

Boosting Cafe Service Quality: How Total Quality Management Empowers a Case Study at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung.

Abstract

Intense competition in Bandung's culinary industry forces coffee shops to maintain high service standards, yet many businesses like Konaro Coffee & Eatery still face operational inconsistencies that hinder optimal customer satisfaction. This applied research and community service initiative aims to identify these service quality bottlenecks and offer strategic solutions through the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM). The research team, comprising lecturers and students, employs a qualitative approach to investigate the cafe's current service performance. We gathered primary data through in-depth interviews and field observations involving the cafe owners and operational staff as key informants. To analyze the data, we map the identified service issues directly against the core pillars of TQM, focusing on continuous improvement and process standardization. The study reveals that implementing a structured TQM framework successfully eliminates service delays, standardizes product consistency, and elevates the staff's hospitality skills. Consequently, these findings imply that adopting TQM principles not only resolves immediate operational gaps but also provides Konaro Coffee & Eatery with a sustainable competitive advantage in a crowded market.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Service Quality, Coffee Shop, Qualitative Approach, Applied Research.

Introduction

In the era of globalization and intensifying business competition, quality serves as the primary deciding factor for an organization to sustain its market existence. The concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) offers a comprehensive management approach that prioritizes total customer satisfaction by involving all organizational members in a continuous improvement process. Furthermore, the Indonesian culinary industry has demonstrated significant growth over the recent years. Data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy reveals that the culinary sector constitutes the largest contributor to the national creative economy, contributing 41.4% to the total creative economy GDP. This rapid growth drives the emergence of numerous new culinary entrepreneurs who fiercely compete for market share.

Konaro Coffee and Eatery operates as a culinary business in an urban environment, targeting the youth and family segments. As a growing business, Konaro Coffee and Eatery faces various challenges in managing product and service quality. These challenges encompass flavor consistency, cleanliness standards, service speed, human resource management, and customer complaint resolution.

To evaluate the operational environment at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, this paper adopts an analytical framework based on the seven TQM principles of ISO 9001:2015. These principles include: (1) customer focus, (2) leadership, (3) engagement of people, (4) process approach,

(5) improvement, (6) evidence-based decision making, and (7) relationship management. We analyze each principle by examining the actual conditions at the cafe, utilizing direct field observations and comprehensive interviews with both management and operational staff. Our initial findings reveal that Konaro Coffee & Eatery does not yet implement TQM in a systematic or structured manner.

In the highly competitive culinary sector, Total Quality Management (TQM) offers a systematic framework that effectively addresses operational challenges and elevates service quality. Rather than operating merely as a standalone program or a temporary technique, TQM functions as an overarching management philosophy. It seamlessly integrates every organizational function—including production, marketing, finance, design, and human resources—toward a single, unified focus: satisfying customer needs and achieving organizational goals. Over the past three decades, the paradigm of quality has evolved significantly. Chen et al. (2022) demonstrate that businesses have shifted their focus from rigid, basic quality control to a broader integration of TQM, service quality, and service sciences. For a modern eatery, this means management must view quality not just as a flawless final product (like a well-brewed cup of coffee), but as an entire service ecosystem that enhances the customer's emotional and sensory experience.

To bridge the gap between internal operations and customer perception, successful service providers combine structural management with customer experience metrics. Owusu-Kyei et al. (2023) utilize a TQM-SERVQUAL perspective to prove that structured TQM practices directly drive customer satisfaction. When a cafe synchronizes its internal quality standards with external service dimensions—such as responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—it immediately transforms how patrons perceive the brand. Because service quality relies heavily on human interaction, human resource management (HRM) practices play a pivotal role in the TQM framework. Kaushal et al. (2026) map the critical journey between HRM practices and service quality, proving that continuous training, employee empowerment, and a shared quality culture directly dictate the final service delivery. In a cafe setting, well-trained and motivated baristas and floor staff execute TQM principles on the front lines, turning abstract quality goals into concrete customer satisfaction.

Maximizing the impact of TQM requires an equilibrium between operational tools and organizational culture. Ali and Juhl (2022) categorize these as "soft" TQM practices (such as leadership, teamwork, and employee training) and "hard" TQM practices (such as data analysis, process control, and technology adoption). A cafe empowers its service quality when leadership uses hard data to streamline kitchen processes while simultaneously fostering a soft, supportive team environment. The localized impact of these quality frameworks further validates their implementation in dynamic urban markets like Bandung. Research by Manik et al. (2023) on industries in Bandung confirms that robust TQM implementation directly elevates product quality and operational consistency. When a local cafe adopts these rigorous standards, it eliminates flavor inconsistencies and reduces service delays, allowing the business to secure a sustainable market presence.

Studying TQM implementation in mid-sized culinary businesses like Konaro Coffee & Eatery provides immense relevance and value, especially since researchers rarely analyze how these

specific businesses apply TQM principles. This initiative aims to analyze the extent of TQM implementation at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, identify existing operational gaps, and provide actionable recommendations for improvement.

Method

To investigate the operational environment and service dynamics, this study employs a qualitative research approach. The research team, consisting of university lecturers and students, conducts field observations and semi-structured interviews to gather primary data directly from the source. Research Object and Informants. The study focuses on Konaro Coffee & Eatery in Bandung as the primary research object. To gain a comprehensive, 360-degree perspective on the establishment's quality ecosystem, we select key informants from three distinct levels of the business operations: Business Owners / Management: To understand the strategic vision, leadership style, and resource allocation regarding quality standards. Operational Staff (Baristas, Kitchen Crew, and Servers): To evaluate daily adherence to workflows, process standardization, and frontline service execution. Customers: To measure actual perceptions of service delivery, hospitality, and overall satisfaction.

This qualitative inquiry centers on two core variables: Service Quality and Total Quality Management (TQM). We examine how the cafe applies the principles of TQM within its daily operations and evaluate how these practices directly influence or shape the overall Service Quality experienced by the consumers. The research team utilizes Gap Analysis as the primary data analysis technique. First, we identify and document the current operational problems and bottlenecks in the cafe's service delivery based on the interview transcripts and observation notes. Next, we map these empirical findings against ideal TQM benchmarks. By analyzing the gap between actual performance and TQM standards, we formulate structured, actionable solutions to bridge these deficiencies and elevate the cafe's service standards.

Result and Discussion

Analysis of Service Quality and Total Quality Management (TQM) Conditions at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung.

a. Customer Focus

Konaro Coffee & Eatery demonstrates a solid initial commitment to customer satisfaction. Management actively collects customer feedback by placing physical satisfaction forms on every table and monitoring online reviews across social media and Google Maps. The team regularly responds to digital reviews on Instagram and Google Maps to maintain engagement. However, Konaro lacks a structured customer data analysis system. Management does not systematically process the collected feedback into actionable insights for strategic decision-making. For instance, the cafe handles recurring complaints about long waiting times reactively, failing to implement systematic process re-engineering to eliminate the bottleneck.

b. Leadership

The owner of Konaro Coffee & Eatery personally drives a strong commitment to product and service quality. The owner directly oversees daily operations, focusing heavily on the consistency of the food and beverages served. Furthermore, the owner clearly communicates the core vision—becoming the top coffee shop choice in the region—to all employees. Nevertheless, a highly centralized leadership style creates a heavy dependency on the owner. The organizational structure does not fully empower managers and supervisors to make independent quality-related decisions, which threatens to stall continuous improvement efforts whenever the owner is absent.

c. Engagement of People

Employee engagement in quality improvement remains limited at Konaro Coffee & Eatery. The cafe relies solely on informal, on-the-job training and lacks a structured quality training program. Management rarely involves front-line employees in identifying operational problems or brainstorming innovative solutions. Additionally, a high employee turnover rate disrupts operational consistency. Every staff replacement forces the cafe to spend valuable time on retraining, making quality standards difficult to maintain. The cafe also lacks an incentive program to reward employees who demonstrate outstanding quality performance.

