CUP OF COFFEE AT THE LIBRARY? FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMERS' ACCEPTANCE OF FOODSERVICE AT THE LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

Young consumers, especially students, are experiencing the coffeehouse culture or the chill-out factor. Considering these factors as a potential determinant for student to visit a place, library management should take these opportunities to introduce an eatery inside the library. The objective of this study is predominantly to assess the relationship between foodservice acceptance, menu offerings, service quality, environment and price among library users. Questionnaires that consist of foodservice acceptance, menu offerings, service quality, environment and price were distributed to 300 students from 3 public universities in Klang Valley. Findings show that the significant relationships between menu offerings, environment, price and foodservice acceptance are confirmed in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). On the other hand, service quality indicates the insignificant relationship with foodservice acceptance. The results provide information that can be utilized in understanding, maintaining, and increasing the level of foodservice acceptance that leads to library patronage amongst students. Implications and suggestions for future research are also provided.

Keywords: *foodservice acceptance, menu offerings, service quality, environment, price, library, SEM.*

INTRODUCTION

Foodservice operations in public universities are constantly moving towards a positive and healthy environment. Operators are trying to fulfil every needs and demand from the customers, who are mostly students. To improve sales, food manufacturers and operators promote various new products in stores. Innovative packages are designed to enhance convenience. Innovations take place in term of new menu items and the expansion of services provided (Walker, 2014). The processing and distribution of food item have seen intensive innovations, although most of it are influenced heavily by the traditions thus leading to changes in the way that individuals consume the food (de Rezende &de Avelar, 2011).

Moreover, young consumers, especially students, hunt the most for the coffeehouse culture or the chill-out factor. Besides just chilling out and doing nothing completely in coffeehouses,

these places are also the place of choice for youth to conduct project meetings and discussions (Hongjun, 2006). Considering these factors as potential determinants for students to visit the library more often, the library management should take the opportunity to introduce an eatery or café inside the library. With the presence of an eatery or café inside the library, this new environment may attract more students to come to the library, thus improving the number of visitors to the library. The eatery or café may also serve as a one-stop centre that provides convenience to regular library users. They may grab the food with easier access and reduce travelling time to go to the cafés or food courts outside of the library. Thus, more productive time can be spent in the library. Such a library that does provide the service in Malaysia is the Islamic Science University Malaysia (Library Café, USIM).

There is still limited research conducted to examine factors that influencing food acceptance in the library. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the relationship between menu offerings, service quality, environment and price factor and food acceptance in the library among library users. Results from the study are hoped to provide additional information on components that can be used to create operational effectiveness and satisfaction towards the customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Menu offerings

Food choice is essential in establishing good eating habits. From a survey by Ruggless (2003), it is noticeable that people do plan their meals properly to be healthy and nutritious. Consumers have different levels of needs and desires when deciding where and what to eat. Brumback (1998) states that the reasons why customer return to a restaurant is based on the quality of the foods and fresh ingredients that been used in preparing food. Besides, a menu is also crucial in foodservice organizations, mainly because the menu acts as a selling tool that will be used by customers for choosing what they want (Bowen & Morris, 1995). Namkung and Jang (2007) state that menu presentations refer to how attractively food is depicted as a tangible reminder for customers' perceptual evaluation. It also can be considered as an essential marker of authenticity from the perspective of the customer. Ajzen (1996) shows that experience and habits are a factor in purchasing food; most are from the standpoint of past behaviour. People make the previous experience as their references in determining whether to buy food or not. In consumer food choice, product characteristics such as quality dimension are significant (Grunert et al., 2001).

Conversely, Herbst and Stanton (2007) highlight that consumers rely more on prepared foods and the foodservice channel even though it will increase the expenditure, as the time for food preparation become more limited. A busy daily schedule will restrict the ability and chances to prepare their own food, thus making a ready-made food a better option for people as this type of food will reduce preparation and consumption time. Herbst and Stanton (2007) also assert that marketers should make a wise move by targeting customers with a range of products or meals that can be consumed easily together. The more the companies can do to create products that can help make meal consumptions easier in the event-packed day, the greater they may see that their offerings are in line with today's customer needs and demands. This can be seen within fast-food chains such as McDonald's, KFC and Pizza Hut. They offer meals in the form of a complete set where you get the main dish, a snack and drinks. Customers do not have to take a fistful amount of time to choose what they want to eat.

