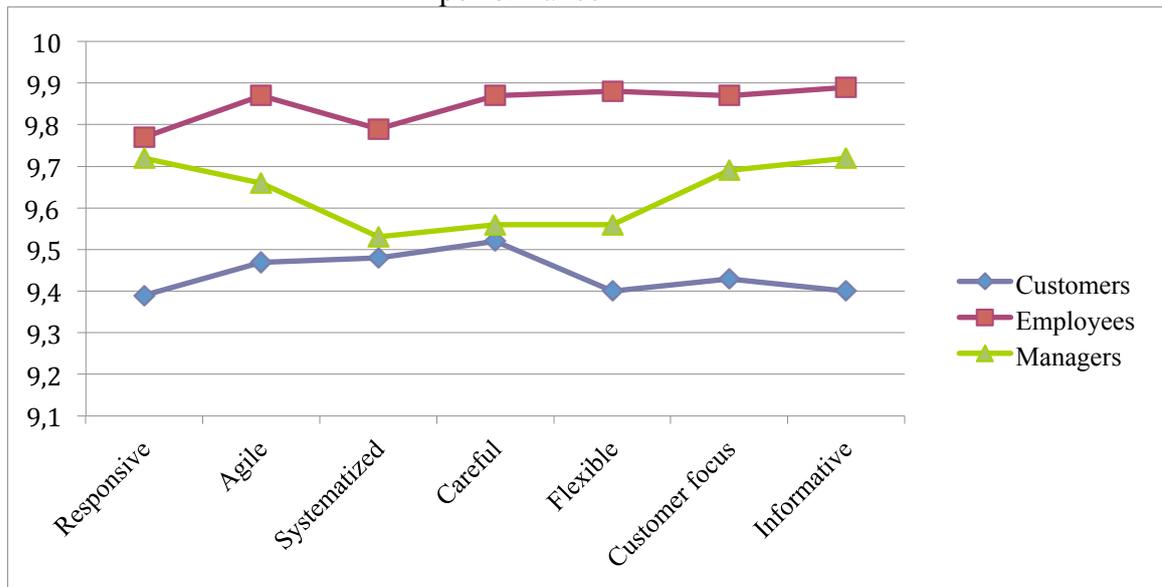
Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

Table 9 shows the comparison of customers and managers perceptions, with higher averages above 9.0. Customers and managers interviewed believe that the restaurant has a good performance in servant process, averaging 9.3. It was noticed that average grade was different between the group of clients and managers, only for attribute flexible ($p < 0.05$).

This result shows that customers and managers perceive the development of a series of activities aimed at the restaurant to serve with responsiveness and agility, always searching for systematization, flexibility and fulfilling customer needs. For Nobrega, Oliveira and Souza (2007), researching on the management of performance based on the sense of service, it was observed that the application of a system for performance evaluation with emphasis on the sense of serving was helpful for improving outcomes in the center, especially in some processes such as the reduction of service time, waiting time, satisfaction of customers and

reducing non-compliance procedures by employees. These results show that the adoption of a management-sense serve, with the adoption of server processes can contribute to customer satisfaction.

Table 9: Comparison between customers and managers perceptions about servant processes performance

Servant Processes	Average		p value
	Customers	Managers	
Responsive	9,39	9,72	0,093
Agile	9,47	9,66	0,282
Systematized	9,48	9,53	0,685
Careful	9,52	9,56	0,969
Flexible	**9,40**	**9,75**	**0,042**
Customer focus	9,43	9,69	0,406
Informative	9,40	9,72	0,094

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

Table 10 shows the perception of joint average grade of the employees compared with those of managers, in which both groups perceive an effective use of all the attributes evaluated, with averages above 9.0. However, employees averages grade for attributes systematic and careful are superior to managers evaluation.

Table 10: Comparison between employees and managers perceptions about servant processes performance

Servant Processes	Average		p value
	Employees	Managers	
Responsive	9,77	9,72	0,689
Agile	9,87	9,66	0,112
Systematized	**9,79**	**9,53**	**0,008**
Careful	**9,87**	**9,56**	**0,003**
Flexible	9,88	9,75	0,342
Customer focus	9,87	9,69	0,068
Informative	9,89	9,72	0,133

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

As shown in Tables 9 and 10, it was observed that the marks awarded by employees on the evaluation of performance are superior to the scores given by clients in all variables

analyzed. However, when compared to management, employees had the same degree of perception of performance for most of attributes, except for the systematic and careful. According to Lovelock and Wright (2001), and Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2005), servant processes can be understood as fulfilling services, or processes designed to have elements of service operations.

8.6   Integrated analysis of customers', employees' and managerial perceptions about servant behavior importance

A joint analysis about servant behavior importance shows highly grades above 9.0. According to Table 11 it was observed that there are significant differences (p <0.05) as assigned by customers and managers, in five of the servant behaviors attributes: responsibility, initiative, willingness to help, good and useful practices. Only in simplicity and renunciation attributes, no differences were identified.

