

Experiência de consumidores com deficiência em bares sob a perspectiva da vulnerabilidade e resiliência dos usuários de cadeira de rodas

Disabled consumers' experience in bars on the perspective of vulnerability and resilience of wheelchair users

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this research was to investigate how the vulnerability and the resilience of wheelchair users relate to their consumption experience in bar-type gastronomic service environments.

Design/methodology/approach: To this end, a quantitative descriptive and single cross-sectional approach was adopted. The data was collected through the administration of questionnaires both online and in person, obtaining a sample of 51 participants. The analysis was made by Pearson's correlation matrix and descriptive statistics.

Research, Practical & Social implications: The results pointed out a positive correlation between the experience of the disabled consumers interviewed and their sense of vulnerability and resilience. The correlation between the latter and the service atmosphere of the bars were negative though. The vulnerability and the resilience of the wheelchair users interviewed were also negatively correlated. Lastly, it was clear that the consumption experience appeared to be more strongly affected by the services atmosphere than the vulnerability and the resilience of the study's participants itself.

Originality/value: This research represents an advance in contemporary debates about food, gastronomy and hospitality, both through the theoretical articulation presented and the practical implications that result from the data analyzed.

Keywords: Servicescape. Bar experience. Disabled consumer. Vulnerability. Resilience.

Resumo

Objetivo: O objetivo desta pesquisa foi investigar como a vulnerabilidade e a resiliência de usuários de cadeira de rodas se relacionam com a sua experiência de consumo em ambientes de serviços gastronômicos do tipo bar.

Método/abordagem: Para tanto, adotou-se uma abordagem quantitativa, descritiva e transversal única. Os dados foram coletados por meio da aplicação de questionários on-line e presencial, obtendo-se uma amostra de 51 participantes. As análises foram realizadas por meio da matriz de correlação de *Pearson* e estatística descritiva.

Contribuições teóricas/práticas/sociais: Os resultados apontaram uma correlação positiva entre a experiência dos consumidores deficientes entrevistados e o senso de vulnerabilidade e de resiliência deles. Já a correlação destas com o ambiente de serviço dos bares foram negativas. A vulnerabilidade e a resiliência dos usuários de cadeira de rodas entrevistados também se mostraram negativamente correlacionadas entre si. Por fim, ficou claro que a experiência de consumo mostrou ser mais fortemente afetada pelo ambiente de serviços do que pela vulnerabilidade e a resiliência dos participantes do estudo em si.

Originalidade/relevância: Esta pesquisa representa um avanço nos debates contemporâneos sobre alimentação, gastronomia e hospitalidade, tanto pela articulação teórica apresentada quanto pelas implicações práticas que decorrem dos dados analisados.

Palavras-chave: *Servicescape*. Experiência de bar. Consumidor deficiente. Vulnerabilidade. Resiliência.

Introduction

The influence of the service environment on the consumer experience has been debated for a long time in the field of marketing studies. Among researchers in the field, Bitner (1992) was one of the pioneers when she suggested the notion of servicescape to define the complex mix of environmental elements capable of influencing internal responses on the part of individuals. It is worth remembering that, years earlier, Kotler (1973) had already proposed the concept of shop atmosphere, based on the idea that, in physical retail, one of the most important elements of the product would be the place where it was purchased and/or consumed. At the time, it was already considered that spatial aesthetics (or environmental design), when strategically planned, could affect the consumer to the point of producing specific emotional effects, thus increasing the likelihood of purchase.

Years later, Lovelock (1983) and Schmenner (1986) drew attention to the fact that, in the service sector, the various companies have characteristics that are unique and specific to the industry in which they operate. In the field of

hospitality, for example, hotels, restaurants, bars and many other commercial establishments have their own specific features. Melo et al. (2011) argue that the offer system proposed by these establishments is not limited to the service itself, but also tends to take into account aspects such as location, architecture, scenery and others capable of influencing the consumer experience. In the gastronomy sector, these elements are even more critical because, according to Teixeira, Barbosa and Souza (2013), the consumption of food and drink outside the home is no longer so strongly associated with basic nutritional objectives. Today, restaurants and bars have become spaces for public coexistence and social interaction.