Briefly, students are more likely to take healthy meals and snack if they have knowledge about healthy eating and make a habit out of it. Many factors inside and outside the university resulted in students choosing food without considering its healthy aspect. In agreement with Gummesson (1996), poor in nutritional knowledge may not be the only limiting factor to student's dietary pattern as they could choose to decide foods based on other criteria. Some of the students may consume the same dishes every day, without knowing the importance of food variety in the diet. The choice of food also has been influenced by a wide range of other factors, for example, social, economic and cultural (Shepherd, Sparks, Belier & Raats, 1991/1992). Yuksel and Yuksel (2002) also mention how people nowadays try to eat more nutritious food not only in their kitchen but also at restaurants. The booming healthy food consumption trends have arrived in South East Asia, and Malaysia is following the patterns too. Organic foods are accepted widely even though the price might be higher than regular foods. Restaurants also started to construct more balanced diets for their customers, such as reducing the use of fats and adding more on greeneries (Durai, 2019). Eckel et al. (2009) say that the majority of the respondents in their study are concerned with both the amount of and the type of fat they consume. Customers nowadays have an awareness of their health and trying to maintain their health in the best form. A controlled amount of fat consumption may reduce the risk of getting obese, thus reducing chronic diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and high blood pressure.

Service quality

Service quality is the outcome measure of the effective service given to the customer and becomes conceptualized when the customer received the service that is beyond their expectations. It is also influenced by a few factors such as degree of tangibility of service, the perishability of the service and the varying nature of service consumption (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988). Rust and Oliver (1994) add that service quality can exist without customer experiencing the service. For example, customer can develop quality expectations of the establishment without experiencing their service.

Another example is that of the self-service where customers serve on their own, such as purchasing items at supermarket and buffet dining. Wong and Sohal (2002) assert that service equality and relationship quality are in theory, distinct constructs, with service quality often conceived as being base to relationship quality. Quality is judged by the customer, all of the product and service that impart to the customer and lead to customer satisfaction and preference basis for a company quality system (Taylor, 1994).

The concept of quality includes not only the product and service attributes that fulfil the requirements of the customer but also consists of those that enhance them from differentiating the offerings. The company quality management process is based on customer focus in establishing a mission, vision and indicators of the performance of understanding, standardizing and maintaining process and continuous improvement of a cycle involving planning, checking and action (Taylor, 1994). Tschohl (1998) states that to establish customer satisfaction, employees must do whatever it takes to meet the customer's needs and demands, and check whether they provide a worthy service or not. He also adds that to be successful, the organization must have two important things that need to be done, that is, you cannot provide exceptional customer service without empowering your employees, and you cannot have a successful organization without providing an exceptional customer. Other than that, the difference between service and product is on how they are produced, consumed and evaluated. This is because service is a performance that needs to be evaluated to make sure that the service

achieves customer satisfaction. Coherent with Gupta and Chen (1995), customer perception is harder to measure because a different customer has a different specification of each service experience that they prefer. The criteria that they use for evaluating service quality are based on the expectations and the actual service experiences when they purchase the service. Bhuyan (2011) says that excellent service in a food establishment is one of the factors that may lead to the rising of several people eating away from home because it provides a significant prediction for a customer to return to the establishment.

Environment

Choi and Zhao (2014) express that consumers have different degrees of needs and desires when deciding where to dine and what to eat. These differences cause consumers to select eateries and foods in different ways. In the marketing literature, Kotler (1973) states that atmospheric can be defined as the sensible designing of space in order to generate specific emotional effects in buyers that may enhance the purchasing probability. To gain a competitive advantage in today's market, restaurants attempt to offer meals that can provide excellent value in pleasant ambience (Soriano, 2002). An authentic overall dining experience may be more desirable and competitive, thus giving more edge against competitors as atmospherics contributes a vital component of the dining experience (Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2011). Atmosphere quality is one of crucial set up for explaining service quality, which may lead to positive satisfaction and re-patronage intentions (Kincaid, Baloglu, Mao & Busser, 2010; Hoare & Butcher, 2008; Namkung & Jang, 2007). The environment is indeed the crucial things that need to be contemplated in the foodservice industry. This is also supported in consonant of Baker and Crompton (2000), Bowen and Shoemaker (1998), Cronin and Taylor (1992), Ariffin, Bibon and Abdullah (2011) and Ha and Jang (2010), say that in the context of restaurant, food, service and ambience quality have a positive impact on customer behavioural intention.

