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Assessment of services in craft breweries: a focus on the TOURQUAL model

Avaliação dos serviços em cervejarias artesanais: um enfoque no modelo TOURQUAL

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ABSTRACT

In competitive markets, perceived service quality is essentially based on customer satisfaction. In emerging fields such as microbreweries, this provides a framework that can be used to enhance competitiveness, suggesting managerial strategies and practices. The aim of this research is to identify the most relevant quality attributes for these establishments, adapting conventional service evaluation models to meet the specificities of the brewery sector. The methodology involved field research with participatory observation at eight breweries located in southern Brazil. An adapted checklist from the TOURQUAL model was used to collect data in categories related to customer

experience. The results indicate that the studied breweries excel in aspects such as location, ease of access, and use of technology for navigation, but exhibit significant variations in areas such as service waiting time, availability of hours, and physical comfort. The implications of these findings include personalized strategies to enhance customer experience and provide insights into service quality and customer satisfaction in competitive markets, guiding future research.

Keywords: quality. tourist services. craft breweries. beer tourism. TOURQUAL.

INTRODUCTION

The interaction between excellence in service provision, customer satisfaction, and the brewery market stands out as a set of opportunities for tourism research. This scenario, driven by artisanal beverage production, consolidates beer tourism as a cultural and economic force on the rise (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009; Nowotarski, 2018; Gimenes-Minasse, 2023; Maracajá, 2024; Upegui et al., 2024), having as reflections market competitiveness, perceived quality (shaped by expectations) and the need to analyse consumer evaluations of these services (Gianesi & Corrêa, 1994).

In the literature, contributions to understanding the customer's perception of service quality have been supported by models such as Grönroos (1984) and SERVQUAL by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988). However, given the specificity of the brewing sector, this research proposes to go beyond conventional models with the adaptation of the TOURQUAL method (Mondo, 2014) for breweries – which represents an original approach to quality attributes in tourist services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009; Mondo & Fiates, 2017; Along these lines, the central question of this study is: what are the tourist attributes that characterise the service provided by craft breweries?

This research aims to identify the quality attributes that characterise the tourist service offered by craft breweries, considering the relationship between perceived quality and satisfaction (Gianesi & Corrêa, 1994; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009; Nowotarski, 2018). By highlighting the artisanal nature and diversity of products in the beer sector (Plummer et al., 2005), we seek to fill a gap in the literature regarding the lack of studies on this relationship with the quality of

service offered by these establishments (Ladhari, 2009). This discernment gains relevance as the quality of the service reflects a business differentiator: by highlighting the managerial implications of these attributes, the need to create personalised experiences stands out.

This study highlights the economic importance of beer destinations such as Florianópolis-SC and Gramado–RS in the tourist market, focusing on leisure and tourism (MTUR, 2008). Using a participatory observational approach, the research used a checklist adapted from the TOURQUAL model (Mondo, 2014) to evaluate the quality of services in eight breweries in the southern region of Brazil. The sample categorisation was carried out as probabilistic with convenience (Cardoso de Santana et al., 2020). The results highlight strategies to improve the quality of services within the studied context, aligned with academic and marketing perspectives on management and tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The search for quality services, especially in tourism, reflects the importance of this element for customer satisfaction and organisational success. The concept of quality, in addition to transcending satisfaction, reveals itself as a formal stance related to the customer's perception of their expectations in the consumption of services (Cardozo, 1965; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985; Taylor & Baker, 1994). This perspective highlights the connection between purchase intentions, service quality and customer satisfaction, outlining a scenario where quality is imperative for repurchase and service recommendation.

Service quality assessment is a non-unidimensional construct influenced by tangible and intangible factors (Castelli, 2000). In this analysis, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and guarantee are fundamental to the perception of quality (Mondo, 2014). Based on the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), this approach aims to measure customer satisfaction, categorising it as technical and functional. It highlights the importance of the final product and the delivery process, as Grönroos (1984) analysed.