d. Process Approach

While Konaro Coffee & Eatery follows certain standard procedures in its food and beverage preparation, management has not yet formally or comprehensively documented these SOPs. Several procedures exist only as verbal instructions and rely heavily on the personal knowledge of specific employees, which compromises process consistency during staff turnovers. In procurement, the cafe applies basic standards for supplier selection and ingredient specifications. However, the receiving team does not use standardized checklist forms to inspect incoming raw materials, which risks letting low-quality ingredients enter the kitchen undetected.

e. Improvement

Konaro Coffee & Eatery has not yet fully embedded a culture of continuous improvement (Kaizen) into its daily operations. The cafe approaches improvements reactively—addressing errors only after a customer complains—rather than proactively identifying and preventing potential flaws before they occur. Management does not schedule formal, routine meetings with staff to discuss quality issues. Furthermore, the team does not utilize basic quality management tools, such as fishbone diagrams, Pareto charts, or control charts, to analyze the root causes of operational problems or measure the effectiveness of past fixes.

f. Evidence-Based Decision Making

The decision-making process at Konaro Coffee & Eatery relies heavily on the owner's intuition and experience rather than systematic data analysis. Although the point-of-sale (POS) system records daily sales data, management does not routinely analyze these figures to identify sales trends, customer patterns, or optimization opportunities. Similarly, the cafe does not statistically analyze customer satisfaction surveys to prioritize operational upgrades. Because

management does not log customer complaints in a structured database, the team struggles to pinpoint recurring issue patterns and design targeted solutions.

g. Relationship Management

Konaro Coffee & Eatery maintains transactional relationships with its raw material suppliers, prioritizing price over long-term partnership value. Management lacks a systematic evaluation mechanism to grade suppliers based on quality consistency, delivery punctuality, and supply reliability. Regarding customer relations, the cafe connects with patrons through social media and direct interactions during their visits. However, Konaro does not offer a structured loyalty program, such as membership cards or reward points, which limits its ability to systematically retain loyal customers.

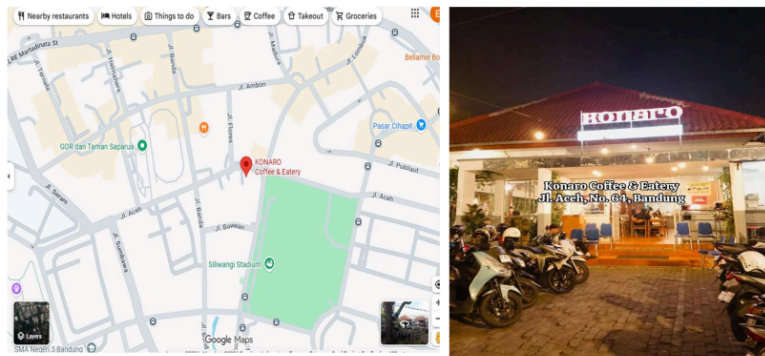


Figure 1. Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung

Analysis of SERVQUAL Dimensions at Konaro Coffee & Eatery

To assess customer perceptions of service quality, the research team evaluated Konaro Coffee & Eatery across the five core SERVQUAL dimensions, assigning scores on a scale of 1 to 5. The narrative below outlines the cafe's current performance:

Tangibles (Score: 3.5/5.0): Konaro Coffee & Eatery maintains a reasonably good physical environment. The staff ensures that tableware and dining equipment remain clean and neatly arranged for customers. However, the physical infrastructure shows signs of wear, indicating that certain areas require immediate renovation to refresh the cafe's visual appeal and maintain a cozy atmosphere.

Reliability (Score: 3.0/5.0): The cafe experiences significant challenges in delivering reliable core products. Specifically, the kitchen struggles to maintain a uniform flavor profile, as food consistency varies depending on which chef handles the shift. This lack of standardization

prevents the establishment from providing a dependable taste experience every time a customer visits.

Responsiveness (Score: 2.8/5.0): This dimension represents the cafe's weakest performance. While the team handles transactions smoothly during quiet periods, service speed drops significantly during peak hours. The staff responds slowly to orders when the cafe gets crowded, which lengthens waiting times and directly tests customer patience.

Assurance (Score: 3.2/5.0): The frontline employees possess adequate product knowledge and understand the menu well. However, they lack confidence when explaining details to customers or addressing specific inquiries. This hesitation limits their ability to fully instill trust and confidence in the patrons regarding the cafe's professionalism.

Empathy (Score: 3.3/5.0): The operational staff shows a friendly demeanor and a willingness to assist guests. Nevertheless, the team fails to deliver this personalized care consistently across all work shifts. Customers experience warm, empathetic hospitality from certain crew members, but this standard fluctuates during different times of the day.



Figure 2. The Facility Activity at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung.

Gap Analysis of Primary Operational Problems at Konaro Coffee & Eatery

The gap analysis reveals several critical operational deficiencies that prevent Konaro Coffee & Eatery from achieving ideal Total Quality Management (TQM) benchmarks. Specifically, the cafe faces five primary structural problems:

Absence of Formal SOPs: Konaro operates without formally documented, written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This structural gap drives severe inconsistencies across food preparation processes and service standards, particularly when new employees replace

experienced staff. Because workers pass instructions down only verbally, the service quality fluctuates constantly.

Lack of Quality Measurement Systems: The cafe completely lacks systematic quality measurement and data analysis systems. Without these metrics, management cannot proactively identify quality bottlenecks or measure whether past operational adjustments actually succeeded. Consequently, the business operates blindly rather than relying on evidence-based decisions.

Deficient Employee Competency Programs: Management provides minimal structured training or competency development initiatives for the operational staff. This lack of investment directly causes inconsistent service quality on the floor and leads to a high frequency of order-serving errors in the kitchen and brewing areas.

Lack of Effective CRM: The business does not yet utilize an effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The absence of a structured database or loyalty scheme makes it incredibly difficult for the cafe to retain loyal patrons. Furthermore, this gap prevents the frontline team from handling customer complaints in a professional, organized manner.

Unstandardized Procurement Controls: The cafe follows unstandardized procurement and raw material quality control processes. By failing to use standardized inspection checklists when receiving goods, the purchasing team risks introducing sub-standard ingredients into the kitchen, which ultimately degrades the consistency of the final product.

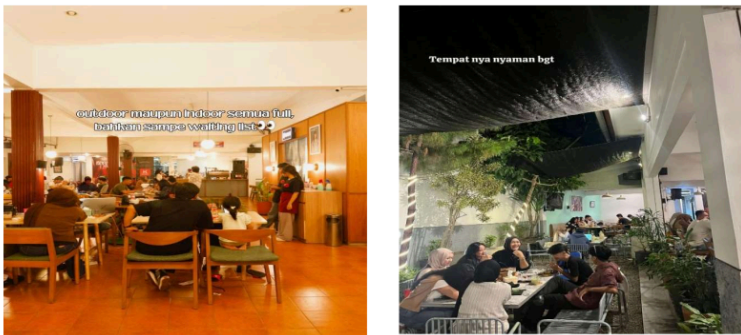


Figure 3. The Café Atmosphere at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung.

Recommended TQM-Based Improvements for Konaro Coffee & Eatery

To bridge the operational gaps and establish a robust quality culture, Konaro Coffee & Eatery must execute the following strategic recommendations based on Total Quality Management (TQM) principles:

a. Formalization and Documentation of SOPs

Konaro Coffee & Eatery must immediately draft and formally document comprehensive, written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all operational domains. These documents must explicitly cover food preparation and cooking processes, raw material procurement and receiving, customer service protocols, complaint handling, and cleanliness and sanitation standards. Management must systematically socialize these SOPs to all staff members and position the printed guides in highly accessible areas across the workspace.