But although they have taken on such a role in contemporary society, it should be emphasized that access to these gastronomic establishments is not always democratic. This is because, for certain people, enjoying the services of restaurants and bars can be somewhat challenging. This is the case, for example, with people with disabilities (PwD), especially those who need wheelchairs to get around. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE (2023) showed that, in Brazil, there were around 18.6

million people with some kind of physical disability in 2022. For these people, the most frequently mentioned difficulty was walking and/or climbing steps (motor disabilities). In other words, factors that, according to Conrad, Alperstedt and Santos (2020), tend to represent barriers to the consumption of gastronomic services. According to the report, the north-eastern region of the country has the highest percentage of people with disabilities of all regions, with approximately 5.8 million. Historically, disabled people have been considered vulnerable in certain types of environments, and bars are among the main ones. Often in these places, there is an intense circulation of people, obstacles to locomotion (e.g. stairs, tables/chairs, etc.), as well as difficulties in the service itself (e.g. counters, cashiers, etc.). This has led to an understanding that the presence of PwDs in these spaces requires a certain degree of resilience on their part. The subject is therefore attributed the role of agent of overcoming, failing to consider the service atmosphere of these establishments as a key element in creating democratically welcoming experiences, along the lines of the basic notions of hospitality (Franzen & Reis, 2013; Correia & Santos, 2020; Meira et al., 2020). Given this, the question that guided the development of this study was: *How does the sense of vulnerability and resilience of wheelchair users relate to their consumption experience in bar-type gastronomic service environments?*

Theoretical Framework

Consumer experience, food service environment and the atmosphere of bars

Service consumption is something that requires direct and intense involvement between customers and suppliers. Unlike the material goods industry, production and consumption occur simultaneously in this sector. This is what, according to Pine and Gilmore (1998), characterizes the purely experiential nature of this type of offer. Also according to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the presence of the consumer is almost always indispensable in the 'service factory', which makes them not only an integral part of the process, but also of the physical configuration of the space itself. In view of this, Carù and Cova (2003) argue that although the company can provide its own set of elements for the composition of the environment (or 'ambience'), the meaning attributed by the consumer to the consumption experience will result from direct interaction with these elements.

In conceptual terms, experience is defined as "an internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company" (Meyer & Schwager, 2007, p.2). Over

the years, it has been understood as being either (1) spontaneous or (2) designed/structured (Duerden et al., 2019). Duerden et al. (2015, p.603) adopt the term 'structured experience' to describe "both the objective interactive encounters between participants and provider manipulated frameworks and the resulting subjective participant outcomes of experiences". In the context of service consumption, this is the type of experience that tends to be most common (or at least that's what is expected). According to Scussel, Fogaça and Demo (2021), it results from the interactive process between the consumer and an organization's value propositions, generating previously planned emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses.

There is no denying that the experiential nature of service makes it fertile ground for planning these responses. For Lofman (1991), the environment in which a service is provided usually inspires states of receptivity and openness in customers, as it is often full of stimuli. For a better understanding of how this works, Baker (1986) suggested that the analysis of the service environment should focus on three main aspects. The first refers to the elements that can be sensorially captured by consumers, such as aromas, textures, sounds, colors, etc. The second, more focused on the interpretation given to

these stimuli. Therefore, it is specifically the perception or meanings attributed (in whole or in part) to the ambience of a particular commercial establishment. Finally, there is the relationship between individuals and other customers and members of the organization, which is considered a strictly social factor.

In 1992, Bitner proposed the concept of 'Servicescape' to characterize the space where services were provided. According to his notion, the 'arena' in which a service is provided is made up of three specific dimensions: (1) environmental conditions, (2) spatial layout and functionality, and (3) signs, symbols and artifacts. The first includes aspects capable of directing human perception, i.e. the same sensory stimuli also suggested by Baker (1986). The second dimension takes into account shapes, sizes and the relationship of space between equipment, machinery and furniture in an environment. With particular reference to functionality, Bitner (1992) drew attention to the ability of these elements to perform expected functions in the provision of the service. Signs, symbols and artifacts, on the other hand, reveal the importance of using certain items that can provide consumers with clues about conduct, meaning and what to expect from the service.

In the context of gastronomic services, both approaches are clearly relevant. According to Barbosa and Souza (2013), in this segment there is a strong attempt by companies not only to manage the consumer's decision-making process, but also to influence the context of consumption. Therefore, there is no surprise in expecting that the experience of individuals in these commercial establishments dedicated to offering food and drink can be easily 'designed', as Duerden et al. (2019) believe. Teixeira, Barbosa and Souza (2013) point out that the attributes that make up the offer of a restaurant, for example, even if intangible, are capable of affecting the consumer experience, providing something that can range from gustatory to multisensory. Therefore, servicescape and consumer experience go hand in hand and should be part of the business strategy of any gastronomic establishment.