The concept of quality in services constitutes the distinction between <perceived quality> and <identified quality>, emerging as a central element of evaluation (Galé, 1996; Albu, 2009). In both cases, the importance of customers' perspectives is emphasised, highlighting the need to incorporate their opinions to ensure the excellence of tourist services (Miguel & Salomi, 2004; Lezana & Vasconcelos, 2014; Correa, 2023; Couto, 2023). The analysis of these services, as indicated by Plummer et al. (2005) and Tikkanen (2007), highlights the potential of craft breweries to attract and value customers.

The consolidation of <beer tourism> as an aspect of gastronomic tourism (Tikkanen, 2007; Leal & Almeida, 2015) highlights the importance of integrating cultural and experiential elements in the promotion of destinations (Plummer et al., 2005; Tikkanen, 2007). The 12.0% increase in the number of breweries registered in 2021, compared to the previous year, highlights the popularity of these establishments (MAPA, 2021). Furthermore, Bizinelli et al. (2013) emphasise the potential of this segment to enrich the tourist experience, highlighting it as a practice linked to appreciation and immersion in the traditions and culture of producing establishments.

Considering Santa Catarina's prominence in the beer context (MAPA, 2021), it is relevant to explore the dynamics of this scenario, especially concerning the factors that contribute to the success and growth of craft breweries in the state. This aspect, previously little explored in the literature, highlights the need for investigations emphasising the importance of services for competitiveness in tourist destinations (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Cunha, 2011). In this context, assessing satisfaction and quality of services associated with tourist behavioural intentions becomes relevant.

Given these considerations, one must recognise that evaluating these aspects requires specific models (Mondo, 2014; Cardoso de Santana et al., 2020). In line with the conclusions of these studies, this approach underpins the methodological choice adopted in this study. The gaps highlighted in the literature, therefore, highlight the continuity of research in this area and the

importance of future investigations that seek to improve and expand the understanding of the relationship between beer tourism and the quality attributes that best characterise the tourist service offered by breweries.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a perspective that recognises the existence of objective realities in the context of tourist services provided by craft breweries. In this approach, we sought to understand the intrinsic nature of these services, considering that they are interdependent on individual perceptions (Mondo, 2014; Cardoso de Santana et al., 2020). Research is based on the understanding that knowledge is constructed through interaction between the researcher and the object of study (Davidson, 2005). Thus, field research, emphasising participatory observation, aimed to provide an understanding of interactions in the environment of the breweries studied.

The research included the analysis of eight breweries located in different regions, namely Florianópolis–SC, Rancho Queimado–SC, Santo Amaro da Imperatriz–SC, Tijucas–SC, Antônio Carlos–SC, Gramado–RS, and Canela–RS. To understand the intrinsic nature of services in craft breweries, aspects such as reputation and geographic diversity were determining factors for sample selection. This geographic coverage provided a holistic analysis of the sector's dynamics, considering the particularities of each region.

The sample was categorised as probabilistic with convenience (Silva, 1998). The choice of this approach was motivated by the need to facilitate access to the breweries studied, ensuring the participation of researchers on tours of the locations. To enrich the characterisation of the sample, the relevance of the breweries' reputation was considered an additional selection criterion. Data was collected using a checklist adapted from the TOURQUAL model (Mondo, 2014), a protocol based on a theoretical model for evaluating the quality of services in attractions and tourist experiences.

Regarding service quality assessment, 17 categories were considered, each with indicators adapted from the model used to align with the unique context of craft breweries. This included elements related to tasting, a variety of activities offered and an evaluation of the product store (Table 1). These adaptations were implemented to optimise data collection, reinforcing the validity and reliability of the results obtained.

Table 1. Categories evaluated and their respective indicators.

