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NURTURING HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS WORLD

HOSPITALITY CLUSTER

Editors:

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Customer Revisit Intention towards Mamak Restaurants in Penang

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ABSTRACT

The study examines customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang and to find out the relationship between food quality, service quality and environment on customer revisit intention. A survey was conducted using questionnaires involving 375 respondents who revisits mamak restaurants. Descriptive and correlation analysis were used to analyze obtained data. Findings revealed that the three variables are significantly related to customer revisit intention with environment showing the strongest relationship while food quality showing the weakest relationship on customer revisit intention. The results are in line with previous researches whereby environment is an important determinant affecting customer revisit intention. Implications and recommendations were provided for future researchers in line with the study.

Keywords: *mamak restaurant, customer revisit intention, food quality, service quality, environment*

INTRODUCTION

Foodservice industry is among the fastest growing industry in the global market and it is growing rapidly in Malaysia (Euromonitor International, 2019). Malaysia is moving rapidly along with the direction in the foodservice together with advanced and developing nations worldwide. The Malaysia Department of Statistics (2017) reported that the number of foodservice establishments has increased from 130,570 in 2010 to 167,490 in 2015 with a total annual growth rate of 5.1%. The rapid growth rate of foodservice industry leads to changes in customers' food habit and demands from people. People are eating out more often as lifestyle changes due to modernization and development. In response to this phenomenon, more new food outlets are being introduced by the local foodservice industries around in Malaysia (Ramly, Ahmad & Ahmadin, 2003). In recent years, consumers are increasingly dining out which affected the food consumption trend in urban areas of advanced and economically growing countries (Akbar & Alauddeen, 2012). In Malaysia, Penang is recognized as the smallest state in Malaysia with the tag of "The Pearl of the Orient" and known as "Food Capital of Malaysia" (Abubakar, 2010). Several studies revealed that it was first discovered and began in Penang in the 1930s (Ramly et al., 2003; Abubakar, 2010). President of Malaysian Muslim Restaurants Operators Association (PRESMA) reported that mamak restaurant industry has generated revenue which contributed to approximately RM 8 billion to Malaysians economy (Bakar & Farinda, 2012).

Othman, Kandasamy, Bakar and Chua (2018) mentioned that Malaysians are familiar with popular mamak restaurants and being recognized as one of the fastest and consistently growing foodservice in Malaysia. It acts as a cultural representation for eating out in the open at night (Jalis & Husin, 2018). It is mainly popular for their menu such as teh tarik, roti canai and their curry (Omar, Karim, Bakar & Omar, 2015). Based on Omar et al. (2015), the restaurants operate 24/7 without closing successfully is what made them popular. People often meet up with friends and family to enjoy mamak food (Bakar & Farinda, 2012). Abubakar (2010) mentioned that the restaurants or stalls serve "nasi kandar" which is the most popular mamak food. Apart from that, the foods contain many quality Indian herbs and spices cooked in Malaysian style that make the food toothsome (Bakar & Farinda, 2012; Omar & Omar, 2018). There are well-known mamak restaurants such as Pelita which has successfully managed to attract high profile people to visit and dine in such as Malaysian Prime Minister (Bakar & Farinda, 2012).

Mohsin (2005) proved that, foodservice establishment is facing challenges in finding the right mix of attributes that influence revisit intention of the customers. Parsa, Self, Njite and King (2005) mentioned that food quality is the critical success factor to a restaurant's success. The responsibilities of local authority to ensure healthy food at foodservice establishment is becoming challenging as the increasing awareness of healthy diet in better environment (WHO, 2002). People nowadays emphasize on food quality while enjoying the food at the food service establishments (Yusof, Ibrahim, Muhammad & Ismail, 2016).

Malay Mail (2019) reported that restaurant owners are exploiting market by misusing the 'halal' certificate in their premise and the issue of hiring non-muslims to operate their business. Metro News and The Star Online (2018) stated that customer's complaint as they expect the place where they dine to have a clean environment and food prepared hygienically. Food quality is being doubted when the issue on food contamination is raised due to outdoor seating at the restaurant (Ali & Abdurahman & Hamali, 2012). There were issues occurred when the restaurants do not comply with the local authority regulation whereby the local enforcement is authority unit has terminated the illegal practice by confiscating seating in the open area, but it was only for a while since the operators continue on the previous act of placing seats all along the roadside around the restaurants.