Reflecting to the idea of foodscape, food environments can influence consumers' food choices and food behaviour (Mikkelsen, 2011). He also adds that food and meals in our environment are embedded in complex physical, social and cultural contexts, thus suggesting that interactions with people, spaces and food influence consumers' eating behaviour. Concerning dining out, people are always looking for comfort as well as quality and an enjoyable environment (Cullen, 2004; Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 2000; Soriano, 2003; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Customers are continually seeking quality, value and desirable environment away from the daily life pressures (Soriano, 2002). Hanefors and Mossberg (2003) concur on these as they highlight the intangible experiences not just depend on an excellent food presentation and good company, but also a pleasant atmosphere.

Furthermore, simple décor that patched in a restaurant will give good ambience among the customer (Ariffin, Bibon & Abdullah, 2011). In line with Barta (2008) and Cullen (2004), they notify that attractive décor and atmosphere influence consumers' restaurant choices. It is affirmed that ambience can influence customer behaviours and perceptions of eateries (Kim, Lee&Yoo, 2006; Dutta, Parsa, Parsa & Bujisic, 2013). Soriano (2003) also claims that offering good food and quality service are not enough to attract consumers and that eateries should provide meals with good value in a favourable ambience. The importance of a comfortable atmosphere is increasing with time (Dulen, 1998) as attentive service and favourable atmospherics could also influence massively on customers' final decisions as well (Mills, 2000).

Furnishings also represent one of the most important design components that can influence customers' perceptions and evaluations (Jang et al., 2011). Music is also serving a specific culture (George, 2001), and it can positively affect customers' responses to service environments (Hui, Dube & Chebat, 1997). Behaviours at restaurants may be affected by surroundings such as taste, service, cleanliness, ambience, and variety of healthy food options in menus, price and portion (Choi & Zhao, 2014). Alonso and O'Neill (2010) discover that the environment affects consumers' choice of restaurant, including comfort and cleanliness, which is also influencing their perception of food safety at restaurants. Equally important, cleanliness of the restaurant is a significant factor for consumers when deciding where to dine (Kivela et al., 2000; Cullen, 2004; Henson, Majowicz, Masakura, Sockett, Jones, Hart & Knowles, 2006). Restaurant patrons remember cleanliness issues longer and are more likely to avoid dirty restaurant in the future (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Pleasant and clean atmospherics may provide fresh feeling and evoke curiosity, thus satisfying customers' desires for new dining experiences and knowledge.

Price

Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler (1986b) define price fairness as the buyers' judgment regarding the differences between what they expected and what they accepted. Consumers develop fairness or unfairness judgments in that they are likely to understand the situation with regards to the potential to maximize personal benefits or rewards and minimize their investments or sacrifice (Peter & Olson, 1993). From a consumer service perspective in consuming products or services, the price paid (price fairness) and the time spent (procedural fairness) are crucial concerns (Fisk & Coney, 1982). Glantz, Sallis, Saelens and Frank (2005) accentuate that the elements of a consumer can be explained as elements that affecting consumers, which include the availability of healthy options and price. Loureiro and Lotade (2005) realize that customers are willing to pay a higher premium for fair trade. Many consumers want quality in their foods, and they are willing to pay for it (Arthey, 1989). He also alerts that their foods must increasingly be of high quality and they must feel that they are getting the value for money spent. As dining out becomes an integral part of consumers' lifestyles, experienced consumers have raised their expectations concerning quality, service, food and interiors while searching a better value for their money (Klara, 2001).

