Research Dialogues

- Krupa Rai -

Applying SERVQUAL model to hearing and speech impaired staff in the fine-dine SME sector for assessing service outcomes

In India, people with disabilities are often perceived as a social liability. Yet some fine-dining restaurants have developed an innovative service model by employing staff with hearing and speech impairments. This study examines how that model shapes guests' perceptions and experiences, and whether inclusive employment can create value for customers, employees and restaurants.

Drawing on service quality, empathy, word-of-mouth, loyalty and social capital, the paper develops seven hypotheses and tests them through a mixed-methods design. The research combines a SERVQUAL survey of 255 guests with interviews with employees and their families and Rorschach assessments. Structural equation modelling examines the relationships between the key constructs, while the qualitative evidence offers insight into employees' experiences.

The findings suggest that customer loyalty stems from genuine service quality rather than sympathy. They also show how employees perceived as a social liability can become a source of social capital, with implications for inclusive employment and service innovation.

25/11 - 13.30

Online only

Webex room:

