



SEMINÁRIO
ENOTURISMO
DA INVESTIGAÇÃO À REALIDADE EMPRESARIAL

CERTIFICADO

Certifica-se que **Helena Portugal** participou no Seminário “Enoturismo: Da investigação à realidade Empresarial”, que decorreu no dia 11 de novembro de 2015, no Instituto Politécnico de Tomar.

Tomar, 11 de novembro de 2015

Diretor da Escola Superior
de Gestão de Tomar

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francisco Carvalho', written in a cursive style.

(Prof. Doutor Francisco Carvalho)

Perceptions of the performance of the restaurant service and the valorisation of the traditional gastronomy of a group of hotels in the Alto Douro region: a comparative analysis



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Introduction

In the Alto Douro region, traditional gastronomy is especially important to cultural tourism, an asset in the low season and one of the main motivations. The National Strategic Plan for Tourism itself (PENT 2006-2015) states that fact, considering "Gastronomy and Wine" a strategic tourism product. It is therefore of paramount importance to identify and measure the perceived performance and satisfaction in hotel restaurants.

Objectives

In the first part of this study the perceived performance of the hotel restaurants was compared. Secondly, the key attributes that determine satisfaction were identified examining the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Thirdly, the focus was on the potential and constraints faced by the hotel restaurants in this region in relation to the traditional gastronomy which is an intangible heritage with tourism value

Methodology

Excluded the so-called budget hotels, were identified 5 Hotels of the Alto Douro, of which 4 were selected. The data used in this research were obtained from a survey given to frequent customers of four important hotels in the Alto Douro. Was elaborated a questionnaire divided into 3 parts:

Part I consisted of personal questions, aimed at categorising the customers and the motivation for their visit;

Part II questions to appraise the performance of the different products and services supplied by the hotel; question on the overall satisfaction of the customers and their possible loyalty.

Part III analyses the importance the offer of tradicional/ regional gastronomy in a place like Douro, considered a developing destination region.

Results and Discussion

Profile of regular guests - regular guests are:

Gender: Male (68%)

Age: relatively young (about 50% has less than 45 years);

Origin: originate mainly from the districts of Porto (32%) and Lisbon (18%); While foreigners (29%) are in great majority British;

Travelling accompanied (70%);

Motivations: rest and leisure (49%) or business or work (44%);

Frequent guests: more than half of the guests visited the respective hotel 4 or more times in the last 3 years (54%);

Came through direct recommendation (47%), a result which reinforces the idea that communication mouth-to-mouth is effective in case of the hospitality industry.

Meals taken in hotel restaurants: breakfast (45%) and dinner (41%) are the meals that most respondents take at the hotel. Few guests lunch (10%).

Characterization of restaurants - Determine the receptiveness of restaurants to provide traditional cuisine:

All hotel restaurants have traditional dishes:

meat dishes (65%); Appetizers (62%);

Less offer off Desserts (33%).

Hotel C has a more balanced supply regarding traditional dishes /international

The traditional dish or product that most tourists seem to associate to Portuguese gastronomy are:

To portuguese guests – codfish, traditional sausages; roast Kid;

To foreign guests – codfish

Which constraints are there regarding the demand of these traditional Portuguese dishes?

Too long confection time?

Higher price

Unacquaintance about the confection method

Unrepresentative traditional restaurant

Others

Connected as high caloric dishes?

Pleased with fast food taste

Disinterest on tasting

Distrust of the proposals

The most marked item in every hotel restaurant was "Connected as high caloric dishes". Secondly appears the item "unacquaintance about the confection method". "Disinterest on tasting" was 3rd item more marked.

Sensitivity and appreciation conferred on the traditional gastronomy and dynamic of Hotels- With regard to the questions about potential and restrains faced by the hotel restaurants in this region in relation to the traditional gastronomy a 7-point Likert scale was used (symmetrical scale from 1= "Completely disagree" to 7 = "Completely agree":

Please choose the most appropriate option.
(tick the box below)

	Strongly disagree							Strongly agree	AVG
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Do you consider that the number of dishes which you offer is suitable to the culinary heritage of the region?									5,75
Do tourists show great interest in traditional gastronomy?									6,75
Do you consider important the offer of tradicional/ regional gastronomy in a place like Douro, considered a developing destination region?									6,25
Do you believe that the increasing role of wine shops and small food producers promotes the development of food tourism in the Douro Region?									7,00

Table 1 – Sensitivity and appreciation conferred on the traditional gastronomy and dynamic of Hotels

The highest value found was: Do you believe that the increasing role of wine shops and small food producers promotes the development of food tourism in the Douro Region? 7 in 7 = "Completely agree"

The second most valued aspect was "Do tourists show great interest in traditional gastronomy?" 6,75 in 7

The least valued was " Do you consider that the number of dishes which you offer is suitable to the culinary heritage of the region? Showing that hotels consider that there is plenty to do: 5,75 in 7.

hotel C innovates by creating "closer" relationships with their suppliers and guests. Monthly they invite local farmers/producers to be responsible for one of the menus which are divided into sections / Specialties, showing examples of strong association between brand food products and tourism.

hotels use local products and some participate at Food Festivals, events and exhibitions held.

Restaurant	A B C D				External Benchmark Rest A	External Benchmark Rest B	External Benchmark Rest C	External Benchmark Rest D
	avg 1 to 7	avg 1 to 7	avg 1 to 7	avg 1 to 7				
The food was properly presented	6,29	6,13	6,80	6,35	0,51	0,67	0,00	0,45
Food was tasteful	6,46	6,07	6,47	6,39	0,01	0,40	0,00	0,08
Food temperature was good	6,54	6,13	6,40	5,92	0,00	0,41	0,14	0,62
Food and beverage personnel provided prompt and quick services	6,62	6,21	6,33	6,21	0,00	0,40	0,28	0,41
Food was served exactly as I ordered it	6,62	6,27	6,80	6,27	0,18	0,53	0,00	0,53
Food and beverage personnel were always willing to help	6,79	6,44	6,67	6,42	0,00	0,35	0,12	0,37
Food and beverage personnel provided courteous services	6,86	6,47	6,87	6,58	0,01	0,40	0,00	0,28
The restaurant was visually appealing	6,85	6,59	6,60	6,65	0,00	0,26	0,25	0,19

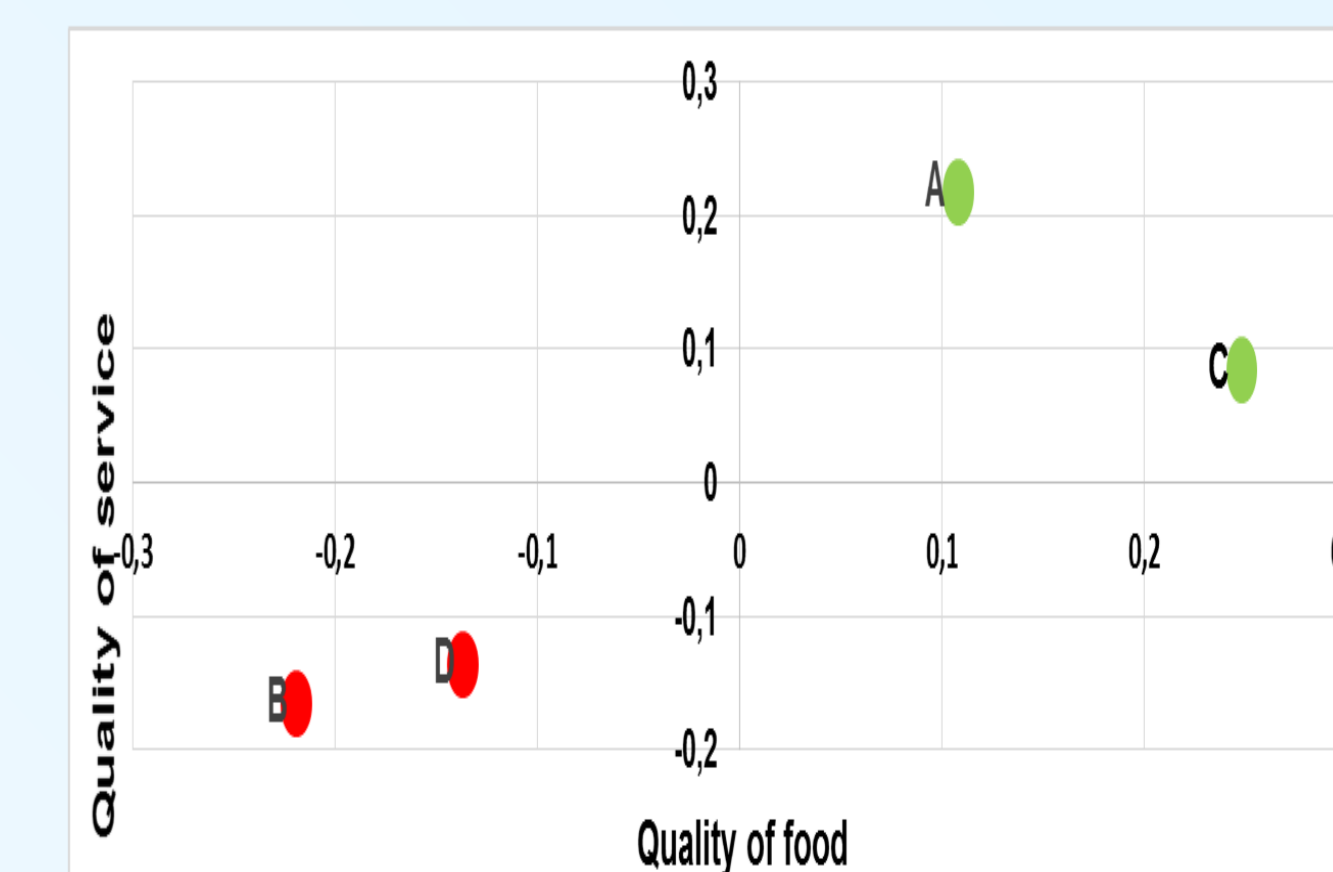


Table 2 - Perceptual map with the competitive positions of restaurants

From the analysis of the previous map, the restaurants of hotels A and C, are those that have a clear competitive advantage. Restaurant A provides best quality of service, while restaurant C offers better quality of food. These results reinforce the values established at the level of satisfaction of these restaurants, and are in accordance with the benchmarking study.

Conclusions

The use of factor analysis made it possible to determine that the main perceptual dimensions that frequent guests use in evaluating the performance of restaurants are the quality of the food and quality of service. The multiple regression analysis has identified these dimensions as the determinant for frequent guests' satisfaction.

The map drawn on the basis of the two dimensions that determine the satisfaction, allowed to show the competitive positions of the 4 hotels (SWs and gaps).

Finally, this study confirms the strong association between satisfaction and loyalty. The analysis of data reveals that the cuisine is recognized as contributing to value the heritage of the destination identity and tourism experience.

However, the fact that foreign tourists come formatted to consume cod, this may eventually result in some inefficiency in the role of promotion. We recommend attention to the performance of the variables that are more correlated with satisfaction and that more influence.

It is recommended the implementation of benchmarking to assess practices and identify the best management practices in major areas of competition, in order to help each hotel improve its performance. It is recommended promotion of Portuguese regional cuisine, giving emphasis to local products

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