Full Length Research Paper

Investigating gender's impact on the relationship between generation Y consumer cultural values and service quality expectations

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The main purpose of this paper is to examine gender's influence on the relationship between Generation Y consumers' individual levels of cultural values and service quality expectations. Cultural values were measured regarding variables of power distance, collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. Service quality was measured from SERVQUAL scale. This paper is descriptive in nature and data have been collected using questionnaire and an empirical method. Sampling was conducted among Generation Y of Islamic Azad University, Tehran Science and Research Branch. Exploiting stratified random sampling proportional to size method, 412 acceptable samples were collected. Data were analyzed using covariance matrix and multiple regressions. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to verify the factor structures of both constructs while structural equation modeling was employed to examine the measures for cultural values and service quality dimensions. Based on results, service quality expectations have a significant direct relationship with uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation but not with masculinity. Collectivism is directly related to responsiveness, reliability, and empathy; power distance is directly related to responsiveness; and conversely related to reliability and empathy. In addition, gender's impact was not found to be significant on the relationship between individual-level cultural values and service quality dimensions.

Key words: Power distance, collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, gender, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, tangibles.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the service sector in the global economy is increasing. Countries which have achieved industrial development and have surpassed an income threshold emphasize on shifting economic activities from agriculture and production to the service sector. This shift to service in economic activities has been evident since 1970. Various strategies and concepts have been

developed to measure and foster this economic shift. One of which, the most. Pre- dominant area of focus, has been service quality Service quality is considered a global trade with global business value and 20% of dedicated business trade to itself (Loges and Fernandes, 2005). The role of service quality as key component in global economic development is completely conceivable. This issue and its influence in competitive market and effectiveness of services have been extensively considered by researchers (Behara and Gundersen, 2001). Considering the high growth of service sector in Asian countries and its influence on their economy during the

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past decade, investigations in this context have become more valuable. Scholars have suggested that service quality plays a crucial role in conceiving customers' satis-faction (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Increasing market competition has made it more important to provide better customer service; and organizations, via heavy invest-ments in the tangibles section, have aimed to amplify the services they provide for their customers compared to competitive organizations (Akan, 1995). Due to the increasing importance of international trading, intercultural investigations are getting more and more important for scholars and marketers (Dash et al., 2009).

This research focused on the youth segment because they represent an important market in Asia. The number of young people in Asia has increased during the past decade. Also, Generation Y has considerable financial power and considerable influence on family purchase decisions. This group is an appropriate target for investigations in service-based marketing. As existing marketing literature shows, Generation Y is a key segment for food services, not just for the quantity of consumption, but also because of their life style and consumption habits. Generation Y eats out frequently and demonstrate a more adventurous spirit than older generations. They are more likely to try new restaurants and different atmospheres and they are more apt to select restaurants that cater to their specific needs. Despite this, there are few empirical studies on the service expectations of Generation Y within the food industry. Likewise, there are few studies on the role of consumers' cultural-individual values (Kueh and Voon, 2007) or on impact of consumer gender. Previous studies suggest that culture influences consumers' expectations when they encounter a customer service situation; however, there is a dire need for further investigation.

Some researchers suggest culture, specifically national culture is relevant to service quality, while others believe that culture influences consumers' expectations in a ser-vice encounter. Regardless, consumers' cultural values and their expectations and perceptions of products or services are hugely important in consumer purchase behavior and, therefore, marketing Consequently, companies need to take into account the effect of culture on the way they produce and distribute products, and the way they service their customers. This research proves the importance of measuring individual levels of cultural values as a variable in market segmentation in order to help to service-providing strategies. Additionally, this research will introduce an appropriate strategy to help restaurants improve their service quality (Dash et al., 2009). For this purpose, this research investigates the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality expectations among Generation Y in the food industry and service considering the role of gender and in the atmosphere of a new culture and country, Iran, as well as helping the scattered literature of

service marketing in developing countries. The first aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality expectations among young Iranian. The second aim of this study is to investigate the effect of gender in the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality expectations among generation Y consumers. Gender, as a mediator variable can be modifying the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality expectations from service quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality

Service quality is a major issue in service marketing; and has been discussed thoroughly. The idea that assessing quality of service is harder than assessing tangible pro-ducts has been accepted. Therefore, it is not surprising that service researchers have listed various determinants in the quality of service (Kueh and Voon, 2007). Despite existing different definitions, the Servqual model (Parasuraman et al., 1985) that has been adapted and tested extensively is still viable. The Servqual model identified five dimensions, namely: Reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy.

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Tangibles are the appearance of facilities, Instruments, staff and communication tools. Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of personnel and their ability to make people feel confident. Empathy is the caring and individualized attention provided to customers by the service providers. Based on this model, service quality can be measured through comparing customers' expec-tations from service along with their perceptions of the actual performance of service. The Servqual tool exploits 22 questions to measure expectations and perceptions in order to cover five dimensions of service. Servequal is used extensively in various kinds of service research in-cluding health facilities, public service, higher education, telemarketing, and banking (Ueltschy et al., 2007).