b. Development of Employee Training Programs

Management needs to design and implement a structured, multi-tier employee training program. This initiative should include rigorous onboarding orientation for new hires, technical culinary and brewing skills training, customer service and effective communication workshops, and foundational quality management courses. The cafe must conduct these training sessions on a recurring schedule and regularly evaluate their effectiveness to ensure performance standards improve.

c. Implementation of Quality Measurement Systems

To shift from a reactive to a proactive management style, Konaro must establish an integrated quality measurement system. This system requires the daily execution of quality checklists for both products and services, structured customer satisfaction surveys with periodic statistical analysis, and a centralized database to log and track complaints. Additionally, management must define clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each department and mandate weekly quality review meetings between owners, managers, and supervisors.

d. Development of a Simple CRM System

The cafe should launch a simple Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to boost patron retention and brand loyalty. The marketing team can initiate this by creating a membership card or digital reward points program for frequent visitors. This system should maintain a customer database that logs personal preferences and visit histories, utilizes automated notification channels for promotional campaigns, and drives active, highly responsive social media engagement.

e. Employee Empowerment and Incentive Programs

To foster high motivation and active engagement among staff, management must introduce targeted empowerment and incentive initiatives. The cafe should establish an "Employee of the Month" award based strictly on service quality performance and implement a structured feedback loop where management acts on employee-submitted operational improvements. Finally, the owner must empower supervisors to make independent quality decisions on the floor and tie profit-sharing incentives directly to the achievement of team quality targets.

In the modern hospitality landscape, cafe service quality acts as the primary differentiator that determines business survival and market share. To consistently deliver exceptional service, establishments must look beyond surface-level fixes and adopt a holistic management framework. Total Quality Management (TQM) provides exactly this structural empowerment,

transforming abstract service goals into a highly integrated, customer-centric reality. To understand how TQM empowers a cafe, management must first understand its foundational roots. Foster and Sidharta (2019) emphasize that basic management principles require the systematic coordination of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to achieve organizational goals. TQM refines these basic management principles by embedding quality into every single step of the operational process. As Heizer and Render (2017) point out in their seminal work on operations management, TQM requires an organization-wide commitment to excellence, encompassing everything from supplier procurement to the final customer touchpoint. For a coffee shop, this means operation managers must treat brewing consistency, kitchen workflows, and front-of-house hospitality not as isolated tasks, but as interconnected components of a single quality system.

The conceptualization of quality has evolved significantly over the decades. A comprehensive 30-year literature review by Chen et al. (2022) demonstrates that modern industries have shifted their focus from rigid, insular quality control to a broader integration of TQM, service quality, and service sciences. In a cafe environment, this shift implies that managers cannot evaluate quality solely by the technical taste of an espresso shot. Instead, they must view quality through the lens of service science, analyzing how physical atmosphere, staff responsiveness, and process efficiency co-create value for the consumer. To measure the direct impact of quality frameworks on the consumer experience, researchers frequently combine TQM with service quality metrics. Owusu-Kyei et al. (2023) utilize a TQM-SERVQUAL perspective to demonstrate that structured quality management practices directly drive customer satisfaction. When a cafe actively applies TQM, it directly enhances the five core SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. By standardizing internal processes, TQM ensures that front-line employees consistently meet or exceed customer expectations, thereby securing long-term brand loyalty.

Maximizing service quality requires a strategic equilibrium between behavioral culture and technical tools. Ali and Johl (2022) distinguish between "soft" TQM practices (such as leadership, teamwork, and employee training) and "hard" TQM practices (such as process control, data analysis, and technological tools). A successful cafe empowers its operations by executing both dimensions simultaneously: The Soft Side (Human Resources): Because hospitality relies heavily on human interaction, human resource management (HRM) practices play a pivotal role. Kaushal et al. (2026) map the journey between HRM practices and service quality, proving that structured employee training, empowerment, and a shared quality culture directly dictate final service delivery. The Hard Side (Process and Consistency): The structural discipline of hard TQM practices guarantees operational reliability. Empirical research by Manik et al. (2023) within the Bandung region confirms that robust TQM implementation directly elevates product quality and minimizes operational errors. For a local cafe in Bandung's highly competitive market, adopting these rigorous process controls eliminates flavor inconsistencies and reduces service delays during peak hours.

