Theme Restaurant: Influence of Atmospheric Factors towards the Customers' Revisit Intention

Wan Nazriah Wan Nawawi*, Wan Nor Bayah Wan Kamarudin, Amanina Mat Ghani, Aina Mawaddah Adnan

[1]Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA (Terengganu), 23000 Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia

wanna035@tganu.uitm.edu.my*; wnbayah@tganu.uitm.edu.my; amanina2979@tganu.uitm.edu.my; wanna035@gmail.com
+6017-9192243

Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the theme restaurants' atmospheric factors and to determine the most important factor that influences the customers' revisit intention at Kuantan, Pahang. The 200 questionnaires had been distributed using the convenience sampling method, however, only 196 questionnaires returned were valid to be analyzed. The finding showed that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor according to respondents' monthly income as referred to the highest mean value. The study perhaps could help the restaurants and outlet retailers in training and make aware of their employees about these variables, as well as management, strategies, and objectives.

Keywords: Theme Restaurant; Atmospheric; Physical Environment; Revisit Intention

1.0 Introduction

Nowadays people are attracted to go to the restaurants that may enhance their quality of life and give them different experience when dine-in which, especially themed restaurants. It is because putting a theme to a restaurant is a way to communicate with their ethnicity that may interact with a different culture and gastronomy (Bailey and Tian, 2002; Barbas, 2003; Germann-Molz, 2003; Long, 2003; Tian, 2001). People always seek for something new for fulfilling their needs and wants. This is because they easily get tired of something that is too typical for them. French, et al. (2001) stated that some changes are made nowadays in the community's trends that hypes up the popularity of outside dining.

Traditionally, Malaysians prefer their own cuisine as compared to fast food. There are a number of case studies catered in Malaysia which includes cities like Bandar Baru Bangi (Selangor), Jitra (Kedah) and Segamat (Johor) found that urban workers, students, and families have developed a trend which had been eating out because they could not settle to eat at home or because in their home, there is no food (Ali & Abdullah, 2012). The Malaysian statistics reported that more than 64% of Malaysians eat at least one meal per day outside of the home (Tan, 2014). In the same article, there is a statement from the head researcher Prof Dr. Jean-Pierre Poulain, who is also the co-director of Taylor's Toulouse University Centre and the head of its Chair of Food Studies: Food, Cultures, and Health that says "Malaysia has a very high frequency of (people) eating out. If you go to Kuala Lumpur or the countryside, you can always find people eating out,". Besides that, the culture of eating outside had been on the rise (Tan & Yeap, 2001), and it is because of several reasons that may include the better of education, a greater level of income and a lowered unemployment rate of Malaysia. This is supported by Stewart et al., (2004) and Ishida et al., (2003) stated that households that are more expensive are less likely to spend in other things besides leisure products and services, especially full service and ambiance. One of the reason is that people in Malaysia

nowadays are eager to experience a much better-eating atmosphere. Usually, upgraded dining establishments' guests will also demand a complete experience of dining instead of just good food (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Andersson and Mossberg (2004) have successfully come out with five factors that give impacts on meal experience, which reflects the cuisine, the interior of the restaurant, services, company and other guests, plus, they have clarified these factors as meal experience's 'satisfiers'. Clearly, there are factors from the atmosphere that influence people to eat out.

An atmospheric factor is one of the crucial parts that management should consider in attracting more customers to come to the restaurant. It is a trend nowadays for customers to choose a restaurant that they want to dine in based on environmental issues. Chow et al. (2013) stated that if a restaurant does not care about the cleanliness of the workplace, this may spoil the customers' appetite. This may give the negative impression in customers' opinions and may influence them to not revisit that particular restaurant. Customers will not be energetic if the environment of the restaurant is too dull or boring. The management should create a restaurant concept to show that they are different and unique from other restaurants. When there is something new in the restaurant, there will be repetitive customers who would enjoy having a meal there. This will help the restaurant to be parallel with the norms of Generation Y, which is our generation right now.