In addition, many studies have investigated service quality using the Analytical Gap Model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) or an amended version of it. In the specific field of hospitality and restaurant services, Servequal enhancement is observable. These studies show that the dimensions of Servequal are appropriate and relevant to the study of service quality in the restaurant industry. Nonetheless, these studies focus on measuring service quality in order to improve service.

Cultural orientations of consumers influence their assessment of the service quality remains largely

unstudied.

Culture and its relationship with service evaluations

In marketing, consumers' cultural values influence their expectations and perceptions from products or services; and affect their purchase behaviors and selections. Therefore, firms need to consider the effect of culture on the way they serve their customers and markets. Attaining and describing systematic differences among cultures of various societies, cultural frameworks, and cultural levels is necessary in making a rigorous basis for research (Kueh and Voon, 2007). Hofstede culture typology is one the most influential and well-known theories of culture (Dash et al., 2009); and has been used extensively in practice. The fact that Hofstede first studied working values of IBM employees has proven the popularity of his study among international marketers (Tsoukatos and Rand, 2007). Hofstede defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). From 1967 until 1973, he collected more than 116,000 questionnaires, which had been distributed among IBM personnel in 72 countries and had been translated to twenty languages. From this survey, cultural dimensions of power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity turned out. In 1980s, the fifth dimension, long-term orientation was added based on BOND Chinese values (Hofstede, 2001).

Research background

Few studies have clearly used Hofstede's cultural dimension framework. Kanousi (2005) inquired the influence of Hofstede's dimensions on service recovery expectation and found out that individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation influence the main aspects of service recovery expectations.

Malhotra et al. (1994) stated that the differences existing in the perception of service quality between developed and developing countries are due to the differences that exist in the economic and socio-cultural environment. Malhotra et al. (1994) also hypothesized that power distance and collectivism are related to the dimensions of service quality, competence, courtesy, communication, and credibility. The next study of Malhorta et al. (2005) gained empirical support for several of these hypotheses.

In a study by Dash et al. (2009), the relationship between Canadian and Indian consumers' national cultural orientations (power distance and individualism) and service quality expectations from banking were

examined. Their findings revealed that power distance and individualism were related to service quality expectations at the individual and national levels. Consumers with lower power distance expected high responsive and reliable service. In contrary, consumers with higher power distance tended to enhance tangible attributes of services. Consumers who had higher individualism expected lower empathy and assurance from service providers. In addition, tangible attributes were more important for Indian consumers, whereas Canadian consumers found service reliability more important. However, differences in overall service quality expectations were not significantly different across two countries.

Donthu and Yoo (1998) examined the effect of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and long-term orientation on the expectations of bank customers from quality service. Masculinity was not examined because, in authors' opinion, it had no strong relation to expectations from services. They found out that customers with high expectations are the ones with long-term orientations, individualists, low on power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. Also, low power distance consumers have higher expectations for reliability and responsiveness; whereas individualist customers have higher expectations for empathy and reliability.

Furrer et al. (2000) extended the study of Donthu and Yoo (1998) in order to inquire the correlation between the five cultural dimensions of Hofstede and the five dimensions of Servqual within the banking industry. The study was used to identify five different types of customers based on quality service expectations.

Their study focused on weak customers who frequently used the services and were served mostly with female personnel. Results showed that weak customers with high power distance cared less for reliability, responsiveness and tangibles and needed less assurance or empathy. There is little evidence that shows masculinity significantly influencing service dimensions for those customers with weak connection that have a positive relationship with tangibles and negative relationship with responsiveness. For customers with high uncertainty avoidance and frequent service condition, all the service quality dimensions except tangibles are important to reduce uncertainty avoidance. It has been found that for custo-mers with high long-term orientation, responsiveness and reliability are the most important, whereas assurance and tangibles are less important.

Tsoukatos and Rand (2007) conducted a research similar to Furrer et al. (2000) about a Greek retail insu-rance company. They described the insurance industry as an infrequent involving service situation along with weak customers that were basically served by women. Tangibles were removed from this research because it was not deemed an important dimension in the Greek

insurance industry. They found that power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance are conversely related to reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. Long-term orientation is only significantly related to reliability while individuality is not related to any dimension of service quality significantly. They also found out from the results of their investigations that the importance of the dimensions of service quality is influenced by cultural characteristics of customers.

Kueh and Voon (2007) examined the influence of individual level of cultural dimensions on Generation Y consumers' expectations from service quality. Findings affirmed that culture does influences evaluations of service quality. Service quality expectations are directly related to uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation but conversely related to power distance. Masculinity and collectivism did not have significant relevance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In Iran, food service includes restaurants, traditional eating places and cafes. Restaurants may have complete or limited service facilities. A limited-service restaurant is determined by the customer ordering behind the counter and paying for it immediately. In Iran, these restaurants include fast food chain restaurants such as Boof, Super Star, Avachee and Haida.