Moreover, the prevalent influence of price is partly since the price cue exits in all purchase situations and represents to all consumers the amount of economic cost that must be sacrificed in any given transaction (Jang & Namkung, 2011). A given deal must satisfy the value perceived by the customers to let go the amount of money needed for the food and service. Namkung and Jang (2008) add that the prices presented on the menu list may be judged differently depending on the customer's predetermined ideas and current experience with numerous of stimuli at the restaurant. Some customers may find certain foods to be reasonably priced, while others might find it overpriced. Food choice behaviours are often weighed by the cost of the food (Chouinard, Davis, LaFrance & Perloff, 2010). Customers tend to choose something that they can afford over what they want if the cost is too high, and this is true with the scenario of students. Subsequently, there is a lot of predictor for the scope of quality. The price might not be an absolute predictor for the quality of the food and service as other predictors can be used to the height the quality of the food and services. However, it can be an excellent indicator of consumers who have not previously dined at the restaurant (Choi & Zhao, 2014). Olbrich and Jansen (2014) however, did not agree with Choi & Zhao (2014), as customers should not use price to conjecture the quality of food products. This is because food

products are fast-moving goods that often utilized to intensify promotions and attract customers.

Foodservice acceptance

Acceptance and intention to purchase will show a measure regarding food products are linked to consumption and the purchasing process. This can be used as an indirect way to gain data to learn customer behaviour. Although the importance of intrinsic variables such as colour, texture, aroma and flavour in food acceptance and choice are recognized, several studies have shown that other variables also play an important role in customer's behaviour (Cardello, 1995; Schutz, 1999). Other factors can influence purchasing decision and food choice besides the price and quality, such as food participation. Considering that food participation refers to the level of the food on a customer's life, we can assume that the level of food participation may differ across individuals and can be an important factor in purchasing decision. Kahkonen and Tuorila (1999) confirm that assistance is notably related to hedonic values. Participation with each food is related to high pleasantness and buying probability for a particular food. Many studies show that context of the food affecting food acceptance and food choice (Steptoe, Pollard & Wardle, 1995; Tuorila, Meiselman, Cardello & Lesher, 1998; King, Weber, Meiselman & Lv, 2004). The context of food consumption includes the eating surroundings (Meiselman, Johnson, Reeve & Crouch, 2000), the presence of other people, the availability of other alternatives, as well as the name and additional information about the product (Thomson & McEwan, 1988). For instance, Lewis (1981) considers five (5) factors, which is, menu variety, food quality, atmosphere, price and convenience factors. The significance of these attributes varies depending on the type of restaurant. Food quality is the most vital consideration that influences restaurant selection by customers.

Additionally, trust in food globally has been affected by the rising demands for balanced diets and healthy foods (Garretson & Burton, 2000). Trust is compulsory in the food industry and the retail food market, as food retailers have been the primary trading partner in food buyer-seller relationships (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). Of equal importance, understanding trust as a device for reducing complexity (Luhmann, 2000) and as a crucial element in risky situations and decisions (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995), trust in a food retailer may help to reduce complexity and uncertainty of food choices (Lobb, Mazzochi & Traill, 2007). Plassmann, O'Doherty and Rangel (2007) also confirm that when all the variables related on trust in retail markets are understood, only then retailers can manage the trust to influence variables that are related to long-term success such as customer loyalty.

From a marketing perspective, the concept of trust is peculiarly crucial for customer relationship management (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust is located on the expected capacity of the organization to fulfil customer expectations regularly and to avoid anything that might harm the customer (Ganesan & Hess, 1997). They also add that trust in buyer-seller relationships can be perceived as the belief of one party (buyer) in the reliability and integrity of the exchange partner (seller). When referring to the marketing perspective, the concept of trust is exceptionally vital for customer relationship management. However, customer loyalty would be a more practical approach because the hospitality business must be a player in market share gainer rather than market growth gainer (Jarvis & Mayo, 1986). In the opinion of Tepeci (1999), a happy and satisfied customer may provide a great deal to the bottom line of any organization. It has been described as a behavioural response and as a part of psychological processes. Tepeci (1999) also reckons that brand loyalty includes some standard of commitment towards the quality of a brand that performs as a function of both positive attitude

and repetitive purchasing. Firms appreciate more on loyal customers than non-loyal customers as they provide higher profitability and more comfortable to serve.