The aim of this study is to provide insights on customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang. The findings of this study are important since mamak restaurants are growing in the cities. However, this study emphasizes on the determinants that influence customer revisit intention to mamak restaurant in the scope of selected areas, Penang.

There are three objectives of this research:

1. To examine the relationship between food quality that influences customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.
2. To examine the relationship between service quality that influences customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.
3. To examine the relationship between environment that influences customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.

Significance of the Study

Researchers

The research paper helps the researchers to explore and to discover critical aspects on how food quality, service quality and environment determine customer revisit intention on mamak restaurants in Penang that past research have not discovered. Future researchers may gain insights by referring to the topic of this research paper.

Food and Beverage Industry

The research paper provides insights to the industry on customer revisit intention to mamak restaurants in Penang. Operators and marketers will be able to adapt to customer intention and meeting customer demand and the industry can achieve competitive advantages through better decision making which benefits the industry in gaining higher profit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Revisit Intention towards mamak restaurants

Past research has shown that the value of gaining new customers is way lower than value of retaining customers (Yan, Wang & Chau, 2015). Some studies have shown that customer satisfaction is important to food service managers because it leads to customer revisit, brand loyalty, and new customers through recommendation (Kim, Ng & Kim, 2009). From the hospitality sector's view, customers not only desire a particular quality of food, but also demand for psychological satisfaction through emotional and social interaction during the dining experience (Marinkovic, Senic, Ivkov, Dimitrovski & Bjelic, 2019). Hence, the elements other than food which are of important

to the guest could trigger satisfaction and revisit intention in restaurants must be identified. Food quality is essential in manipulating revisit intention in a restaurant (Kim, Lee, Kim & Ryu, 2011).

Food Quality

Many researches have proven that critical dimension in eating out is frequently known as food quality (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Soriano, 2002; Peri, 2006; Eliwa, 2006) and Susskind and Chan (2000) claimed that food quality is a leading factor for customer patronizing a restaurant. Tastiness of the food is one of the key reasons for customers to dine in a restaurant since it is the most apparent tangible element for the customers to evaluate the restaurant's food quality (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2003). Ng (2005) pointed out that food presentation is believed to create the first impression for the customers as it goes through the sense of sight. Besides, Bakar and Farinda (2012) concluded that customer prefer to dine in mamak restaurants because of the food aroma. Therefore, food quality affects customer revisit intention and restaurants' choice (Clark & Wood, 1999; Sulek & Hensley, 2004).

Service Quality

The overall perfection of the service provided based on customers' perception is often regarded as service quality (Zeithaml, 1988). Nikolich and Sparks (1995) concluded that service provider's performance during service delivery will result in service quality evaluation of a restaurant which is evaluated based on the perception of customer while interaction with service provider. Service quality is reviewed as a crucial factor and major element that will determine customer future visiting behaviour (Omar, Juhdi, Ahmad & Nazri, 2014; Munna, Abang Abdullah & Rozario, 2009; Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 2000; Namkung & Jang, 2007 and Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Bakar and Farinda (2012) urged that it is undeniable that customers dine in mamak restaurants because of the friendly service where some of the workers can even remember the name of repeating customers and their preferred food in the restaurant.

Environment

Othman et al. (2009) urged that due to globalization, customers are expecting restaurants and perceived it to be more than just a place to dine. Physical environment of a restaurant acts as an indicator for what customers to judge and rate the quality of a restaurant which portrays on an impact on customers' perception regarding food quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Rys, Fredericks & Luery, 1987; Wall & Berry, 2007; Omar et. al., 2014). The statement was also proven by Lim (2010) and Chang (2000) that the response and judgement made by customers to a restaurant is based on the environment. Maintaining the environment of the restaurant is a unique strategy of mamak restaurants to support the business and providing a different atmosphere experience compared to other restaurants in terms of cheerful environment, open-air concept and its ambience is found to stimulate the awareness response to customers (Othman et al., 2018).

Research Hypothesis

In this study, the three hypotheses tested are:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between food quality and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.
- H2: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between environment and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.

Research Framework

The research model used for this study is to investigate customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang. Food quality, service quality and environment determine customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang which are used in this study to test the hypothesis.