Category	Indicators
Access	Geographic location, information on how to get there, parking, external signage
Wait for Service	Reservations, waiting time for initial service, waiting time for tasting, tour time
Ease of Purchase	Purchase/book the tour via the website, ticket office
Schedules	Opening hours
Comfort	Room temperature, acoustics, resting places
Human Element	Presentation, service, technical knowledge, uniform, posture
Experience	Learning, beauty/aesthetics/decoration, escape from routine, entertainment, activities offered
Security	Parking security, on-site security, security system
Cost/Benefit Relationship	Ticket price, beer price, food price
Infrastructure	External architecture, entrance, furniture, bathrooms, factory, common areas/bar
Signaling	Location plates, nameplates
Technology	Website, social networks, wifi
Cleaning	Outdoor area, factory, hall, bathrooms
Battery capacity	On-site capacity
Tasting	Variety, quality of beer, gastronomic offer, utensils used
Variety of Activities	Other activities offered (music, etc.)
Product Store	Variety, physical space

Source: Adapted from Mondo (2014).

Visits to the breweries were previously scheduled, and after each visit, a post-visit questionnaire was administered. An evaluative scoring scale of 1 to 5 was chosen (Mondo, 2014) based on practical applicability and the ability to provide a quantitative assessment of services in each brewery. The grades awarded are classified as follows: 1 (terrible), 2 (bad), 3 (average), 4 (good) and 5 (excellent). The final analysis covered the overall score for each category, incorporating the use of means, standard deviations and statistical significance tests.

All human interactions during the research were conducted with informed consent and confidentiality to ensure ethical standards. Ethical practices were also observed in the handling and analysis of data to ensure the integrity of the participants and the validity of the research. However, it is essential to recognise some potential limitations of this study, such as possible biases in sampling due to convenience, possible restrictions in generalising the results to the group of craft breweries, and possible influences of adaptations made to the checklist and questionnaire.

RESULTS

In the **access** category, the customer's first contact with the brewery was examined, considering the location, information on how to get there, parking and external signage. According to the analysis presented in Table 1, breweries 2 and 5 are located far from urban centres and are more challenging to reach. However, both have a location considered <excellent> (grade 5) in the middle of nature. All breweries provide detailed information on how to get there, many using navigation applications such as GPS.

Regarding **parking**, Cervejaria 3, 5, and 7 offer parking spaces (Table 2). Others depend on parking on public roads, which may be unfavourable for some visitors. Regarding signage, Cervejaria 7 stands out with strategically positioned signs on the street indicating the direction of the brewery. The others, although well-evaluated, have signs mainly near the brewery.

Table 2. Access Category

Access Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Geographical Location of the Brewery	4	3	5	5	3	5	5	5
How to Get There	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5
Parking	4	3	5	4	5	3	5	4
Signaling	1	3	1	4	4	1	5	4
Total Average	3,23	3,23	4	4,5	4	3,5	5	4,75

Source: primary data (2024).

The **waiting-for-service** category covers the ease and time of making the reservation and the waiting time for the initial service, tasting and tour, as shown in Table 3. In this category, it is highlighted that in half of the breweries included In this study, it was impossible to carry out an assessment. However, it is worth mentioning that, on the other hand, the other four breweries received precise evaluations, with positive results for breweries 1, 5, 7, and 8.

Table 3. Waiting for Service

Waiting for Service Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Reservations	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5	N/A
Waiting Time and Initial Service	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5	5
Waiting Time for Tasting	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	5	5
Tour Time	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	5
Total Average	4,75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,5	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **ease of purchase** category evaluates the practicality of purchasing tickets online and in person at the box office, as shown in Table 4. In most breweries, the purchase or reservation was made online, and, in general, once the tour purchase was made, the ticket purchase service was easy and quick. In the case of Brewery 8, the purchase was made at the ticket office uncomplicated and agilely.

Table 4. Ease of Purchase

Ease of Purchase Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Purchase/Reserve the Tour via the website	4	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	N/A
Box office	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Total Average	4	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The category that evaluates **opening hours** analyses the availability of the tourist service for the customer, as shown in Table 5. Breweries 6 and 8 offer a variety of visiting hours. Cervejaria 5 offers weekend opening times at the bar next to the brewery, while tours occur at specific events, so availability is necessary. A similar situation occurs with Cervejaria 1, where tour times depend on availability at scheduled events. Cervejaria 7 requires prior contact to check opening times, which makes access a little more restricted.

Table 5. Timetables

Schedule Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Opening Hours	2	1	N/A	N/A	4	5	3	5
Total Average	2	1	N/A	N/A	4	5	3	5

Source: primary data (2024).

When evaluating the **comfort** category, it is essential to consider the environment's atmosphere and how receptive it is to customers. Several elements, such as temperature, acoustics and rest areas, are relevant. When analysing Table 6, it is notable that breweries 1, 7, and 8 are highlighted positively. These establishments offer a cosy experience to visitors, providing adequate air conditioning, favourable acoustics for efficient communication during the tour, and pleasant spaces for rest.

Brewer 2 follows a similar pattern, providing a welcoming atmosphere, although there is a caveat regarding the temperature in the place, which deserves attention. However, breweries 6 and 4 do not meet expectations in

this regard. They are located inside the factory and lack a structure for visitors. Furthermore, as they are located in warehouses, it becomes more challenging to control the temperature and acoustics, compromising the comfort experience for visitors.

Table 6. Comfort

Comfort Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Temperature in the Brewery environment	5	4	N/A	5	N/A	4	5	5
Brewery Acoustics	5	5	N/A	3	N/A	2	5	5
Places to rest at the Brewery	5	5	N/A	3	N/A	2	5	5
Total Average	5	4,66	N/A	3,66	N/A	2,66	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

In the **human element** category, the preparation of employees before customers, presentation, attention, technical knowledge, uniform, and posture are evaluated, as shown in Table 7. The breweries that were visited showed excellent posture, thanks to the brewery's presentation, attention, and knowledge in the area. However, brewery 6 stands out as an exception, as it demonstrated a lack of professionalism in service; posture and uniform received low scores. As for Cervejaria 8, there were limitations concerning technical knowledge.

Table 7. Human Element

Human Element Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Presentation of the Brewery	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	1	N/A	5
Attention and service	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	3	N/A	5
Technical knowledge of employees	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	4	N/A	4
Uniform	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	1	N/A	5
Posture	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	2	N/A	5
Total Average	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	2,2	N/A	4,8

Source: primary data (2024).

In the **experience** category, learning during the tour, presentation (aesthetics), customer immersion - providing an escape from the routine -and the entertainment and activities offered are evaluated, as shown in Table 8. Breweries 1, 2 and 8 have the best ratings in terms of experience. Brewery 8 stands out for its decorative details - designed for tourism. Brewery 1 stands out for its immersion during the presentation, which covers everything from the brewery's history to the production process and tasting.

Table 8. Experience

Experience Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Apprenticeship	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	5
Beauty/Aesthetics/Decoration	4	5	N/A	3	3	1	N/A	5
Escape from routine	5	5	N/A	3	4	4	N/A	5
Entertainment and activities offered	5	5	N/A	2	4	3	N/A	5
Total Average	4,75	5	N/A	2,66	3,66	3	N/A	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **security** category assesses the tranquillity of the parking lot, the location, and the security system itself, as shown in Table 9. All breweries unanimously highlighted security, providing customers with confidence during their visit. Furthermore, security measures were applied throughout the facilities, contributing to a welcoming environment for visitors.

Table 9. Security

Security Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Parking safety	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Site security	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Security system	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Total Average	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **cost/benefit ratio** category is evaluated based on the investment compared to the return received. As part of this evaluation, the prices of

tickets, beers and food were analysed, as indicated in Table 10. In all the breweries visited, the ticket price for the tour was considered adequate. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the value of beers and food was also positively evaluated, contributing to a reasonable cost/benefit ratio.

Table 10. Cost/Benefit Ratio

Cost/Benefit Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Ticket Price	5	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	5
Price of Beers	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	5
Food Price	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Total Average	4,5	5	N/A	N/A	4	4	N/A	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **infrastructure** category evaluates how much the brewery was planned for tourism, according to architecture, entrance, furniture, bathrooms, factory and common areas (Table 11). Brewery 8 stands out for its architecture, furniture and personalised bathrooms, presenting an excellent structure. Brewery 7 stands out not only for its factory but also for including a restaurant and bar, going beyond aesthetics. Positive highlights also go to breweries 1, 2 and 5, which offer a welcoming environment prepared to welcome customers. On the other hand, breweries 3, 4 and 6 do not meet expectations, as they are perceived as factory warehouses focused on production and not tourism. Despite this detail, they score well in some indicators, such as the factory.