A highly satisfied customer is much more loyal and easier to handle than satisfied customer, and this is related to the drop in total satisfaction that may result in a major drop in loyalty. Most of the big players in the food industry develop frequent-guest programs that give rewards to their customers for repeat businesses. The goal of the loyalty program is to thank customers for their business and show them that the company is interested in building and maintaining a relationship with them (Sparks, 1993). Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler (2002) affirm that positive word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is considered as one of the key outcomes to the loyalty process. WOM assists in attracting new customers, which is, crucial for the long-term economic success of the organization. Wangenheim (2005) also alleges that customers spread WOM as they try to convince themselves of the purchasing decision that they have made. Kinard and Capella (2006) append that WOM plays a vital role for service providers whose offerings are mainly intangible and experience-based. Customers rely heavily on the advice and suggestions from others who have experienced the service before. Customers often trust each other more than they trust communication and information from the organizations, thus focusing on the significance of WOM (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).

From the literature review, four hypotheses have been developed.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between menu offerings and acceptance of foodservice at the library.

H_2 : There is a significant relationship between service quality and acceptance of foodservice at the library.

H_3 : There is a significant relationship between environment and acceptance of foodservice at the library.

H_4 : There is a significant relationship between price and acceptance of foodservice at the library.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and procedures

The respondents of this study consisted of individual students from three public universities in Klang Valley. Data was collected by self-administered questionnaires to 300 respondents and all questionnaires were found useful and were retained for further analysis.

Measures

A 10-item instrument used to measure perceived menu offerings (MO), 10-item instrument used to measure service quality (SQ), 10-item instrument used to measure environment (EV), 10-item instrument used to measure price (PR) and 12-item instrument used to measure foodservice acceptance (FA) were adapted from the work of Hamilton-Ekeke and Thomas, 2007; Eckel et. al; 2009, Gummeson, 1996; Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988; Allen and

Reicheld, 2005; Bhuyan, 2011; Namkung and Jang, 2007; Alonso and O'neil, 2010; Choi and Zhao, 2014; Sulek and Hensley, 2004; Chouinard, Davis, LaFrance and Perloff, 2010; Klara, 2001; Verbeke and Lopez, 2005 and Tepeci, 1999. All the items were measured by using the 5-point Likert Scale.

Data analyses

The demographic information was used to provide an overview of the respondents' profile. Principal factor analysis was performed to reduce the number of factors or items from each variable. The final results from this factor analysis were then used for further investigation using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS 22.0 program. It aims to find the most optimal model or combination of the variables that fits well with the data on which it is built and serves as a purposeful representation of the reality from which the data has been extracted, and provides a parsimonious explanation of the data (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010; Kline, 1998). In this study, the SEM technique was used to identify the influence of perceived safety, perceived price, perceived convenience and perceived accessibility to intention to use e-hailing service by tourists.

RESULTS

Profile of samples

Out of 300 respondents surveyed, 154 of respondents are female, and 146 of the respondents are male. 4.7% of the respondents visit the library every day, 22.0% of the respondents visit library multiple days a week, 42.7% of them visit the library once a week, 22.7% of the respondents visit the library once a month and 8.0% of them never visit the library. On the reason why they come to the library, 52.7% chose to study or revision, 17.3% chose to conduct other activities, 14.7% chose to conduct an academic reading, 9.3% chose to have a rest, and 6% of them chose to chat with a friend. 77.3% of the respondents agreed with the suggestion of establishing an eatery or café inside the library, while 22.7% of the respondents rejected the suggestion.