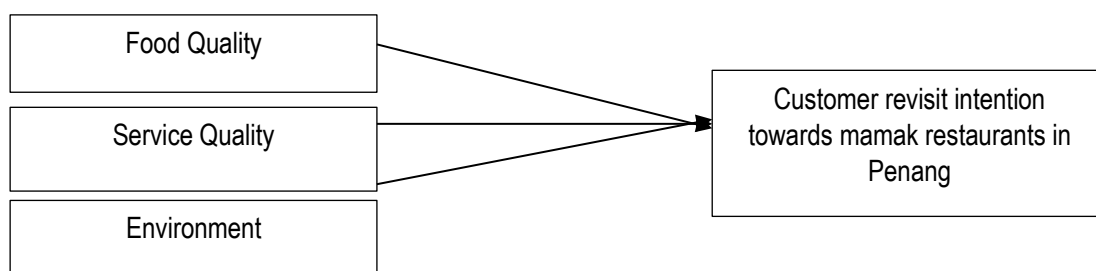


Figure 1: Research Framework for Customer Revisit Intention towards mamak restaurants

Source: *Determinants of UiTM Students' Revisit Intention to Kopitiam in Penang*

(Yusof, N. M., Ibrahim, A. A., Muhammad, R. & Ismail, T. A. T., 2016)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used quantitative method to gain data through questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in bilingual (English and Malay). The questionnaire consists of 3 sections with a total of 26 items. The first section which is demographic profile includes six multiple choice questions. The second and third section are on independent variables and dependent variable which include 20 items with six-point Likert-scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree. The questions were adopted from previous studies (Omar et al., 2014; Yusof et al, 2016; Othman et al., 2009; Lim, 2017) by measuring customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in terms of food quality, service quality and environment factors. Therefore, the instrument is considered reliable.

Data Collection

Pilot testing were conducted with 30 respondents in Penang to test the reliability of the study prior to conducting fieldwork. The fieldwork was then proceeded by distributing questionnaires randomly to 384 target respondents who revisit to Mamak restaurants in Penang upon consent from respondents. Respondents were required to answer all questions according to the six-point Likert-scale. After all questionnaires were answered by the respondents, the data were collected. Researchers collected the questionnaires personally from the respondents in order to secure the information obtain. The final questionnaires collected was reported at 97.7% of response rate with a total 375 usable questionnaires.

Sampling

This study was conducted by using simple random sampling as sampling method to collect the data as it is the simplest form and can be carried out without any bias (Malhotra, 2010). The purpose of simple random sampling is to select the individual sample as the representative of the population. In brief, the sample size would be 384 persons based on the rule of thumb proposed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

Data Analysis

SPSS version 24.0 was used to analyse the quantitative data collected from respondents. Frequency analysis is being used to analyse the data on respondents' demographic profile. Descriptive analysis was employed to identify and examine customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants and Pearson's Correlation was adopted to examine the relationship between food quality, service quality and environment on customer revisit intention toward mamak restaurant. Findings with a p-value of less than the conventional value of 0.05 were regarded as statistically significant and the hypothesis can be accepted.

FINDINGS

Profile Sample

Table 1
 Demographic Profile (n=375).

Respondent Profile	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	224	59.7
	Female	151	40.3
Age	Below 20	37	9.9
	20 – 29	177	47.2
	30 – 39	112	29.9
	40 – 49	35	9.3
	50 and above	14	3.7
Race	Malay	147	39.2
	Chinese	119	31.7
	Indian	98	26.1
	Others	11	2.9
Marital status	Single	186	49.6
	Married	173	46.1
	Widow / Separated /	9	2.4
	Divorced	7	1.9
	Prefer not to tell		
Monthly income	Below RM1,000	89	23.7
	RM1,000 – RM2,999	112	29.9
	RM3,000 – RM3,999	130	34.7
	RM4,000 – RM4,999	29	7.7
	RM 5,000 – RM5,999	8	2.1
	RM6,000 and above	7	1.9
Frequency of visiting Mamak restaurants in a Week	Once a week	185	49.3
	2 – 3 times	158	42.1
	4 – 5 times	25	6.7
	6 times and more	7	1.9

Table 1 shows the characterization of the respondents in this study. 224 out of 375 (59.7%) respondents are male while 151 (40.3%) respondents are female. 9.9% of the respondents' aged below 20 years old, 47.2% of the respondents aged between 20 to 29 years old, 29.9% of the respondents aged between 30 to 39 years old, 9.3% of the respondents aged between 40 to 49 years old and only 3.7% of the respondents were aged 50 years old and above. 39.2% of the respondents were Malays, 49.6% of the total respondents were single and a majority of the respondents earned RM3,000 to RM3,999 monthly, representing 34.7%. In addition, 49.3% of the respondents visited mamak restaurants once a week, 42.1% of them visited 2 to 3 times weekly, 6.7% of the respondents visited 4 to 5 times weekly while 1.9% of respondents visited 6 times and more weekly.

Analysis on Customer Revisit Intention towards Mamak Restaurants

Table 2
 Mean, standard deviation (SD) of items and variables (n = 375).

Variables	Statements	Mean	SD
Food Quality	The taste of food in Mamak restaurants is authentic.	4.82	0.989
	Food served suits my taste.	4.77	1.058
	The Mamak restaurants serve freshly cooked food.	4.73	1.071

		Food served by Mamak restaurants stimulates appetite.	4.82	1.050
		Food served is attractive and tempting.	4.51	1.067
		Subsection score	3.92	1.049
Service Quality		Waiters at Mamak restaurants are friendly.	4.53	1.074
		Waiters at Mamak restaurants are attentive.	4.45	1.066
		Mamak restaurant provides efficient counter and table cashier service.	4.51	0.986
		Short waiting time for food ordered.	4.31	1.048
		Delivering of the food correctly.	4.77	1.083
		Subsection score	3.59	0.945
Environment		Mamak restaurants provides comfortable temperature.	3.26	1.212
		The dining area in Mamak restaurants is virtually clean.	3.49	1.069
		The mood of the Mamak restaurants is entertaining.	3.43	1.149
		Mamak restaurants provides comfortable seats.	3.50	1.079
		The lighting of Mamak restaurants creates comfortable atmosphere.	3.81	1.048
		Subsection score	3.50	0.912
Customer revisit intention		Food quality of Mamak restaurants affects my revisit intention.	5.82	0.721
		Service quality of Mamak restaurants affects my revisit intention.	5.72	0.874
		The environment of Mamak restaurants affects my revisit intention.	4.62	1.497
		I will revisit Mamak restaurants.	5.73	0.863
		I prefer Mamak restaurants compared to other restaurants.	4.58	1.500
		Subsection score	5.30	0.720

“Food quality” scored the highest (mean = 3.92, SD = 1.049) indicating that food quality determined customer revisit intention since most respondents agreed with the item. Respondents agreed that mamak restaurant served food that stimulates appetite and the taste of food is authentic (mean = 4.82, SD = 1.050, 0.989). The respondents agreed that food served suits their taste (mean = 4.77, SD = 1.058) and Mamak restaurants serve freshly cooked food (mean = 4.73, SD = 1.071). Meanwhile, the food served is attractive and tempting scored the lowest (mean = 4.51, SD = 1.067). The finding is in line with previous research by Namkung and Jang (2007) who found that food quality is the one of the most crucial elements for dining experience.

“Service quality” scored the second highest (mean = 3.59, SD = 0.945). Respondents agreed that the food served in mamak restaurants was delivered correctly (mean = 4.77, SD = 1.083). Respondents also agreed that waiters are friendly (mean = 4.53, SD = 1.074) and mamak restaurants provide efficient counter and table cashier service (mean = 4.51, SD = 0.986). Respondents agreed that waiters are attentive (mean = 4.45, SD = 1.066). Meanwhile, short waiting time for food ordered scored the lowest (mean = 4.31, SD = 1.048). The finding indicates that service quality successfully determined customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants and is supported by Shah Alam and Mohamed Sayuti (2011). Based on the study, service quality has been recognized as being essential for retaining customers. Customers prefer to visit the food establishments again if they are satisfied with the service experienced.

“Environment” scored the lowest among the variables (mean = 3.50, SD = 0.912). Specifically, respondents slightly agreed that the lighting in mamak restaurants created comfortable atmosphere (mean = 3.81, SD = 1.048) and provision of comfortable seats (mean = 3.50, SD = 1.079) which is in accordance to the finding of Othman et al. (2018) on the ambience found in mamak restaurants stimulates the awareness of response to customers. Next, the dining area is virtually clean scored (mean = 3.49, SD = 1.069) and the mood is entertaining (mean = 3.43, SD = 1.149). The restaurants provide comfortable temperature scored the lowest (mean = 3.26, SD = 1.212).

The dependent variable – customer revisit intention scored 5.30 (SD = 0.720). Literally, respondents strongly agreed that food quality affects their revisit intention (mean = 5.82, SD = 0.721) and respondents will revisit mamak restaurants in the future (mean = 5.73, SD = 0.863). Service quality also affects respondents revisit intention (mean = 5.72, SD = 0.874) and environment affects respondents in revisit intention (mean = 4.62, SD = 1.497). In the past research, it has been proven that the value of attracting new customers is lower than the value of retaining customers

(Yan, Wang, & Chau, 2015). Surprisingly, respondents prefer mamak restaurants compared to other restaurants (mean = 4.58, SD = 1.500).

Relationship between Food Quality, Service Quality and Environment on Customer Revisit Intention towards Mamak Restaurants

Table 3
 Pearson's Correlation between Food Quality, Service Quality and Environment on Customer Revisit Intention.

		Customer Revisit Intention
Food Quality	Pearson Correlation	.203**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	375
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	375
Environment	Pearson Correlation	.486**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	375

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 3 indicates that food quality and customer revisit intention (.203) suggests a weak linear relationship. Following service quality and customer revisit intention (.462) indicating a positive linear relationship. Meanwhile, environment and customer revisit intention (.486) indicating a moderate linear relationship. All three variables are positively correlated to customer revisit intention and they are significant since $p < 0.05$.

H1: There is a significant relationship between food quality and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.

The present study shows similarity to the past research that mentioned food quality plays an essential part in the overall restaurant experience by influencing customer revisit intention (Peri, 2006; Eliwa, 2006). It is further supported by Clark and Wood (1999) that food quality is a fundamental aspect in affecting customer revisit intention in restaurant's choice.

H2: There is a significant relationship between service quality and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.

The statement is proven by past studies of Omar et al. (2014) who mentioned that service quality is among the major element to be included as fundamental elements for dining experience that will determine customer future visiting behaviour. Bakar and Farinda (2012) noticed that customers dine in mamak restaurants because of the friendly service and workers can even remember the name of repeating customers and their preferred food in the restaurant.

H3: There is a significant relationship between environment and customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang.

The hypothesis is in accordance with the finding in Ryu and Han (2011) study that proved customers invested in a better eating environment compared to the previous time. Kokko (2005) reported that customers perceived that the most positive characteristic of a restaurant is environment, which is even more important than the food served.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION

Several challenges and limitation faced in the study are to be highlighted for future research purposes. The respondents' behaviour in answering the questionnaire could doubted on truthfulness that will eventually result in invalid finding that should be excluded from the study. Future research is encouraged to increase the reliability of the study by being more creative in collecting data from respondents like using qualitative method such as in-depth interview to gain reliable and detailed data. Secondly, the researchers face limitation in accuracy of the data interpretation due to the exclusion of unusable data collected. In this study, the researchers only covered three determinants. However, there might be other essential determinants that play an important role in determining customer revisit intention that are omitted by the researchers. Therefore, future research is encouraged to conduct more research by exploring into other determinants such as location, price and facilities which could truly determine customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants. Future research could consider a new location of conducting the survey since customers may have different opinion due to different demographic profile. It is suggested that comparative study for mamak restaurants in different states in Malaysia by expanding the sampling frame to places such as Kuala Lumpur and Johor to benchmark customer revisit intention.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted in order to examine the determinants of customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants in Penang. Overall, the results obtained indicated that both service quality and environment have a moderate relationship against customer revisit intention towards mamak restaurants. Although a majority of the respondents agreed that food quality contributed the most in revisit intention towards the restaurants, but it was proven that the relationship between food quality and customer revisit intention is significantly weak due to customers nowadays are expecting restaurants and perceived it to be more than just a place to dine. The study conducted also proved that even though the determinants are still far from reaching maximum level, customer will revisit mamak restaurants in Penang due to its popularity among millennials and locals. Therefore, the objectives of this study are achieved.

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