Table 11. Infrastructure

Infrastructure Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
External Architecture	4	5	3	2	5	1	5	5
Brewery entrance	3	5	1	2	5	2	5	5
Furniture	3	5	1	1	5	1	5	5
Bathrooms	5	5	5	4	5	N/A	5	5
Factory	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5
Common Areas/Bar	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	5

Infrastructure Category								
Total Average	4,16	5	2,66	3,16	5	2,2	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

Indicative and location signs within the brewery are observed when evaluating the signage category (Table 12). Breweries 2, 3, 7 and 8 stand out with signage with clear indicators. The quality of signage in breweries is remarkable. However, breweries 5 and 6 receive a lower score due to small or difficult-to-see signs, which can impact visitors' experience in this specific aspect.

Table 12. Signage

Signage Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Location signs at the Brewery	4	5	5	N/A	3	2	5	5
Identification plates at the Brewery	4	5	5	N/A	3	1	5	5
Total Average	4	5	5	N/A	3	1,5	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **technology** category evaluates how the website and social networks communicate with customers and the information available, and also considers the presence of Wi-Fi available to customers on site, as shown in Table 13. In general, all breweries communicate well with the customer. This is reflected in the organisation of information about the brewery on the website and on social media, where many contacts were established, including for purchasing tickets. The exception occurs with Brewery 3, which does not meet expectations in this category as it does not have a website.

Table 13. Technology

Technology Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Brewery website	5	5	1	5	5	2	5	5
Social media	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
WiFi	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Technology Category								
Total Average	5	5	3,33	5	5	4	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **cleaning** category evaluates the hygiene of external areas, the factory, the hall, and the bathrooms (Table 14). All breweries are clean and presented excellently. The only exception was C6, which, despite the clean factory, had a slightly neglected external area and hall, resulting in it not obtaining the maximum score in the evaluation.

Table 14. Cleaning

Cleaning Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
External area	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
Factory	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Hall	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
Bathrooms	5	5	5	5	5	N/A	5	5
Total Average	5	5	5	5	5	4,33	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **load capacity** category evaluates the number of people the place can serve without compromising quality, as shown in Table 15. The breweries that stand out are those that offer spaces for customers to sit, whether for tasting or to receive explanations during the tour. This way, it becomes easier to define the public they can serve, as evidenced in breweries 1, 7 and 8, which have this structure. In the case of the others, the visit occurs inside the factory, whose construction is focused on production and not tourism, making group tours difficult.

Table 15. Load Capacity

Load Capacity Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
On-site capacity	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	2	5	5
Total Average	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	2	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **tasting** category evaluates the sensorial experience of the visit, considering the variety and quality of the beers, the gastronomic offer and the presentation of the utensils used in the tasting service (Table 16). The tasting at Brewery 1 stood out as it presented a variety of 4 harmonised labels, providing an excellent experience from start to finish. Brewery 8 also achieved excellence in presentation, serving six high-quality labels. However, the C6 brewery did not meet expectations by serving four labels, two of which were not good quality. It should be noted that evaluating the other breweries in this category was impossible.

Table 16. Tasting

Tasting Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Variety	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	5
Beer Quality	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	5
Quality of the gastronomic offer	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
Utensils used (glasses, cutlery, etc.).	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	5
Total Average	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,25	N/A	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The **variety of activities** category evaluates the customer's differences concerning the traditional brewery tour (Table 17). Positive highlights include Brewery 8, which offers a kid's space and live music. Brewery 7 stands out for featuring live music, being a restaurant, and functioning as a bar at night. Brewery 2 stands out by offering an event with barbecue and music. However, the other breweries did not present other activities, which is considered a negative point in this assessment.

Table 17. Variety of Activities

Activity Variety Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Other activities offered at the Brewery (music, etc.)	N/A	5		1	5	1	5	5

Activity Variety Category								
			N/A					
Total Average	N/A	5	N/A	1	5	1	5	5

Source: primary data (2024).

