

CHAPTER 5

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter encompasses the implication of the findings, limitations of this research and suggestion for future studies. It list down all theoretical implications as well as managerial implications that may be beneficial to academicians and business managers. The limitations provide a guide for future studies.

5.2 Implication

Theoretically, this study has included price fairness as an individual construct compared to previous study along with physical environment, food quality and service quality to have a more comprehensive evaluation on the effect of each construct in creating customer satisfaction and behavioural intention in full service restaurants (Meng & Elliot, 2008; Liu & Jang, 2009). Additionally, regression equation was formulated to further understand the significant level of attributes contribution in creating customer satisfaction and thereafter behavioural intention.

Besides theoretical implication, this study also provides several managerial implications. The results obtained from this study can help restaurant manager to better understand which of the attributes that can contribute to improve customer satisfaction as well as affecting consumer behavioural intention. The finding suggests

that food and environment sanitation and reliable service are considered to be top priorities in choosing food establishment (Jang & Namkung, 2008). It is also necessary to emphasise to employees on the importance of providing accurate services such as accurate guest billing and served food as ordered as this can lead to unsatisfied customers and immediate loss of customer (John & Pines, 2002).

At the same time, full service restaurant should pay more attention in training employees to provide attentive services as well as to review on the pricing strategy as based on the importance – performance approach, these two attributes are considered to be important in choosing food establishment and eventually creating satisfaction and behavioural intention toward the food establishment but are poorly performed.

Additionally, this study also demonstrated which of the attributes have a significant effect on generating customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. This can be a guide to full service restaurant managers to allocate their fund to the attributes which will significant help them to improve customer satisfaction and encourage behavioural intention. For instance, only food quality and service quality are found to play a significant role in generating customer satisfaction. Thus, food establishment managers should improve their food quality and service quality which are the core factor to exceed customers' expectation and additional effects can be achieved with differentiated atmospheric aspects (Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Liu & Jang, 2009; Jang & Namkung, 2009).

As to generate behavioural intention, food establishment managers should focus on food quality, service quality and pricing strategy. According to the

regression correlation, if these attributes are unable to meet customers' expectation, the changes of them returning, recommending to others and sharing favourable word-of-mouth are very slim. Unlike customer satisfaction model, if food quality and service quality did not meet their expectation, they may still be satisfied with their overall dining experience but there is no guarantee that it will create behavioural intention.

5.3 Limitations

Just like any other study, this study is conducted with some limitations. Firstly, the sample size is small with only 200 respondents and a convenience sampling method was used. Therefore, generalisation of this research finding should be done with caution. The volunteered participants are mostly from the fairly high income group (i.e. more than RM 2,000 monthly income) and majority are degree holders. Thus, results obtained may be bias as they may have dined out at higher end full service restaurant which have accreditation on their performance. Furthermore, the questionnaire was prepared in only one language and respondents need to have some level of understanding of the language in order to answer the questionnaire. The second limitation is the scope of study whereby only four constructs were used to assess contribution of the construct in influencing customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. This study is only conducted on one segment in the food service industry.

In the behavioural intention model, only three items were used to measure behavioural intention and these three items alone may not be represent the whole

picture regarding behavioural intention (Liu & Jang, 2009). In the study, importance – performance approach’s results may influence the managerial recommendation as the importance of basic attributes may tends to overestimate while importance of excitement attributes may be underestimated. Other possible problems with importance – performance analysis are the relationship between attribute performance and overall satisfaction may be asymmetrical and attribute performance and importance are not independent variables (Matzler & Sauerwin, 2002; Matzler et al., 2004).

5.4 Suggestion for future studies

Future studies should be conducted in different segment of the food service industry to understand the relationship among the studies construct as different relationship may be observed. In 1998, Clark & Wood reported that the order of attribute importance is somewhat different in different segment of the food service industry. In extension on the present research, the influence of demographic characteristic of diners and cultures on relationship between attributes and customer satisfaction as well as relationship between attributes and behavioural intention should be carried out. As Malaysia is a multiracial country, it will be good to study the relationship of different races with their choice of food establishment and to further localise the future studies, one should factor in the ‘halal’ matter as part of the contributing factor.

To have a clearer picture of the influencing attributes, other constructs as well as other possible relationship in regards to customer satisfaction and behavioural

intention should be included in the study. For instance, the nature of the market, the influence of dining companion, the influence of dining occasion on customer satisfaction and behavioural intention and as well as the difference between new customers versus existing customers can be included in the future studies. Auty (1992) have noted that the relative importance changes with the type of dining occasion.

5.5 Conclusion

This study has revealed the relationship between restaurant attributes and customer satisfaction and behavioural intention as well as the significant determinants of customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. Considering both importance – performance results and regression results, this study provide a comprehensive picture for full service restaurant managers to improve on food qualities and service qualities in customer satisfaction model. In term of behavioural intention, managers should be allocating their resources to further improve on food qualities, service qualities and adopt fair pricing strategy as in the event if customers felt the foods are overly priced or being cheated, no behavioural intention will happen. In customer satisfaction model, food quality and service quality are the key determinants.

Physical environment attributes although are not significant determinant of both customer satisfaction and behavioural intention, it is suggested that full service restaurant managers should also pay a fair attention to enhance the customers' overall experience and different the restaurants from others.

The study has also demonstrated that food qualities such as food cleanliness, food freshness, served food as ordered, accurate guest billing and environment cleanliness are five pivotal aspects to the success of full service restaurant. On the other hands, accurate service (i.e. accurate guest billing), food and environment sanitation, food freshness and as well as taste were the prerequisites when choosing a full service food establishment. Based on the Importance - Performance matrix, full service restaurant managers need to pay close attention in crafting fair pricing strategy and training to employees to provide attentive service. These are the two areas where restaurant managers need to improve for a better customer satisfaction and encourage behavioural intention.

Specifically, all attributes except music and fair pricing of beverages have shown to have different level of influence in customer satisfaction. Thus, full service restaurant managers should reasonably allocate the companies' resources based on the importance level of each attribute.