Now, it should be borne in mind that the gastronomic sector has such a wide range of offerings that some of the specificities of different types of business need to be respected (Vogas & Souza, 2024). Bars are one of those that require a certain amount of caution when it comes to their physical and spatial planning. This is because, according to Mondo et al. (2023) and Melchior and Procedômio (2024), the elements that

make up the atmosphere of these establishments can have a strong influence on the consumer experience. Pacheco (1996) characterizes bars as commercial establishments where drinks are usually served at a counter, with individual seats that tend to rotate. Obviously, this is not the only definition. Rocha (2017) suggests that the physical space of bars, in addition to the counter, usually also consists of room(s) where specific types of food are served, especially so-called 'snacks'.

Unlike restaurants, bars tend to be more geared towards socializing and interpersonal interaction. They are places that people sometimes go to alone in search of new social connections (Koponen & Mustonen, 2022). Therefore, it is expected to find a democratic, welcoming and hospitable atmosphere in this type of establishment (Jacob, 2006). However, it should be considered that, for some consumer segments, the impression may not be exactly this. This is the case, for example, with wheelchair users. In bars, in addition to the physical characteristics of the servicescape, it is common to see heavy traffic and, according to Spence et al. (2019), the noise aspect (music, conversations, noise, etc.) also stands out. These factors somehow interfere with the consumption dynamics of wheelchair users, requiring of them

what Milaković (2021) calls 'self-efficacy' when frequenting such gastronomic leisure spaces.

Vulnerability and resilience of wheelchair users in bars

For disabled consumers, access to certain service environments is not always so simple. This is a fact that can be observed in a variety of contexts, from going to a bank, having dinner in a restaurant or just meeting friends in a bar. In Brazil, current legislation establishes a set of general rules and basic criteria to guarantee accessibility for people with disabilities in commercial establishments. Law 10.098/2000, for example, requires companies to invest in actions capable of removing possible barriers and obstacles that could prevent disabled consumers from accessing service environments such as bars, restaurants, among others. Regarding accessibility, the Statute for People with Disabilities (Law No. 13.146/2015) states:

Possibility and condition of being able to safely and autonomously use spaces, furniture, urban equipment, buildings, transportation, information and communication, including their systems and technologies, as well as other services and facilities open to the public, for public or private use, both in urban and rural areas, by people with disabilities or reduced mobility (Brazil, 2015).

However, it is known that not all commercial establishments in Brazil strictly comply with these requirements. It remains for disabled consumers to demonstrate 'self-efficacy' in order to take part in the consumption of gastronomic services, especially those more focused on socialization and interpersonal interaction, as is the case with bars. Milaković (2021) defines self-efficacy as a personal process that can be better understood as an individual's ability to adapt to a new situation. In other words, it represents a particular effort to overcome certain barriers, not accepting the embargo of a condition seen as limiting and taken for granted. According to Schunk and Pajares (2009), studies show that this has a strong influence on individuals' motivation, achievements and self-regulation. In light of this, Milaković (2021) suggests that two of the elements that best explain self-efficacy are people's sense of vulnerability and resilience.

The concept of vulnerability is related to an individual's low capacity to obtain certain benefits for themselves. According to Hill and Sharma (2020), it usually tends to be determined by factors of both psychosocial origin and contextual and environmental conditions. In the context of consumption, Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg (2005,

p.134) state that it is “a state of powerlessness that arises [...] when control is not in the hands of an individual”, and is capable of affecting the relationship of buying and/or enjoying a certain product, especially those of an experiential nature. Despite this, it is worth noting that, conceptually speaking, there is a clear distinction between what is meant by 'vulnerable consumer' and the notion of 'consumer vulnerability'.

Perera and Jayawickrama (2022) state that consumer vulnerability refers to the context of consumption, suggesting that anyone and everyone can become vulnerable. For example, people of a certain age when faced with certain attractions in an amusement park, water park, etc. On the other hand, Beudaert and Nau (2021) state that certain groups of consumers, such as those with disabilities, tend to be naturally considered vulnerable, as their condition is independent of situational factors. In light of this, Echeverri and Solomonson (2019) point out that consumers' experience is more likely to be negatively affected if certain standards of adequacy are not minimally followed, such as those set out in Law No. 10,098/2000 and the Statute for People with Disabilities. In other words, disabled consumers are more likely to encounter situations of vulnerability

when they frequent service environments such as bars.

Resilience, in turn, refers to the individual's ability to deal with stressful situations (or change) in a satisfactory way, recovering promptly from the adversities encountered (Baker et al., 2005). In terms of consumption, Baker and Mason (2012) state that it tends to manifest itself when individuals react positively to certain restrictions that access to and/or enjoyment of the product imposes on them due to their condition. In other words, when they overcome a situation of vulnerability. In the case of disabled consumers who frequent bars, the barriers they encounter are often physical in nature. As such, their resilience ends up being a consequence of their own vulnerability. On this basis, Milaković (2021) argues that a low degree of vulnerability certainly tends to reflect a considerable degree of resilience on the part of the subject.