Power distance and service quality

Power distance is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). In societies with high power distance, inequality and hierarchical order between people are expected and desirable. Based on Donthu and Yoo's study (1998), generally, service providers have a degree of power compared to customers.

In fact, Generation Y customers are dependent on restaurants as an option from which to get their food. Customers with higher power distance tend more to accept dependence to the service providers.

Therefore, they respect restaurant staff more and demonstrate more tolerance against flaws; ultimately, they have lower service quality expectations compared to the customers with low power distance (Kueh and Voon, 2007).

H_1: There is a converse relationship between power distance and all the dimensions of service quality.

Collectivism and service quality

Collectivist societies emphasize dependence within groups because every person is expected to remain loyal to the group. This issue is for keeping and maintaining social harmony and avoiding direct confrontation. Collectivist customers tend to be in harmony with service providers and interdependent in social relationships (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). They are more tolerant of mistakes and have less reliability expectations from delivered services. Instead, they need a service provider who demonstrates more empathy, assurance, and responsiveness. They also have a higher need for service quality to be assured by tangibles as surrogate evidence (Dash et al., 2009).

H_2: There is a converse relationship between collectivism and reliability.
H_3: There is a direct relationship between collectivism and tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Masculinity and service quality

Masculinity and femininity have been defined as "the dominant gender role patterns" society (Hofsede and Hofstede, 2005). Masculine societies emphasize assertiveness and financial success in men. Masculine cultures stress ambition, results, and rewards based on performance. Kueh and Voon (2007) believe that the gender of service provider is of less importance compared to the values required by the job itself (Kueh and Voon, 2007). According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), there are jobs relating to human beings that, in their very nature, need feminine values; regardless of the gender of the job holder. In restaurants, feminine values such as friendliness, caring and helpfulness are required from the service provider; and just because the service provider is a man, customers may not expect a weaker service.

H_4: There is no significant relationship between masculinity and any of the dimensions of service quality.

Uncertainty avoidance and service quality

Uncertainty avoidance mentions to "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Societies with high uncertainty avoidance need rules and regulations in order to decrease uncertainty, give preference to structures in organizations and communica-tions, have low tolerance for the behaviors and ideas that are different, and resist changes. Kueh and Voon (2007)

argued that even in frequent service situations, there is still an uncertainty that future service, comparatively, would not have the same quality with what the customer used to receive. In this case, it would be difficult for restaurants that employ a medium to high level of human contact to maintain consistent service quality levels. Tangibles play a role in assuring customers that the service quality will be preserved. If the presence of facilities and staff make the situation worse, this can make customers doubtful to the service quality. For restaurants, physical environment is a key element in experiencing service. Therefore, it is probable that customers use tangibles, along with other dimensions of service quality, as a means to decrease uncertainty concerning service quality and regardless of the frequency of the situation of service. It is expected that customers with high uncertainty avoidance have more expectations in all dimensions of service quality, for they are more alerted and do not like unpleasant surprise.

H_5: There is a direct relationship between uncertainty avoidance and all the dimensions of service quality.

Long-term orientation and service quality

The fifth dimension is long-term orientation, which has been oriented from Chinese values in research that has been conducted on university students in 22 countries. Long-term oriented societies think about future and value perseverance, thrift, adaptability, self-discipline, virtue and having a sense of shame. Long-term oriented con-sumers emphasize perseverance and sustained efforts (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). These consumers look for invaluable evidence to come back to the same service provider. Therefore, they have higher expectations from all of the dimensions of service quality (Kueh and Voon, 2007).

H_6: There is a direct relationship between long-term orientation and all the dimensions of service quality.

The dimensions of culture, service quality and gender

Kueh and Voon (2007) did not investigate mediator variables such as gender in the relation between cultural values and service quality expectations. They suggested that the effect of gender variable should be investigated in further enquires on the relationship between cultural values and service quality expectations.

H_7: Gender influences the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality dimensions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research examines the influence of individual-level cultural dimensions on consumers' expectations of Generation Y from service quality with emphasis on gender in the food industry in Iran. Therefore, individual-level of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Servqual model are used to analyze cultural values and consumers' expectation from service quality, respectively. Gender is also considered as a nominal variable which may mediate this relation-ship. Thus, power distance, collectivism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation as independent variables and tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy as dependent variables are considered in this study. A structured questionnaire survey method is also applied in order to collect the data on self-evaluated cultural values and service quality expec-tations. The data is collected using twenty-three (23) items related to cultural values and seventeen (17) items related to service quality expectations, which were adapted for the food industry by exploratory factor analysis. Consumers were asked to respond to a total of forty (40) questions. Consumers were also asked to complete the questionnaire using a five point Likert scale (that is, 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree,) as shown in Table 1, the cultural values questionnaire includes four (4) questions related to collectivism, five (5) questions related to uncertainty avoidance, four (4) related to masculinity, five (5) related to power distance, and five (5) related to long-term orientation. The service quality questionnaire also includes four (4) questions related to tangibles, four (4) questions related to reliability, three (3) questions related to responsiveness, two (2) questions related to assurance, and four (4) questions related to empathy.