Those who were born between 1977 and 1994 are known as Generation Y (Pawan et al., 2014) and are currently aged between 18 and 35. Generation Y covers all the present population who harnesses the resent culture and norms. The people of this generation spends more money and dines out more than the earlier generations and they have been regarded as the key segment of the market in the industry of food service (Pawan et al., 2014). Generation Y has been known to be adventurous in new food trying and new place visiting along with their rare and bizarre eating habit. She stated this generation of the Malaysian people is 26.9% of Malaysia's population. Pawan added, generation Y is very good with their spending power and when they become a customer, they are savvy. Clearly, this generation is the key market segment in the foodservice industry because of their eating habits, lifestyle and adventurous. In addition to that, Generation Y people find it necessary to constantly post pictures of their food. With the existence of GoPro, smartphones and expensive DSLR cameras, supported by photo-based social media such as Instagram and so on, this phenomenon has become a culture that is out of control. In other words, it has become an obsession to the people these days. Schirripa (2015) mentioned that generation's "selfie obsession" has turned into an entire industry. So, what should theme restaurants contribute to the current trend of the people is that they have to prepare good sceneries or nice atmospheres to act as the "background" for this 'selfi-ers' to take photos. Instead of supplying food for their tummy demands, restaurants also can supply a place for their self-taking picture demands. If these are fulfilled, there is a possibility of influencing their revisit intention.

Revisit intention has been dubbed as a major research topic in a competitive market of tourism destinations. Despite the considerable number of research on repeat visitors, it remains unclear on why people unaware of repeat visits. Further stated the repeat visitation as a factor of loyalty in tourists destination that is strongly affected by destination attributes. (Som et al., 2012).There are studies that showed revisit intention can be understood by the previous visits amount (Petrick et al., 2001). So, management and foodservice providers should think of some new ideas that may lure customers to go to their restaurant. Customers revisit intentions are important because they are the ones that will generate income for the restaurant. This study focuses more on the atmospheric factors of theme restaurants that trigger their revisit intention. Before this, there were few researchers who explored the factors that affect the revisit intention in theme restaurants.

Nomenclature

Theme restaurant	A concept of restaurant designed at a particular spot or area with a distinctive building, style of music and personality. (Hsu & Powers, 2002)
Atmospheric	A "general interior" atmospherics category which includes music, sound, lighting, scent, colour, temperature (often referred to as "ambient" environmental cues), and visual design elements (Turley & Milliman, 2000)
Physical Environment	A simply the physical characteristics of the room. This refers to things like the size of the room, how dark or light it is, what the temperature is like, whether it has carpeting or just concrete, etc. (Bhakar, S. et al., 2013)
Revisit intention	Repurchase intention and behaviors that demonstrate the willingness to disseminate and recommend positive information for a service provider (Teng & Kuo, 2011)

2.0 Materials and Method

A quantitative research with constructed a cross-sectional descriptive study. The instrument used for the research was a self-administered questionnaire which adapted from the previous studies. This questionnaire was divided into three sections which include 45 items in total, which examines respondents' perspectives on the theme restaurant's atmospheric factors that they visit as well as the level or rate of revisit intention.

The researchers believe, it is a potential to conduct this study on the East Coast of Malaysia, which is Kuantan, the capital city of Pahang. We focused to study on the atmospheric factors that influence respondent to revisit this five popular theme restaurants in Kuantan:

Table 2.0 List of Theme Restaurants

Num.	Name of The Restaurant	Type of Theme
1.	Kula Cakes	Downtown Garden
2.	Whims Cat Emporium	Cat House
3.	Kotakkalam	Old School Scenery
4.	Akar Kopi	Eco-green
5.	Last Minute Coffee	Clocks

1 Kula Cakes

2. Whims Cat Emporium

3 Kotakkalam

4. Akar Kopi

5. Last Minute Coffee

The questionnaires distributed with the convenience sampling to the potential respondents at the main attractions areas in Kuantan city, and the places in Kuantan with such criteria are in the likes of shopping malls such as Kuantan Parade, Kuantan Megamall, East Coast Mall, and beaches such as Teluk Chempedak. The 200 questionnaires had been distributed using the convenience sampling method, however, only 196 questionnaires returned were valid to be analyzed.

3.0 Results

As shown in the table, most items have mean value over 3. On top of that, the item that has the highest mean value is item 1 with the mean value of 4.5, while the lowest mean value is item 13, with 3.88 mean value.

Table 3.0 Descriptive Statistics on Variables

Num	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Restaurant Cleanliness	196	4.50	0.509
2.	Restaurant Ambience	196	4.11	0.604
3.	Restaurant Physical Environment	196	4.16	0.564
4.	Revisit Intention	196	4.15	0.532

Table 3.0 shows the highest mean of each variable category available in the questionnaire. For restaurant cleanliness, the highest mean value in this category is 4.50 followed by revisit intention with 4.15. Restaurant ambiance and restaurant physical environment have a mean of 4.11 and 4.16 respectively. If the mean value of the variables is more than 3, it means that the variable has an impact on customers' revisit intention. Since of the theme restaurant and atmospheric factor have their mean value more than 3, this shows that the atmospheric factors have the influence towards customers revisit intention.

Next, the value of standard deviation shows how close the data is to the mean. The highest standard deviation is 0.604, which is from restaurant ambiance. Second is restaurant physical environment with 0.564, followed by revisit intention and restaurant cleanliness with the standard deviation value of 0.532 and 0.509 respectively.

3.1 Hypothesis Testing

3.1.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		Atmospheric	Revisit
Atmospheric	Pearson Correlation	1	.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	196	196
Revisit	Pearson Correlation	.674**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	196	196

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

In table 3.1, the independent variable correlation is significant at 0.01, two-tailed towards customers' revisit intention. The result indicated that there is a positive relationship between independent variable and dependent variable. The value of atmospheric factors and customers' revisit intention is 0.674.

Hypothesis 1
H_0: There is no relationship between atmospheric factors and customers' revisit intention.
H1: There is a relationship between atmospheric factors and customers' revisit intention.
Reject H_0, if $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 3.1, the significant value of atmospheric factors is 0.000, which is below p-value of 0.05. Hence, H_0 is rejected, which indicates that there is a relationship between atmospheric factors and customers' revisit intention.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 The theme restaurants' atmospheric factors influence customers' revisit intention.
Referred to the results, the theme restaurant atmospheric factors had the influences towards customers' revisit intention, based on the Pearson correlation coefficient that is 0.674 which a positive correlation and significant at alpha which is 0.000. Thus, the hypothesis (H1) is accepted as there is a positive relationship between atmospheric factors and customers' revisit intention. In act, the research question 1 is also answered by this result. To really prove that the first objective has been met, the researchers have provided proofs to say that each theme restaurant atmospheric factors influenced customer's revisit intention. Restaurant cleanliness has 0.538 correlation value, while the restaurant ambiance and physical environment each have 0.594 and 0.579 Correlation value respectively. All of the atmospheric factors have achieved its target as well as proved that they influence revisit intention. The result of the descriptive analysis, the researchers are agreed that their objective has been achieved successfully. Customers might be more concerned about the restaurant's environment rather than the food itself (Chow et al, 2013). This proved that the atmosphere influenced customers' revisit intention (Weiss et al. 2005).

4.2 The most important atmospheric factor in the theme restaurants that influence customers' revisit intention based on demographic factors.
The previous study of Ramli, 2015 revealed that service delivery, service provider attitude and restaurant environment were seemed significant element of service provider attentiveness (predictor) towards customer satisfaction. The customers that satisfied will be intended to revisit. Thus, based on study findings, on gender factor, the mean results are quite one-sided. The mean value for both male and female are high at the cleanliness factor. For the 74 male respondents, the mean for cleanliness is 4.2748, higher than ambiance, and physical environment which is 3.9493 and 3.9853 respectively. For the 122 female respondents, there is a close value between the three, where cleanliness came out highest with mean score 4.6412, followed by the physical environment with 4.2593 and ambiance with 4.2152. Female tends to think about cleanliness more than male. With the mean value of female respondents agreeing to restaurant cleanliness more than male respondents, it shows that cleanliness is more important to female guests. For ambiance, yet female is more influenced towards this factor rather than male, with the great margin of mean value difference. Same for restaurant physical environment, female respondents are more positively reacted than male respondents as their mean value is higher than them.

Since female respondents are agreeing more on every factor of the atmosphere of the theme restaurant than male, they will most probably more agree to revisit a theme restaurant rather than men. Of all the factors available, researchers can conclude that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor according to gender since it has the highest mean value between all.

By the age factor, 146 respondents are from the age of 18 to 25 years old. For the age of 26 to 35, 36 to 45, 46 to 55, and 56 and above, the respondents count are 23, 14, 12, and 1 respectively. All of them have the highest mean value for cleanliness factor, where starting from the youngest to the oldest, the mean values are 4.5814, 4.2271, 4.1825, 4.4167, and 4.8889 respectively, and much higher than other variables. Respondents aged below 25 years old tend to agree towards restaurants cleanliness rather than other factors of theme restaurants. In addition, respondents aged 26 to 35 years old also have restaurant cleanliness as their most influential factor, followed by the respondents from the age of 36 to 45 years old, 46 to 55 years old and above. Since all of them agreed that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor of atmosphere that triggers revisit intention, researchers can say that cleanliness is theme restaurant's customer's choice of choosing a restaurant based on age.

Furthermore, a different race has different types of view towards theme restaurants. 190 Malay respondents tend to agree on cleanliness with a close call of the mean value, which is 4.5006 on cleanliness, 4.1072 on ambiance, 4.1545 for the physical environment. Two Chinese respondents also agreed towards cleanliness, with the highest mean value of 4.3333. An Indian respondent has set the highest mean on ambiance instead, with 4.1250 mean value, while other race agreed that cleanliness is important, with the mean value of 4.9259. Researchers have collected the data mostly from Malay respondents. Malay respondents are more agreeing to the fact that restaurant cleanliness is the most important compared to other factors. Similar to the Chinese respondents who went to theme restaurants, they prefer to look forward to the restaurant cleanliness compared to other factors. Indians have a different point of view instead. From the questionnaire, it proves that Indian is more influenced to visit a theme restaurant based on its ambiance, while other races excluding the first three prefer cleanliness factor as influential. Since most races tend to revisit a theme restaurant, restaurant cleanliness will be their major factor.

On top of that, for marital status factor, researchers have only been able to collect data from single and married respondents only. Single respondents have the highest mean value of 4.5295 on cleanliness, while married respondents also have the highest mean value of cleanliness with 4.3918. Mostly single respondents, they were found to be interested in restaurant cleanliness rather than other factors, and same goes to the married ones, they preferred more to the cleanliness of the restaurant. Since all of them agreed that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor of atmosphere that triggers revisit intention, plus having the revisit intention as well, researchers can say that cleanliness is theme restaurant's customer's choice of choosing a restaurant based on marital status.

For education level, most of the results prove the same thing. SPM/STPM respondents have 4.4670 mean value for cleanliness, which is the highest among other attributes. Diploma respondents also agree towards cleanliness, with the mean value of 4.4020 in total, followed by other three education level which has their highest mean value counted under the cleanliness factor. Respondents with SPM/STPM level of education have the highest mean rate at restaurant cleanliness factor instead of other atmospheric factors. Similarly to respondents with Diploma, they tend to agree that restaurant cleanliness is the major factor in atmospheric point of view. Respondents with Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree also have the highest mean value at the cleanliness perspective of a restaurant. Although the mean rate of other levels of education is lower compared to those stated education levels, their mean value is still the highest at restaurant cleanliness. Since most education levels tend to revisit a theme restaurant, restaurant cleanliness will be their major factor.

Monthly income has no significant difference in its results. People with no income agreed that restaurant cleanliness is more important than any other factors because the highest mean value is at cleanliness, with 4.5887. For the income of RM900 to RM3000, it also has the highest mean value of restaurant cleanliness, which is 4.3246. Same goes to respondents with RM3001 to RM5000 and RM5001 to RM7000; they also agree that restaurant cleanliness is the major factor that may trigger their revisit intention since their mean values are at the highest rate on restaurant cleanliness, with 4.3556 and 4.6667 respectively. Even though their mean rate for revisit intention was low, people with the monthly income level of RM7001 and above have significantly influenced by restaurant cleanliness once they have attended a theme restaurant.

Although another study conducted in Shah Alam also found that restaurant ambiance significantly influenced customers' revisit intention (Omar et al., 2014), from this result, researchers can conclude that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor according to respondent's monthly income since it has the highest mean value between all. According to Chow et al., (2013), restaurant environment positively affect customers' revisit intention. Clearly, the results that the researchers have gathered match the concept. All in all, the researchers can conclude that the second research objective is met. Since the mean values of all the atmospheric factors are above 3. Researchers now can say that atmospheric factors of theme restaurants are influenced by demographic backgrounds and it is fair to say that restaurant cleanliness is the most influential factor among the factors that trigger restaurant revisit intention despite the differences in the respondents' demographic background. This is supported by research that is conducted by Yoo (2012), stating that restaurant cleanliness is considered one of the most significant conditions when customers evaluate the overall restaurant. Researchers agreed that their result is solid and valid because there are studies that come out with a similar answer. In addition, since all objectives and questions are answered, researchers declare this study as a complete success.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the theme restaurants' atmospheric factors significantly influence customers' revisit intention. The three atmospheric factors focused on this study, restaurant cleanliness, restaurant ambiance, and restaurant physical environment proved that the hypothesis as true. The study of revisit intention is so interesting actually that it almost has no end. This dependent variable can be

related to any variable from any industry. Revisit intention is unique that it deals with intangible factors. There are many studies regarding revisit intention that has been conducted and this study should be considered as one of the flocks. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that food is not everything when it comes to the study of food establishments. This industry has been one of the biggest producers of knowledge regarding hospitality and service and this is not the end of it. This century will be the start of something new in the service world. This study will definitely help to cater future researchers. Besides that, this study can be continued by any other researchers who want to further learn about theme restaurant atmospheric factors or revisit intention. The information provided in this research can be used as a reference to students' future studies and knowledge because the information written in this research is based on places that are very near to their study place. Future research may extend to focus solely on these variables specifically. Besides further research, this study may also help future research to come out with brand new ideas on relating these variables into other topics or industries. The knowledge that one industry produces may be beneficial to other industries as well because there are always indirect relationships between one industry to another. The study perhaps could help the restaurants and outlet retailers in training and make aware of their employees about these variables, as well as management, strategies, and objectives.

Acknowledgements

References

Andersson, T., & Mossberg, L. (2004).*The dining experience: do restaurants satisfy customer needs.* Food Service Technology, 4, 171 – 177.

Ali, N., & Abdullah, M. A. (2012). The food consumption and eating behaviour of Malaysian urbanites: Issues and concerns. *Geografia: Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, *8*(6), 157-165.

Bhakar, S., Agrawal, A. K., Suthar, B. K., Verma, S., Verma, A., Singhal, K., & Singh, P. (2013). Impact of service quality, physical environment, employee behavior on consumer perception. *Prestige International Journal of Management & IT Sanchayan, 2*(2), 117-133.

Bailey, R., & Tian, R. G. (2002). Cultural understanding and consumer behavior: A case study of Southern American perception of Indian food. *Journal of American Academy of Business, 2*(1), 58-65.

Barbas S. (2003). I'll take Chop Suey: restaurants as agents of culinary and cultural Change. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 36(4), 669-86.

Chow, K. Y., Dickson Ong, C. S., Tham, W. L., & Wong, Y. K. (2013). *Factors influencing dining experience on customer satisfaction and revisit intention among undergraduates towards fast food restaurants* (Doctoral dissertation, UTAR).

French, S., Story, M., Fulkerson, J. A., & Hannan, P. (2001). Fast food restaurant use among adolescents: Associations with nutrient intake, food choices and behavioral and psychosocial variables. *International Journal of Obesity, 25*, 1823-1833.

Germann-Molz, J. (2003), ''Tasting an imagined Thailand: authenticity and culinary tourism in Thai restaurants'', in Long, L. (Ed.), Culinary Tourism: Eating and Otherness, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, pp. 53-75.

Hsu, C., H., C., and Powers, T. (2002). Marketing hospitality, 3rd ed., Canada: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Ishida, A. S. (2003). Changes in Food Consumption Expenditure in Malaysia. Agribusiness, 61-76

Long, L. (2003), ''Culinary tourism: a folkloristic perspective on eating and otherness'', in Long.

Omar, M. S., Ariffin, H. F., & Ahmad, R. (2014). Factors affecting customers' satisfaction in Arabic restaurants. *International Journal of Administration and Governance*, 1(4), 1-8.

Pawan M. T., Kamarul J. L. & Marzuki M. (2014). Study on Generation Y Dining Out Behavior in Sabah, Malaysia. International Journal of Business and Social Science. Vol. 5, No. 11.

Petrick, J.F., Morais, D.D. & Norma, W.C. (2001). An examination of the determinants of entertainment vacationers' intentions to revisit. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40, 41–48.

Ramli, N., Wan Mohd Nowalid, W.F., Mohd Kamal, M.H., Wan Nawawi, W. N. (2015). A Study on Determinants of Customer Satisfaction towards Service Providers Attentiveness in Casual Dining Restaurants. Journal of Applied Environmental and Biological Sciences. 5(6S) 1-4. Text Road Publication.

Som, A. P. M., Marzuki, A., Yousefi, M., & Abu Khalifeh, A. N. (2012). Factors influencing visitors' revisit behavioral Intentions: A case study of Sabah, Malaysia. *International Journal of marketing studies*, 4(4), 39.

Stewart. H., N. B. (2004). The Demand for Food Away From Homes: Full Service or Fast Food?

Turley, L.W., & Milliman, R. E. (2000). Atmospheric effects on shopping behavior: A review of the experimental evidence. *Journal of Business Research*, 49(2), 193-211.
Tan, B.C. and Yeap, P. F. (2011). Relationships among the Antecedents of Behaviour Intention towards Environmentally Friendly Restaurants: A Causal Model. International Conference on Environment and Industrial Innovation IPCBEE, vol.12, IACSIT Press, Singapore.

Tan, C. (2014, August, 3). More Malaysians eat out nowadays but are we eating enough healthy food? The Star Online. Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2014/08/03/food-always-on-our minds more Malaysians-eat-out-nowadays-but-are-we-eating-enough-healthy food/.

Teng, C.-C., & Kuo, T.-H. (2011). The combined effects of employee hospitality performance, environment, and entertainment on customer affective response   and revisit intention in restaurants. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management Conference Proceeding*, (3-7).

Tian, R. G. (2001). Cultural awareness of the consumers at a Chinese restaurant: An anthropological descriptive analysis. *Journal of Food Products Marketing, 7*(1/2), 111-130.

Weiss, R., Feinstein, A. H., & Dalbor, M. (2005). Customer satisfaction of theme restaurant attributes and their influence on return intent. Journal of Foodservice Business Research, 7, 23–41.

Yuksel, A., & Yuksel, F. (2002). Measurement of tourist satisfaction with restaurant services: a segment-based approach. *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* 9 (1), 5268.

Yoo, S. A. (2012). *Customer perceptions of restaurant cleanliness: A cross cultural study* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University).