Rajesh (2024) proposes that consumer resilience is the result of individual traits that can be grouped into five large categories: 1) Individual psychological; 2) Individual attitudes; 3) Individual socio-demographic; 4) Micro-environmental and 5) Macro-environmental. It is precisely in the first of these that self-efficacy is found. According to (Gielnik et al., 2020), this is the factor re-

sponsible for making individuals believe in their own abilities to achieve certain goals. For a disabled wheelchair user, going to a bar is a clear example of this. Attending this type of gastronomic establishment naturally means facing adversity. That's why, in Rajesh's view (2024), self-efficacy reflects an individual's strength not to accept the limits imposed on them. Thus, reinforcing Milaković's (2021) assumption that the vulnerability-resilience relationship is what best translates the notion of 'self-efficacy'.

Methodology

This research adopted a quantitative, conclusive-descriptive and single cross-sectional approach (Malhotra, 2019). The population delimited for the empirical study comprised wheelchair users living in the Metropolitan Region of Recife - PE, both men and women, aged 18 or over and frequenting bars in the city. It is estimated that the current population of wheelchair users living in Recife is approximately 182,000 inhabitants (IBGE, 2023). On the other hand, the platform TasteAtlas (2023) named the city as one of the 100 most influential in the gastronomic sector globally – 3rd best in the country, behind only São Paulo and Rio Janeiro –, which justifies

the study of this public in the area. A total of 51 wheelchair users took part in the research, and the data was collected in the first few months of 2023. The sample was included using the non-probabilistic techniques of snowball sampling (online collection) and convenience sampling (face-to-face collection) (Hair et al., 2009).

The digital instrument was made available to participants via Google Forms (distributed on social networks), while the face-to-face survey was carried out at the headquarters of the Association of Physically Handicapped People of the State of Pernambuco - Adefepe. The scales used were Likert-type, with seven points each (Table 1). The first, referring to the general experience of disabled consumers in bars, contained 4 items taken from the study by Shin et al. (2022). In addition, a scale proposed by Jang and Namkung (2009), also with 4 items, was used to assess the participants' relationship with aspects relating to the service atmosphere of the bars they usually frequent. Their sense of vulnerability was measured by combining the Sinclair and Wallston (1999) and Milaković (2021) scales. While the 3 items of the latter referred to the chances of the chair user being able to frequent bars of their choice, the 6 of the

former focussed specifically on psychological aspects of these subjects' vulnerability.

The participants' sense of resilience was measured using 15 scalar items. The first five were adapted from the study by Sánchez, Pedro and Izquierdo (2016), with the aim of assessing the ability of wheelchair users to persevere in order to frequent these gastronomic establishments, even in the face of difficulties. In turn, the remaining 10 items were taken again from Milaković's study (2021) and used in this research to measure the inter-

viewees' ability to overcome the difficulties they face in frequenting bars on a daily basis. Thus, the ability to persevere and to overcome were the two dimensions that served as the basis for measuring the sense of resilience of the participants in this study. Finally, the data collection instrument also included five socio-demographic and behavioural questions.

Construct	Items	Code	Source
Consumer Experience	In general, my consumer experiences are pleasant.	EXP1	Shin et al. (2022)
	In general, my consumer experiences are good.	EXP2	
	In general, my consumer experiences are unforgettable.	EXP3	
	In general, my consumer experiences are memorable.	EXP4	
Service atmosphere	Usually, the layout of the facilities allows me to move around easily.	ATM1	Jang e Namkung (2009)
	Usually, the internal design (physical environment) is visually appealing.	ATM2	
	Usually, the colors used create a pleasant atmosphere.	ATM3	
	Lighting usually creates a comfortable atmosphere.	ATM4	
	The ambient sound is usually pleasant.	ATM5	
Consumer Vulnerability	If I don't achieve my goals, I feel like a failure as a person.	VUL1	Sinclair e Wallston (1999); Milaković (2021)