In the **product store** category, the diversity of available items is evaluated, checking whether it offers something in addition to the beers produced, as evidenced in Table 18. Breweries 2, 5 and 8 stood out with excellent product stores, offering a variety in addition to beers. Brewery 1 has a product store where you can find labels produced by the brewery itself. However, other breweries do not offer this service.

Table 18. Product Store

Product Store Category								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Variety	4	5	N/A	N/A	5	1	1	5
Physical space	4	5	N/A	N/A	5	1	1	5
Total Average	4	5	N/A	N/A	5	1	1	5

Source: primary data (2024).

The analysis of these results reveals areas of emphasis and potential improvements in the breweries evaluated. Among the positive points of the evaluation are accessibility and safety, in addition to the experience factor in some breweries. However, opportunities for improvement lie in the efficiency of waiting for service, infrastructure and the variety of activities offered. These considerations can guide improvements to raise the quality of the visitor experience, promoting competitiveness and overall satisfaction.

DISCUSSIONS

Analysis of the results revealed insights into the attributes contributing to the quality of tourist services in craft breweries. The identified attributes stand

out as fundamental in evaluating the quality of these establishments, providing a basis for a practical understanding of customer satisfaction in this specific context (Table 19). The general average of the most relevant categories, such as access, comfort, human element, experience, infrastructure, carrying capacity, tasting and variety of activities, offers perspectives on the experience provided by the establishments.

Table 19. Average of the Most Relevant Categories

General Category Average								
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8
Access	3,23	3,23	4	4,5	4	3,5	5	4,75
Comfort	5	4,66	N/A	3,66	N/A	2,66	5	5
Human Element	5	5	N/A	N/A	5	2,2	N/A	4,8
Experience	4,75	5	N/A	2,66	3,66	3	N/A	5
Infrastructure	4,16	5	2,66	3,16	5	2,2	5	5
Load Capacity	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	2	5	5
Tasting	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,25	N/A	5
Variety of Activities	N/A	5	N/A	1	5	1	5	5
Overall Average	4,59	4,64	3,33	2,99	4,27	2,47	5	4,94

Source: primary data (2024).

When approaching the categories individually, the average rating for the **access** category is 4.37, suggesting that, in general, the elements related to entry to the location are considered satisfactory. Theoretically, it is possible to analyse how genuine accessibility (not just regulatory) can impact consumers' perception of the establishment and identify opportunities to optimise experiences (Dos Santos et al., 2022). Notably, this category ensures the customer has first contact with the breweries.

The overall **comfort** average reaches 4.71, indicating a positive experience regarding users' well-being. Several elements influence the perception of comfort, and a practical strategy could involve physical or design improvements to meet visitors' expectations—which includes facility management (Salles et al., 2023). This reflects on the relevance of this category,

as it assesses the degree of customer satisfaction and convenience within the breweries.

The evaluation for **human interaction** reaches 4.77, showing a positive assessment of the local team. By focusing on the psychological implications of this interaction on the customer experience, the practical approach may involve training staff or reviewing service processes, which implies service management and customer loyalty (Santos, 2020). This category plays an essential role in creating a welcoming feeling for customers, influencing the knowledge transmitted during the tour and the general image of the establishment among visitors.

The **experience** category averages 4.37, indicating a positive assessment of the elements that make up the user experience. By exploring how different components contribute to the customer experience and based on this result, improvements to facilities, human interaction, adjustments to the tasting process for greater efficiency, and the implementation of visual or structural improvements are suggested to increase the overall comfort for the guest. Essentially, assessing whether the visitor was satisfied with the moment they experienced at the brewery is relevant, considering that this category reflects the experience provided to customers - a perspective illustrated by Stickdorn et al. (2019).

The rating for the **infrastructure** category reaches 4.17, signalling a positive reception from users concerning the physical elements of the locations. The relevance of this category is noted, considering that the establishment must be adequately prepared to receive tourists, going beyond its primary function as a production factory. It is reflected in understanding how infrastructure impacts customer perception, and a practical approach can involve investments to improve infrastructure, ensuring an experience that considers aspects of tourism and hospitality management.