Sample selection and data collection

Sampling method of this research is stratified random sampling proportional to size of sample. Sample size is determined based on the Krejce and Morgan Table, which is equal to 379. Tehran Science and Research Branch of Islamic Azad University are selected for the survey. This university is located in the northwest of Tehran. There are 24,174 students in this university, in seventeen different departments. The sample of the survey includes 412 students of the university. Table 2 addresses the demographic characteristics of the sample of students. As it is clear, the majority of the respondents are men (53.6%) and 84% of respondents are single. Most of the respondents also contain very young students who are less than 24 years old. In this category, 30.8% of students are between 19 and-21 years old and 24.8% are between 22 and-24 years old. 49.8 and 45.1% of the respondents are Bachelor and Master students, respectively.

Internal consistency method has been exploited in order to assess the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to find out its internal consistency. A pre-test has also been used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. In pre-test, 61 questionnaires were distributed among the samples and 53 acceptable questionnaires were attained. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.84, which was more than 0.70, which is acceptable. After reliability approval of the questionnaire, 500 of them were distributed and 412 acceptable ones were acquired.

Data analysis

In order to analyze the data, analytical descriptive statistics such as frequency and frequency percentage, and inferential statistics such as correlation test (covariance matrix) were used to investigate the

Table 1. Standardized factor loadings for cultural values and service quality expectations.

Scale items	Cronbach's alpha
Cultural values	0.7
Collectivism	0.8
Sacrifice self-interest for the group	
Stick with the group even through difficulties	
Group welfare is more important than individual rewards	
Group success is more important than individual success	
Uncertainty avoidance	0.7
It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail	
It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures	
Rules/regulations are important to me	
Standardized work procedures are helpful	
Instructions for operations are important	
Masculinity	0.7
It is more important for men to have a professional career	
Men solve problems with logical analysis; women with intuition	
Solving difficult problems usually requires an active forcible approach which is typical of men	
There are some jobs that a man can always do better	
Power distance	0.6
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions	
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently	
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions	
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions	
People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions made by people in higher positions	
Long-term orientation	0.7
Careful management of money (thrift)	
Going on resolutely in spite of opposition (persistence)	
Personal steadiness and stability	
Long-term planning	
Working hard for success in future	
Service quality expectations	0.9
Tangibles	0.7
Modern-looking equipment	
Visually attractive physical facilities	
Neat appearance of staff	
Visually attractive materials	
Reliability	0.8
Genuine interest in solving customers' problem	
Performs service right the first time	
Provides service at the time it promises to do so	
Error-free service	
Responsiveness	0.7
Prompt service	

Table 1. Contd.

Willingness to help	
Never too busy to respond to requests	
Assurance	0.6
Customers feel safe in their transactions	
Knowledge to answer customers' questions	
Empathy	0.7
Individual attention to customers' needs	
Convenient operating hours	
Personal attention	
Have customers' best interests at heart	

Table 2. Sample demographic characteristics.

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	221	53.6
Female	191	46.4
Age		
22-24	102	24.8
25-27	98	23.8
28-30	64	15.5
30 and over	21	5.1
Marriage status		
Single	346	84
Married	66	16
Education level		
Bachelor	205	49.8
Master	186	45.1
PhD	21	5.1

relationship between dependent and independent variables, multiple regression to inquire the effect of gender on the relationship between independent and dependent, and exploratory factor analysis, in order to approve the structural factors of the two constructions of individual levels of cultural values and expectations from service quality. Structural equation modeling was applied to investigate cultural values criteria and service quality dimensions. Statistical analysis was done through software namely SPSS and LISREL. Descriptive investigation of the variables of the research model was done through the first two questions of survey (Table 3). Table 4 shows the exploratory factor analysis for independent variables, that is, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, power distance and long-term orientation.

In Table 4, in the first function, questions numbered seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven, have been placed with coefficients higher than 0.5 in one group – which is uncertainty avoidance. In the second function, questions numbered 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in one group (that is, long-term orientations). Questions numbered 12, 13, 14 and 15, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in one group which is masculinity. In the fourth and sixth functions, questions numbered 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in another group, that is, power distance. In the fifth function, questions numbered 3, 4, 5 and 6, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in one group, that is, collectivism. KMO and Bartlett test for the cultural values questionnaire are shown in Table 5, because the amount of KMO is more than 0.5, the sample number adequacy is inferred. Significance level is also less than 0.05 error amount in Bartlett test, therefore, factor analysis is approvable. Exploratory factor analysis for dependent variables, that is, tangibles, reliability,

Table 3. General information of respondents' consumption.