	I feel entitled to receive better treatment from others than I usually do.	VUL2	
	I often feel inferior to other people.	VUL3	
	I need the approval of others to feel good about myself.	VUL4	
	I often set my goals too high and get frustrated when I try to achieve them.	VUL5	
	I usually feel resentful when others take advantage of me.	VUL6	
	When I want to go to a bar, I often have no choice but to give up my first preference and choose another/worse option.	VUL7	
	When I want to go to a bar, I often realize that there are very few options at my fingertips.	VUL8	
	Often I can't go to a bar I want and I have to choose a similar substitute.	VUL9	
Consumer Resilience	When things seem hopeless, I never give up.	RES1	Sánchez, Pedro e Izquierdo (2016); Milaković (2021)
	When I'm under pressure, I can concentrate and think clearly.	RES2	
	I consider myself a strong person.	RES3	
	I can deal with unpleasant feelings.	RES4	
	I think I'm in control of my life.	RES5	
	I usually adapt to the changes, if necessary, so that I can go to them (bars).	RES6	
	I can usually deal with any situation if I have to in order to go to them (bars).	RES7	
	I usually see the positive side of things, if necessary, so that I can go to them (bars).	RES8	
	I can usually cope with the pressure or stress of going to bars.	RES9	
	Usually, after some setback, I go back to them (bars).	RES10	
	I usually manage to achieve my goals, despite the difficulties, so that I can go to them (bars).	RES11	
	I usually stay focused, even under pressure, so that I can go to them (bars).	RES12	
	I'm hardly discouraged by the barriers to going to them (bars).	RES13	

	In general, I define myself as a strong person because I can go to them (bars).	RES14	
	I can usually deal with unpleasant feelings if I have to in order to go to bars.	RES15	

Table 1. Data collection instrument

Source: Research data (2023).

As mentioned, the questionnaire used for data collection in this study was made up of a total of 33 scalar items, divided into four dimensions. The participants' answers were analyzed using Pearson's correlation statistical test which, according to Paranhos et al. (2014), is capable of assessing the intensity of the correlation between variables in cases where it is difficult to identify the degree of interdependence between them. This technique was cho-

sen because it was considered appropriate for verifying the possible interactions between the experience of wheelchair users in bars and their own sense of vulnerability and resilience. Python software (version 3.10.6) was used for this analysis. IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 22) was used to descriptively analyze the instrument's items (mean and standard deviation). This methodological approach led to the results presented and discussed below.

Results and Discussion

Sample profile

The study participants were equally distributed between the female (49.02%) and male (49.02%) genders, with 1.96% of the sample preferring not to provide this information. The predominant age group was 21 to 30 year-old individuals (31.37%), followed by those between 31 and 40 (27.45%). Overall, the sample was made up of a majority of people aged between 21 and 50 (86.27%). With regard to level of education, 29.41% of respondents have a

postgraduate degree (Specialisation, Master's or Doctorate), while 17.65% have completed higher education and 21.57% have incomplete education. The rest said they had less than university education. In absolute terms, the most representative income bracket in the sample was that of individuals with monthly family earnings between R\$1,212.00 and R\$3,636.00 (45.10%). With regard to the behavioural parameter analyzed, 47.06% said they went to

bars between 2 and 5 times a month. The second most predominant group was those who go to bars no more than once a month (45.10%). The remaining participants usually go to bars 6 times or more in a single month.

Descriptive analysis of variables

After defining the sociodemographic profile and monthly bar attend-

ance, a descriptive analysis of the variables was carried out. Table 2 shows that the means ranged from 2.04 (VUL4) to 5.77 (RES3), and the standard deviations of the 33 items were mostly close to 2. According to Hair et al. (2009), larger standard deviations indicate greater dispersion in the answers. Thus, the results point to considerable variability in the participants' responses.

Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
EXP1	3,98	1,709	VUL3	2,46	1,776	RES5	4,69	1,966
EXP2	4,12	1,617	VUL4	2,04	1,313	RES6	4,62	1,806
EXP3	3,71	1,649	VUL5	2,52	1,515	RES7	3,71	1,934
EXP4	3,69	1,788	VUL6	3,77	1,976	RES8	4,21	1,753
ATM1	2,65	1,507	VUL7	3,52	1,894	RES9	3,73	1,634
ATM2	4,00	1,749	VUL8	4,62	2,002	RES10	3,35	1,888
ATM3	4,17	1,505	VUL9	4,33	1,958	RES11	3,94	1,720
ATM4	4,10	1,512	RES1	4,94	1,798	RES12	3,52	1,754
ATM5	4,06	1,776	RES2	4,06	1,934	RES13	3,83	1,779
VUL1	3,46	1,841	RES3	5,77	1,529	RES14	4,48	1,965
VUL2	3,62	1,717	RES4	4,98	1,831	RES15	3,90	1,871

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of variables

Source: Research data (2023).

Table 2 shows that the wheelchair users surveyed tend to have negative experiences in bars, with average responses below the midpoint of the scale (4.0), except for item EXP2. This

indicates that, even if good, the consumption experiences are not pleasant or memorable. It is believed that this is linked to the perceived lack of support for the specific needs of these consumers, as suggested by Carú and Cova

(2006). Of the five aspects of the service atmosphere evaluated, the physical facilities were considered to have the most negative impact on the experience, probably due to non-compliance with the Accessibility Law (10.098) or the Statute for People with Disabilities (Law 13.146), making it difficult to get around.

Table 2 reveals that, in relation to vulnerability, the participants' average responses were generally low (except for VUL8 and VUL9), indicating that they do not consider themselves socially inferior or see disability as a justification for discrimination. For Isichei (2022), vulnerability can cause rejection, which Echeverri and Salomonson (2019) associate with the misperception of bars as inaccessible. The wheelchair users interviewed denied feelings of incapacity or vulnerability, emphasizing their ability to enjoy leisure. However, they mentioned the scarcity of accessible bars, leading them to opt for suitable alternatives when necessary.

Regarding resilience, the mean scores of the wheelchair users surveyed varied, being both below and above the central point of the scales (Table 2). Specifically with regard to the ability to persevere, all the indices exceeded 4.00, with RES3 achieving the highest score

(5.77), indicating that the participants consider themselves to be strong people. On the other hand, most of the averages relating to the ability to overcome (also linked to resilience) were below the central point, except for items RES6, RES8 and RES14. This result shows that, although they define themselves as positive, strong and adaptable - including by going to bars despite being wheelchair users - these individuals are not willing to face any situation to do so.

Analysing the correlation between variables

The subsequent analysis sought to assess the relationship between the consumption experience of wheelchair users in bars and their vulnerability. Figure 1 reveals a direct linear correlation between these variables: the increase in consumption experience goes hand in hand with an increase in vulnerability in the same proportion. According to Voorhees et al. (2017), presence in the service environment implies inseparability from vulnerability, although its magnitude is unpredictable. The dispersion of respondents in Figure 1 indicates variability in responses for both variables.

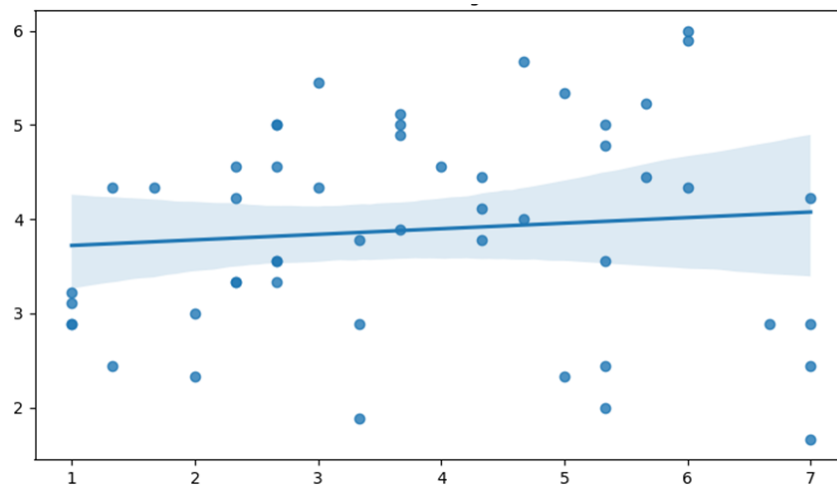


Figure 1. Relationship between the variables experience and vulnerability
Source: Research data (2023).

Figure 2 reveals a more linear relationship between 'Consumer Experience' and 'Consumer Resilience' than previously observed. The proximity of the results to the regression line suggests greater regularity in the responses, which, according to Paranhos

et al. (2014), indicates strong linearity. Considering that resilience is associated with past experiences (Glandon, 2015), the greater uniformity in the participants' responses can be attributed to their probably similar consumption experiences as wheelchair users in bars.

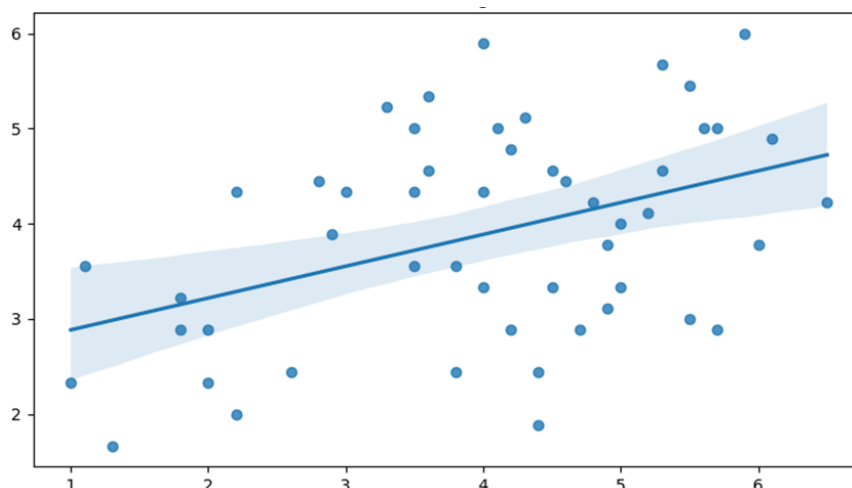


Figure 2. Relationship between the variables experience and resilience
Source: Research data (2023).

To deepen the analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient ('r') was applied to measure the strength of the association between variables (Hair et al., 2009). Table 3 shows the values, which range from -1.00 to 1.00 (Corrar et al., 2011). The correlation between 'Consumer Experience' and 'Consumer Vul-

nerability' was $r=0.01$, revealing a positive linear relationship, albeit tenuous. Paranhos et al. (2014) recommend careful interpretative analysis when 'r' approaches extremes, despite statistical significance.

	Vulnerability	Resilience	Service atmosphere
Experience	0,01	0,42	0,576**
Vulnerability		-0,01	
Service atmosphere	-0,238	-0,102	

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: Research data (2023).

The study evaluated the relationship between the consumption experience and the vulnerability of wheelchair users in bars, an important concept for understanding certain consumers (Baker, Gentry and Rittenburg, 2005). The positive correlation found was weak, indicating a similar theoretically dubious mutual influence. Milaković (2021) argues that vulnerability considers both internal and external factors. Therefore, the correlation may not be relevant to the experience of wheelchair users in bars. Commuri and Ekici (2008) point out that 'vulnerable' groups don't always feel this way.

The correlation between 'Consumer Experience' and 'Consumer Resilience' ($r=0.42$ in Table 3) reveals a stronger positive linear relationship. Variations in one tend to impact the other significantly. For Rajesh (2024), resilience has multiple factors, such as expectations influencing the ability to persevere/overcome. However, Glendon (2015) associates resilience more with past experiences. Overcoming obstacles to go to bars can enhance the consumer experience for wheelchair users.

The correlations between Service Atmosphere and Vulnerability ($r=-0.238$) and Resilience ($r=-0.102$) were negative (Table 3), although weak. This

suggests that a more/less adequate atmosphere is associated with an opposite sense of vulnerability and resilience among participants. Echeverri and Salomonson (2019) link inadequate atmospheres to the vulnerability of clients with disabilities. Rajesh (2024) adds that the resilience of these customers may increase as they become suspicious of the suitability of the venue, as they are likely to need to overcome barriers to enjoy an inaccessible bar.

Table 3 shows an almost null correlation ($r=-0.01$) between Vulnerability and Consumer Resilience, suggesting that participants do not perceive both to the same degree. Although Uekusa and Matthewman (2019) admit their coexistence, the result supports Coelho's (2021) idea that resilience mitigates vulnerability and vice versa. For Maurer (2016), difficulties require overcoming. The negative correlation may indicate that the wheelchair users interviewed do not feel vulnerable when they go to bars and consider themselves resilient.

The relationship between 'Consumer Experience' and 'Service Atmosphere' ($r=0.576$ in Table 3) showed a significant positive correlation. This indicates that a better service atmosphere in bars, especially in terms of accessibility,

tends to optimize the experience of wheelchair users, a result similar to that of Poria, Reichel and Brandt (2011) in the hotel sector. This was the highest correlation observed, emphasizing that an adequate consumption experience for wheelchair users in bars depends on a service environment that meets their needs.

In summary, the analyses revealed the existence of: 1) a low-intensity positive correlation between Experience and Consumer Vulnerability; 2) a moderate-intensity positive correlation between Experience and Consumer Resilience; 3) a low-intensity negative correlation between Service Atmosphere and Consumer Vulnerability; 4) negative correlation of low intensity between Service Atmosphere and Consumer Resilience; 5) negative correlation of low intensity between Vulnerability and Consumer Resilience and, finally, 6) positive correlation of moderate intensity between Consumer Experience and Service Atmosphere, this being the most significant relationship of the study, as shown in Figure 3.