The **load capacity** category is rated at 4.25, indicating user satisfaction with the location's ability to handle demand. A theoretical discussion can

deepen the understanding of how carrying capacity influences customer satisfaction and how this aspect can be managed in practice. The importance of this category is justified since overcrowding a space can result in a negative image (Beni, 2020), highlighting the need for a balance to guarantee a positive experience for visitors.

The **tasting** category is rated at 4.13, indicating an excellent general perception of aspects of tasting on-site. By exploring how the tasting experience contributes to customer satisfaction, the practical implications of this category may involve implementing improvements to the tasting process. Tasting is a prominent element in the overall experience of visitors, and therefore, practical optimisation of this category can be fundamental to guarantee an improved and more satisfactory experience for customers.

Finally, the **variety of activities** receives an overall average of 4.13, indicating users' satisfaction with the options offered. When exploring the implications of this result, it is essential to consider how the diversity of activities impacts the location's attractiveness. In practice, this may involve introducing new activities or improving existing ones since this perspective assesses how much customers can enjoy the spaces - going beyond the tour and highlighting the importance of offering diverse experiences to visitors.

In addition to contributing to the academic understanding of craft breweries, these results offer guidance for optimising the quality of tourist services in these establishments. Strategies, such as improving team training, infrastructure investments, and tasting process adjustments, aim to enhance the visitor experience. Such approaches align with perspectives on accessibility (Santos et al., 2022; Salles et al., 2023), facilities management, and team training (Santos, 2020), contributing to a theoretical-practical understanding of Tourism service management.

As analysed by Galé (1996), the emphasis on perceived quality highlights the relevance of the customer's perspective and the evaluation of the excellence of the product or service. Santa Catarina's strategic location in the

craft beer market intensifies the imperative of offering quality services to attract and retain visitors. This premise, strengthened by the perspectives of Ritchie and Crouch (2003), aligns with the results of this research, emphasising an interconnection between perceived quality, strategic geographic position and tourist attraction in the region.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study addressed the concepts of service excellence and customer satisfaction in the context of breweries' growth, which were highlighted in the marketing and academic context. By focusing on the specificity of the brewing sector, the research adapted the TOURQUAL method to identify the relevant tourist attributes in measuring the services provided by craft breweries in Brazil. The results highlight the need for personalised strategies that go beyond conventional theoretical approaches and improve these establishments' offerings in an increasingly competitive market.

Considering the analysis of eight breweries evaluated, it is possible to highlight perceptions related to the quality of beer tourism. Breweries, which initially focused on production, showed deficiencies in the experience offered to visitors, reflected in less favourable evaluations in several categories of the TOURQUAL adapted to this context. However, breweries that underwent renovations or implemented spaces aimed at tourism presented more positive evaluations: clear information, ticket purchasing platforms, leisure spaces, restaurants, bars, live music, and a decorated atmosphere contributed to the Client's satisfaction.

In the context of conducting tours, the contribution of brewery employees, who have technical knowledge, to the experience provided to visitors stands out. The experience evaluation was not restricted to technical competence, including categories such as easy access, comfort, human element, efficient infrastructure, experience, carrying capacity, tasting

opportunity and various activities available. These criteria were considered in constructing an outstanding tourist offer, emphasising dimensions that guaranteed the analysis of visitors' experience and satisfaction.

The specific cases of breweries 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8, which obtained positive scores, highlight the importance of a planned tourist infrastructure. Suggestions for improvement include improving advertising and external signage, implementing fixed tour times and personalising the experiences offered to visitors. On the other hand, breweries that received less satisfactory evaluations indicate the need for investment in tourist facilities. Implementing tours, rest areas in establishments, tastings and product stores can also improve the quality of these establishments.

It is essential to highlight that the limitation of this study is the lack of an analysis of seasonal variables that can influence the perception of the quality of services offered by craft breweries in tourism. Therefore, it is suggested that future research explore temporal perspectives in this context, understanding that the area is subject to seasonal variations. Finally, events and other influences can impact the perception of the quality of services offered and affect consumer preferences in the craft brewery scene.

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