Status	Classification	Frequency	Frequency (%)
The number of times respondents consume fast food (per month)	<5	240	58.3
Q1	5-10	112	27.2
	11-15	28	6.8
	16-20	21	5.1
	>20	11	2.1
Respondents' desire to select fast food restaurants	Boof	68	16.5
Q2	Avachee	30	7.3
	Super Star	70	17.5
	Haida	88	21.4
	Other fast food	154	37.4

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis for independent variables (cultural values dimensions).

Question	Functions (*Varimax turn*)					
	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4	Function 5	Function 6
Q3	-0.155	0.033	0.025	-0.106	0.710	0.081
Q4	-0.067	0.024	0.054	-0.064	0.699	0.000
Q5	0.229	-0.005	0.023	-0.006	0.706	0.036
Q6	0.250	0.042	0.024	-0.010	0.693	-0.065
Q7	0.505	0.292	0.053	0.145	0.094	-0.305
Q8	0.687	0.131	0.124	0.025	0.101	-0.005
Q9	0.705	0.209	0.105	0.065	0.102	0.054
Q10	0.752	0.087	0.058	0.003	-0.063	0.175
Q11	0.688	0.230	0.103	-0.024	0.015	-0.052
Q12	0.074	0.218	0.695	0.065	-0.066	-0.097
Q13	0.158	0.006	0.781	0.091	0.097	0.156
Q14	0.101	-0.011	0.733	0.068	0.053	0.364
Q15	0.094	0.135	0.736	0.185	0.085	-0.153
Q16	0.070	0.027	0.194	0.681	-0.084	-0.138
Q17	0.090	0.037	0.165	0.764	-0.153	-0.121
Q18	-0.005	-0.030	0.049	0.783	-0.084	0.249

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett test results for the cultural values questionnaire.

KMO	Significant level (Bartlett)	x^2 statistics	Error value
0.733	0.000	2461.652	0.05

responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are shown in Table 6.

In Table 6, in the first function, questions numbered nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen, have been placed with coefficients higher than 0.5 in one group (that is, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In the second function, questions numbered five, six, seven and eight, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in one group (that is, reliability). In the third function, questions numbered one, two, three and four, with coefficients higher than 0.5 are placed in one group (that is, tangibles). Table 7 shows KMO and Bartlett test for the questionnaire of expectations from service quality, because the amount of KMO is more than 0.5, the sample number adequacy is

Table 6. Exploratory factor analysis for dependent variables (service quality dimensions).

Question	Functions (*Varimax turn*)		
	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3
Q1	0.220	-0.001	0.729
Q2	0.089	0.110	0.810
Q3	0.002	0.273	0.749
Q4	0.099	0.375	0.615
Q5	0.273	0.630	0.243
Q6	0.200	0.699	0.245
Q7	0.333	0.754	0.093
Q8	0.252	0.642	0.166
Q9	0.658	0.304	0.123
Q10	0.568	0.217	0.127
Q11	0.682	0.361	0.111
Q12	0.539	0.475	0.124
Q13	0.678	0.410	0.028
Q14	0.641	0.393	0.130
Q15	0.601	0.185	0.142
Q16	0.793	0.000	0.147
Q17	0.639	0.323	-0.046

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett test results for the questionnaire of expectations from service quality.

KMO	Significant level (Bartlett)	x^2 statistics	Error value
0.922	0.000	2815.901	0.05

inferred. Significance level is also less than 0.05 error amount in Bartlett test, therefore, factor analysis is approvable.

Confirmatory factor analysis

In this research, confirmatory factor analysis (in order to assure the measurement model to be true) using path analysis technique has been performed about known factors in exploratory factor analysis. This analysis was done via structural equation modeling and using LISREL statistical software. In this survey, each of the variables are represented (Table 8). Figure 1 depicts measurement model in standard estimation mode. The results (the lower part of the figure) reveal that the model is appropriate. Considering the output of LISREL (Table 9), the amount of x^2 to the degree of freedom is equals to 2.80 and less than 3 which is appropriate. This criterion being low shows little difference between research conceptual model and the observed data in the study. Output also shows that RMSEA=0.066 for the model which is less than 0.1. In addition to x^2, the less the amount of RMSEA criterion, the fitter the model becomes. GFI=0.96, AGFI=0.92, CFI=0.96, IFI=0.97, NFI=0.90, NNFI=0.94 are the criteria that show the good fitness of model because they are all above 0.90. In Figure 1, all the variables

Table 8. Research variables (dependent and independent).

Variables	Index
X1	Collectivism
X2	Uncertainty avoidance
X3	Masculinity
X4	Power distance
X5	Long-term orientation
Y1	Tangibles
Y2	Reliability
Y3	Responsiveness
Y4	Assurance
Y5	Empathy

Table 9. The criteria of the model fitness.