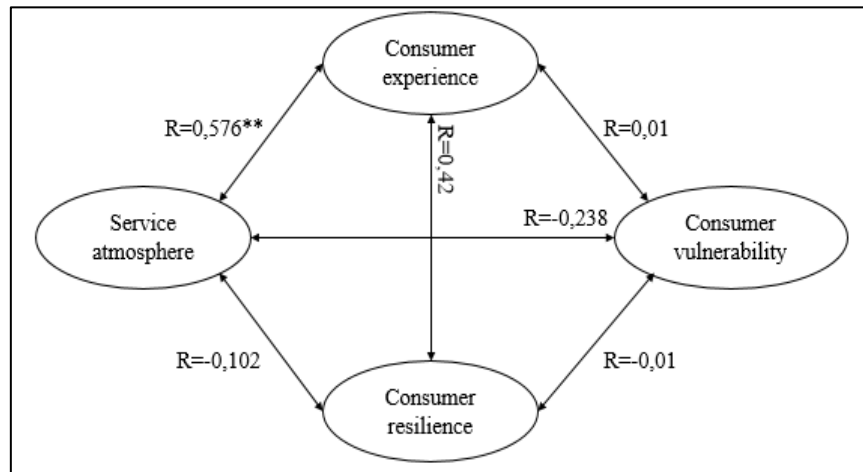


Figure 3. Summary of the correlations analyzed

Source: Research data (2023).

These results confirm the findings of previous studies on the effect of the servicescape on the consumer experience (Bitner, 1992; Hanks & Line, 2018; Lin, Gursoy & Zhang, 2020). Although Poria, Reichel and Brandt (2011)

have already included disabled consumers in other discussions in the field of hospitality and management, this research focussed specifically on wheelchair users in bar service environments.

Conclusion

In the context of hospitality, where bars are a substantial part of the gastronomic offer, it is extremely important to understand the servicescape in order to guarantee a satisfactory consumer experience (Pytharoulakis & Zouni, 2020; Yan & Felicen, 2021; Kim & Lee, 2022; Kuo & Zhang, 2023). However, it has to be considered that access to many of these establishments is still not democratic in the sense of including different audiences, such as disabled

people. This study sought to investigate how the consumption experience of wheelchair users in bar service environments could be related to their sense of vulnerability and resilience. The results revealed that, of all the correlations tested, the one between the consumption experience and the servicescape was the most relevant for the interviewees. This emphasizes that, in their view, their sense of vulnerability and resilience tends to play a less significant role than the servicescape itself in the consumer experience in bars.

This research represents an advance in contemporary debates about food, gastronomy and hospitality, both through the theoretical articulation presented and the practical implications that result from the data analyzed. In terms of theory, it expands knowledge and provides insights into accessibility as an elementary factor for a gastronomy that is more geared towards human experiences and environments designed for social interaction. Therefore, this study contributes to reducing the existing gap in the literature on the intersections between disabilities, gastronomy and commensality.

In the managerial sphere, the results of this study can be used to help develop strategies to guide entrepreneurs in the gastronomy sector on how to make their service offering more suitable for wheelchair users. Faced with a market scenario in which consumers are increasingly demanding, the bar sector needs to promote accessible services and facilities. In this way, the results of this study provide insights into how to optimize service provision processes, avoiding obstacles to their use, especially for people with disabilities. According to the results of the study, the most significant correlation occurred between the dimensions of consumer experience and service atmosphere. This reinforces the need for bars

to provide environments that are fully accessible to customers with disabilities, offering a servicescape designed to cater for this consumer, which will have an impact on their experience. It is therefore suggested that bar managers and professionals involved in accessibility in gastronomic establishments plan, build and implement services and infrastructure that can meet the needs of disabled consumers.

With this in mind, we recommend three operational strategies that can be applied in these establishments. Firstly, managers and owners should study the legislation in force and plan the physical structure of the bar according to the standards and guidelines of specialized professionals in accessibility. Secondly, it is essential to have a team of staff who are prepared and qualified to serve disabled customers properly. It is believed that this can give these customers more security, since the first contact is made with waiters and hostesses. Thirdly, it is important to clearly signal that the bar has adaptations for disabled customers. As well as reinforcing the perception of welcome, this can boost the bar's reputation and make it seen as an accessible business.

Limitations include the fact that the number of participants with the profile defined for the study was lower than expected. Despite several attempts

to contact them, as well as personal approaches, many of them showed no interest in contributing to the research, because they didn't think that the results could lead to real changes in the status quo. It should be noted that, for practical reasons, it was also not possible to approach these individuals in the bars themselves, at the time of consumption. It was felt that this type of approach could result in questionnaires being filled in inappropriately and/or in people giving inauthentic answers (due to the movement of people, noise, drinking, etc.). For future research, it is recommended that the sample size be increased so that the results can represent the population of wheelchair users in a given locality. Furthermore, the use of qualitative methods is also suggested in order to gain a deeper understanding of the behaviour of these consumers. Finally, we suggest adopting an intersectional perspective, considering factors such as gender, class and ethnicity, which can also influence the consumption experience of people with disabilities.

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