Conclusion

This applied research and community service initiative successfully evaluates and enhances the operational standards at Konaro Coffee & Eatery, Bandung, through the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM). The initial gap analysis and SERVQUAL assessment revealed that the cafe suffered from significant operational inconsistencies, slow peak-hour responsiveness, and a lack of written, formalized SOPs, all of which stemmed from a highly centralized leadership style and informal training methods. By introducing a structured TQM framework, this initiative provides the management with the necessary strategic tools to transition from reactive troubleshooting to proactive quality control. Ultimately, we conclude that systematic TQM implementation serves as the primary mechanism to empower staff, stabilize product flavor, reduce service delays, and elevate overall cafe service quality.

Based on our empirical findings, we propose several actionable recommendations for the management of Konaro Coffee & Eatery. The management must immediately document and enforce written SOPs for food preparation, procurement, and customer service to eliminate dependencies on verbal instructions. The owner should actively delegate quality-related decision-making power to shift supervisors, thereby fostering operational agility. The cafe must implement regular hospitality and quality control training programs, alongside an "Employee of the Month" incentive scheme to lower staff turnover and maintain high motivation. The team needs to utilize simple quality measurement logs and a basic digital Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to track complaints and reward customer loyalty systematically. Management must draft foundational Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) through a gradual, systematic approach. The kitchen and service teams should prioritize the most critical processes that frequently experience quality inconsistencies. Furthermore, management must actively involve experienced employees in the drafting process to ensure the guidelines remain relevant and highly practical for daily operations.

The cafe must mandate structured employee training programs at least once every three months. These workshops must focus on sharpening product quality standards, mastering excellent service techniques, and instilling a foundational understanding of basic TQM concepts among the staff. The operational team should implement quality measurement systems gradually, beginning with simple daily quality checklists before transitioning to more complex performance metrics. Managers must systematically use this collected data as the primary benchmark for discussions during weekly operational meetings. Management needs to invest adequate time and corporate resources into building stronger partnerships with preferred raw material suppliers. To achieve this, the procurement team must establish clear, written quality criteria and conduct periodic supplier evaluations to safeguard supply reliability. The marketing team should develop a simple yet effective customer loyalty program as an initial step toward building a robust Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The cafe can easily initiate this strategy by introducing physical stamp cards or launching a digital membership scheme via accessible platforms like WhatsApp. For subsequent academic investigations, future researchers should quantitatively measure customer satisfaction using a validated SERVQUAL instrument. This shift toward statistical measurement will provide a much more accurate map of the actual service quality gaps at Konaro Coffee & Eatery.

For Konaro Coffee & Eatery, these TQM-driven solutions provide an immediate blueprint to minimize raw material waste, eliminate order errors, and professionalize customer complaint handling, which directly strengthens their brand equity. Cafe owners in dynamic urban markets like Bandung can replicate this model to understand that sustainable competitive advantage relies not just on aesthetics, but on the disciplined alignment of human resources and process management. This study enriches hospitality literature by demonstrating how small-to-medium culinary enterprises can successfully adapt complex quality standards (like ISO 9001:2015) without requiring prohibitive corporate budgets.

This research relies heavily on a qualitative approach and a single case study design at Konaro Coffee & Eatery within a specific timeframe. Consequently, the highly localized qualitative data restricts our ability to statistically generalize these findings across the entire Indonesian culinary sector. Furthermore, the short-term nature of this community service project prevents us from measuring the longitudinal effects of TQM on the cafe's actual long-term financial performance. Future researchers should employ mixed-method or quantitative approaches, utilizing larger sample sizes across multiple coffee shops in Bandung to validate the statistical relationship between TQM and customer retention. Additionally, future longitudinal studies should track the multi-year implementation of these quality frameworks to evaluate how "soft" and "hard" TQM practices dynamically impact a cafe's net profitability and long-term business survival.

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