Index	Reported	Optimum
$x^2/_v$	2.80	<3
RMSEA	0.066	0.05 <RMSEA<0.1
GFI	0.96	>0.9
AGFI	0.92	>0.9
NFI	0.90	>0.9
NNFI	0.94	>0.9
IFI	0.97	>0.9
CFI	0.96	>0.9

Table 10. The results of the first hypothesis.

	Power distance	
	t statistics	Result
Tangibles	3.95	Direct relationship
Reliability	-1.31	No relationship
Responsiveness	-1.85	No relationship
Assurance	-2.92	Converse relationship
Empathy	-3.21	Converse relationship

(questions) had a t statistic larger than 1.96 (they have an appropriate standard coefficient). As a result, we continue with all of the questions and start investigating the relationship between covert variables (Table 10).

RESULTS OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H_1: There is a converse relationship between power distance and all the dimensions of service quality.
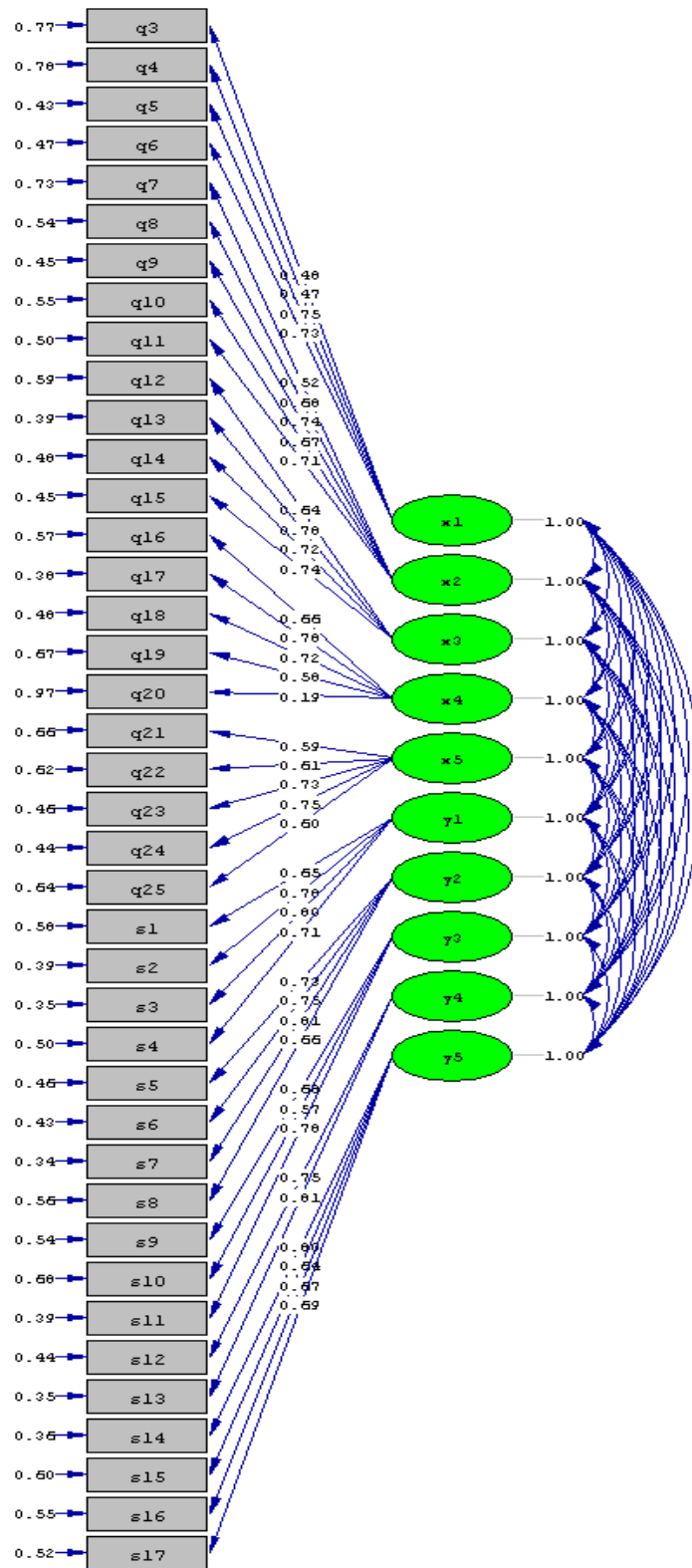
Figure 2. Structural equation modeling (the relationship between variables).
Chi-square-1947.49; df=695; P-value=0.00000; RMSEA-0.066.

Table 11. The results of the second and third hypothesis.

	Collectivism	
	t statistics	Result
Tangibles	-0.40	No relationship
Reliability	0.97	No relationship
Responsiveness	3.62	Direct relationship
Assurance	2.98	Direct relationship
Empathy	5.16	Direct relationship

Table 13. The results of the fifth hypothesis.

	Uncertainty avoidance	
	t statistics	Result
Tangibles	5.01	Direct relationship
Reliability	6.43	Direct relationship
Responsiveness	6.08	Direct relationship
Assurance	5.66	Direct relationship
Empathy	6.69	Direct relationship

Table 12. The results of the fourth hypothesis.

	Masculinity	
	t statistics	Result
Tangibles	1.16	No relationship
Reliability	0.86	No relationship
Responsiveness	-1.33	No relationship
Assurance	-1.37	No relationship
Empathy	1.00	No relationship

Table 10 shows that the absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variables of reliability and responsiveness is less than 1.96, meaning, there is no significant relationship between independent variable of power distance and two dependent variables of reliability and responsiveness. The absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variables of tangibles, assurance, and empathy is more than 1.96, meaning that, there is a significant relationship between independent variable of power distance and three dependent variables of tangibles, assurance, and empathy (Table 10). Therefore, there is a direct significant relationship between power distance and tangibles, and a converse significant relationship between power distance and dimensions of empathy and assurance. There is not a significant relationship between power distance and the dimensions of reliability and responsiveness. Therefore, H_0 is supported and there is no reason to prove H_1. In other words, the H_1 cannot be verified in this case and it is plausible that there is not a converse relationship between power distance and all the dimensions of service quality. Generation Y with high power distance expect more tangibles and less assurance and empathy.

H_2: There is a converse relationship between collectivism and reliability.

Table 11 shows that the absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variable of assurance is less than 1.96,

and three dependent variables of responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Table 11). Therefore, there is a direct significant relationship between collectivism and dimensions of responsiveness, assurance, and empathy; however, there is not a significant relationship between collectivism and tangibles.

Therefore, H_0 is supported. In other words, the H_3 cannot be verified in this case and it is plausible that there is not a converse relationship between collectivism and responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Generation Y with high collectivism expect more responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

H_4: There is no significant relationship between masculinity and any of the dimensions of service quality.

Based on Table 12, absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy is less than 1.96, meaning there is no significant relationship between independent variable of masculinity and five dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. So, there is no significant relationship between masculinity and any dimensions of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). Therefore, H_0 is not proved. In other words, the H_4 can be verified in this case and it is plausible that there is not a significant relationship between masculinity and any dimensions of service quality.

H_5: There is a direct relationship between uncertainty avoidance and all the dimensions of service quality.

Table 13 shows that the absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy is more than 1.96, meaning that, there is a significant relationship between independent variable of uncertainty avoidance and five dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

So, there is a significant relationship between

Table 14. The results of the sixth hypothesis.

	Long-term orientation	
	t statistics	Result
Tangibles	8.78	Direct relationship
Reliability	7.11	Direct relationship
Responsiveness	4.04	Direct relationship
Assurance	5.59	Direct relationship
Empathy	3.51	Direct relationship

independent variable of uncertainty avoidance and all the dimensions of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy).

Therefore, H_0 is refuted. In other words, the H_5 supported in this case and it is plausible that there is a significant direct relationship between uncertainty avoidance and all the dimensions of service quality. Generation Y with high uncertainty avoidance expect more from service quality.

H_6: There is a direct relationship between long-term orientation and all the dimensions of service quality.

Table 14 shows that the absolute value of t statistics for the dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy is larger than 1.96, meaning that there is a significant relationship between independent variable of long-term orientation and five dependent variables of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

So, there is a direct relationship between long-term orientation and all the dimensions of service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy). Therefore, H_0 is refuted. In other words, the H_6 supported in this case and it is plausible that there is a significant direct relationship between long-term orientation and all the dimensions of service quality. Generation Y with high long-term orientation expect more from service quality.

H_7: Gender influences the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality dimensions.

Table 15 presents the results of 5 regressions based on mediator variable of gender. Therefore, gender does not mediate in all cases and so, H_0 is proved. In other words, the H_7 cannot be verified in this case and it is plausible that gender does not influence the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and the dimensions of service quality. Gender only influences on relationship between:

1. Power distance and tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy.

2. Collectivism and responsiveness, assurance and empathy.
3. Masculinity and responsiveness.
4. Uncertainty avoidance and reliability and empathy.
5. Long-term orientation and assurance.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Similar to other studies, this study has limitations. This study considered fast food restaurants consumers in the campus of Tehran Science and Research Branch of Islamic Azad University as a case study of this research. Therefore, the results may not be expanded to service industries in other places. The results of this study are also limited to the Generation Y students and their previous experience may affect their expectations from current services.

With respect to similar investigations, which are survey-based and conceptual, the same problem exists and sometimes the quality of data is questionable. As a suggestion, further research can be implemented in other places and service industries. There are other theoretical approaches on measuring consumers' expectations. Results are summarized in Table 16.