Table 11: Comparison between customers and managers perceptions about servant behavior importance

| Servant behavior	Average		P value
	Customers	Managers	
Responsibility	**9,32**	**9,88**	**0,005**
Simplicity	9,30	9,69	0,098
Resignation	9,17	9,38	0,220
Initiative	**9,30**	**9,84**	**0,017**
Willingness to help	**9,32**	**9,81**	**0,023**
Welfare practices	**9,27**	**9,83**	**0,010**
Usefulness	**9,32**	**9,93**	**0,001**

Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

In all attributes, managers showed higher averages than customers, while among employees and managers, there were no significant differences in any of the items in the servant behavior.

8.7   Integrated analysis of customers', employees' and managerial perceptions about servant behavior performance

According do Graphic 3, the three groups strongly agree that the average restaurant server behavior practices. It is interesting to observe that for employees the evaluation showed the highest average (9.7) in all attributes. Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant difference between customers, employees and managers about servant behavior performance of the restaurant, for all attributes (p-value <5%), as evidenced in chart 3.

Chart 3: Mann-Whitney test for ccomparison between customers, employees and customers perceptions about servant behavior performance
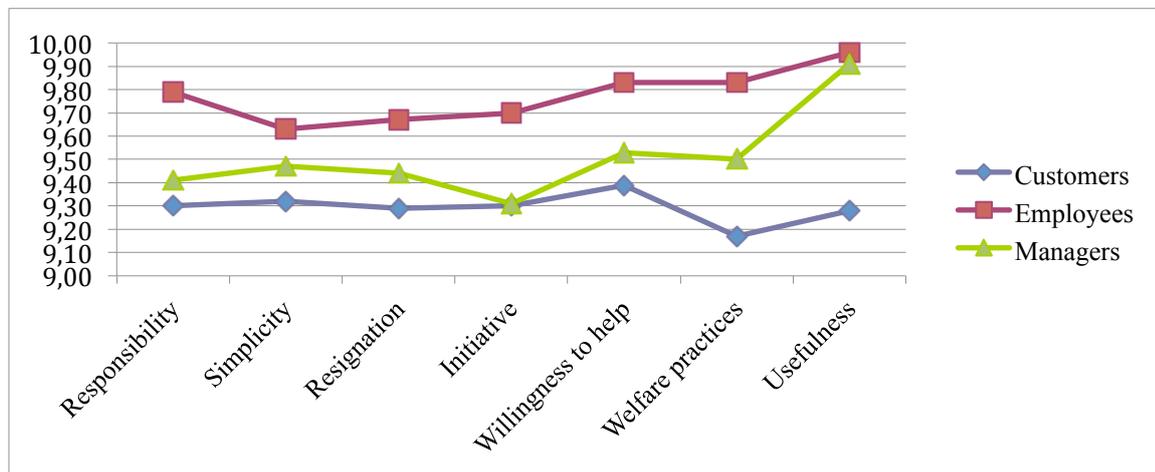
Source: Research primary data (May / June – 2011)

These results corroborate the idea that the studied restaurant, according to customers, managers and employees presents elements of a servant company.

9. Conclusions

This article addressed the issue of serving sense from the identification of elements of a servant company, based on a conceptual framework for analysis in three dimensions: strategy, processes and behavior in a restaurant.

The research revealed that the methodology adopted by the organization produces satisfactory results, especially by the following considerations:

- Customers perceive the restaurant as highly servant, in all the studied dimensions (strategy, processes and behavior), with great emphasis on the sense of serving, developing practical elements of a servant company;

- Customers have the same perception of managers and employees about the servant processes, which indicates that the restaurant serves assessed respondents' expectations for flexibility, organization and care of the customer;

- Servant behavior is perceived similarly in their degree of importance by managers, employees and customers, with great emphasis on responsibility, desire to help and useful;

- Customers perceive a better performance in the restaurant's desire to help, while managers refer to perform better in the utility, and the staff assigned a higher performance for initiative;

- Servant processes and servant behavior were perceived by managers, employees and customers, as of high importance and performance. The most valued attributes and perceived as practiced were: flexibility, organization, care of clients, responsibility, desire to help and usefulness.

- It is, then, concluded that the restaurant can be considered highly server, the dimensions investigated in the study

10. Limitations and future research

This study is on of the first practical contributions for development of the concept and practical approach of servant company, requiring, so, more deepen research, in order to consolidate the theoretical approach. A comparative study, in another similar restaurant, or a group of restaurants, will allow more comparison, what will provide more practical insights. Some analysis can be made, aiming to identify possible correlations among the attributes of each dimension.

11. Managerial implications

This study is on of the first practical contributions for development of the concept and practical approach of servant company, requiring, so, more deepen research, in order to consolidate the theoretical approach. A comparative study, in another similar restaurant, or a greater number of restaurants may be useful.

As showed in results, the researched restaurant seems to have a good management, and can be used as a benchmark.

12. Limitations and future research

- Once this was a theoretical study, it assumes that the analysis were result from the researchers point of view based on the accessed authors. This carries a certain amount of subjectivity, that can be deepened with a selection of more references from the chosen authors;

- The selection of a sample of authors, constitutes another limitation, not allowing generalization about service orientation versus marketing orientations. Future research can include more authors on service strategy, as well as marketing service;

- There was a focus, in this research, to explore three elements from the servant company, which were: servant behavior, servant processes and service strategy. This can be deepened if research is conducted with all the elements on servant company.

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