Conclusions

In this study, the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and expectations of Generation Y consumers from service quality, concerning the role of gender was analyzed using a conceptual framework based on theoretical literature review and research background. To summarize the research hypotheses, findings show that cultural values have relationship with customers' expectations from service quality. Except for the dimension of masculinity and other cultural dimensions, including power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation, which are significantly relevant with expectations from service quality. In fact, Generation Y consumers with more uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation, expect more from service quality. Also, the results reveal that gender does not influence the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and dimensions of service quality and only affect the relationship of some dimensions of individual levels of cultural values with dimensions of service quality (power distance and tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy, collectivism and responsiveness, assurance and empathy, masculinity and responsiveness, uncertainty avoidance and reliability, long-term orientation and assurance). Finally, it is observed that, seven hypotheses have been supported completely,

Table 15. The results of the seventh hypothesis (multiple regressions).

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Men groups		Women groups	
		Significant level	Standard coefficient	Significant level	Standard coefficient
Tangibles	Collectivism	0.994	0.000	0.105	-0.122
	Uncertainty avoidance	0.220	0.087	0.162	0.117
	Masculinity	0.684	-0.027	0.166	-0.106
	Power distance	0.000	0.237	0.606	-0.038
	Long-term orientation	0.000	0.350	0.039	0.166
Reliability	Collectivism	0.663	0.029	0.154	-0.103
	Uncertainty avoidance	0.157	0.109	0.006	0.221
	Masculinity	0.556	0.042	0.150	-0.106
	Power distance	0.803	-0.017	0.025	-0.160
	Long-term orientation	0.004	0.224	0.013	0.193
Responsiveness	Collectivism	0.013	0.165	0.865	0.012
	Uncertainty avoidance	0.014	0.190	0.006	0.226
	Masculinity	0.028	-0.159	0.871	-0.012
	Power distance	0.846	0.013	0.075	-0.129
	Long-term orientation	0.261	0.086	0.084	0.136
Assurance	Collectivism	0.013	0.162	0.431	-0.057
	Uncertainty avoidance	0.014	0.189	0.044	0.162
	Masculinity	0.109	-0.114	0.299	-0.076
	Power distance	0.206	-0.087	0.027	-0.160
	Long-term orientation	0.061	0.142	0.003	0.236
Empathy	Collectivism	0.000	0.286	0.486	0.051
	Uncertainty avoidance	0.000	0.273	0.140	0.121
	Masculinity	0.876	-0.011	0.519	0.048
	Power distance	0.441	-0.051	0.006	-0.202
	Long-term orientation	0.516	-0.048	0.077	0.140

Table 16. The results of the research hypotheses.

No.	Hypothesis	Results
H_1	There is a converse relationship between power distance and all the dimensions of service quality	Not Supported
H_2	There is a converse relationship between collectivism and reliability	Not Supported
H_3	There is a direct relationship between collectivism and tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy	Not Supported
H_4	There is no significant relationship between masculinity and any of the dimensions of service quality	Supported
H_5	There is a direct relationship between uncertainty avoidance and all the dimensions of service quality	Supported
H_6	There is a direct relationship between long-term orientation and all the dimensions of service quality	Supported
H_7	Gender influences the relationship between individual levels of cultural values and service quality dimensions	Not Supported

as well as partial support for the other hypotheses (Table 16). Regarding previous researches, findings of this study prove the results of Donthu and Yoo (1998), Furrer et al. (2000), Tsaktus and Rand (2007) and Kueh and Voon (2007) in which the relationship between factors such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance and long term

orientation with service quality were examined.

Based on the results of this study, the following practical suggestions are presented:

1. Generation Y consumers expect more from service quality of fast food restaurants and this issue can encourage the managers and personnel of these kinds of restaurants in order to improve the service for this segment of market. Because this segment of market will be the representative of a big market; that if continue to purchase, they will have potentially high value for the firms in their life span.

2. Generation Y consumers, due to having a higher power distance, expect more from fast food restaurants tangibles. Therefore, managers of these restaurants (especially Haida) should be more sensitive and pay more attention to the tools, facilities, and appearance of their restaurants.

3. Generation Y consumers due to being collectivist, expect more responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This results means that they expect restaurants to give those fast services; restaurant staff to cooperate with them to satisfy their needs; personnel who feel responsible toward them; who have enough knowledge to answer the customers; who give special attention to them. Fast food restaurants should have appropriate working hours; give personal attention to the customers; have reasonable prices. These hints can be used as a competitive advantage by fast food restaurant managers against other restaurants.

4. Generation Y consumers, due to having higher uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation, expect more from the service quality of fast food restaurants. Therefore, managers of fast food restaurants should try harder to create an environment with minimum risk and maximum quality. They should also pay more attention to make a long-term relationship with this group of their customers.

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