Structural equation of hypothesized final model

Based on the modification index of CFA, the measurement model of exogenous and endogenous and the final model as the examination of the hypothesized model confirmed the constructs of menu offerings (MO), service quality (SQ), environment (EV), price (PR) and foodservice acceptance (FA) of the hypothesized paths. In SEM, factor analysis and hypotheses are tested in the same analysis. SEM techniques also provide fuller information about the extent to which the research model is supported by the data. The goodness of fit indices for the 52 observed variables of menu offerings (MO), service quality (SQ), environment (EV), price (PR) and foodservice acceptance (FA) shows that the reading is good if it ranges from 0.184 to 0.734 for the significance standardized regressions weight. The standard error (SE) for each observation shows the goodness of fit and low-level reading from 0.082 to 1.874, and estimate (Square Multiple Correlation) of observation shows the contribution level to the latent variable (0.033 to 0.692). Table 2 summarizes the standardized regression weight between menu offerings (MO) and foodservice acceptance (FA) which is 0.256, between service quality (SQ) and foodservice acceptance (FA) which is 0.013, between environment (EV) and foodservice acceptance (FA) which is 0.395, and between price (PR) and foodservice acceptance (FA) which is 0.337. The final model shows the model explained in a substantial portion of the

variance in all the endogenous variables (square multiple correlations) that indicates the four exogenous variables (MO, SQ, EV and PR) jointly explained 73.2% variance in FA. Finally, from the Structural Model, the reading for GFI is at 0.90 (acceptable fit criteria), and RMSEA is less than 0.08. The measurement model has a good fit with the data based on assessment criteria such as GFI and RMSEA (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Table 1 summarizes the goodness of model fit of MO, SQ, EV, PR, FA and the structural model. The structural models testing of endogenous variables (IU) fulfils the GFI (GFI > 0.90) and RMSEA criteria (less than 0.08).

Table 1: Summary of the Goodness Fit of PS, PP, PC, PA, IU and Final Model

Model Fit Indicator	MO	SQ	EV	PR	FA	Final Model
(x^2)	189.780	679.699	95.629	9.454	188.489	208.236
DF	50	218	18	6	38	134
CMIN/DF	3.796	3.118	5.313	1.576	4.960	1.554
P	0.016	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
GFI	0.990	0.992	0.912	0.988	0.945	0.901
RMSEA	0.076	0.078	0.067	0.077	0.080	0.053

Table 2: Summary of the Standardized Regression Weight

Hypothesis	Exogenous	Endogenous	Standard Estimate	P	Status of Hypothesis
H_1	MO	FA	0.256	0.000	Accepted
H_2	SQ	FA	0.013	0.860	Rejected
H_3	EV	FA	0.395	0.000	Accepted
H_4	PR	FA	0.337	0.000	Accepted

DISCUSSIONS

Menu Offerings

Table 2 shows that there is a relationship between menu offerings of an eatery in library and foodservice acceptance among library users. Menu offerings produce a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable as the value of sig. is less than 0.05 (0.000). With the Beta value of 0.256, this variable gives a notable contribution towards the study. Typically, students have a different level of needs and desires when deciding where and what to eat. Namkung and Jang (2007) state that menu presentations refer to how attractively food is depicted. Some prefer taste over portion. Others may prefer the way of food presentation

more than the rest of the characteristics of the menu. And there is a group of students that do not mind at all if they can fill in their hungry tummy. Arthey (1989) says that the product not only should be safe and nutritious but also must have a characteristic that increases the appetite and can secure enjoyment as we consume the food. In a student's daily schedule, time is a valuable thing as the clock ticks life away. The foods need to be in a convenient manner as a student would much prefer the grab-and-go meal concept. Herbst and Stanton (2007) highlight that retailers should make a wise move by targeting customers with a range of products or meals that can be consumed easily together. The more the companies can do to create products that can help make meal consumptions easier in the event-packed day, the greater they may see that their offerings are in line with today's customer needs and demands.

Service Quality

Table 2 shows that there is no relationship between the service quality of an eatery in library and foodservice acceptance among library users. Service quality does not produce a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable as the value of sig. is more than 0.05 (0.860). With the Beta value of 0.013, this variable contributes the least towards the study. In the opinion of Rust and Oliver (1994), service quality can exist without customer visibly experiencing the service itself. The students may prefer a self-service or counter service due to the time constraint. In the scenario of consuming food in the library, most of the students may perceive a fast and quiet service over a fancy table service that may consume lots of time. If the quality developments are not built on customer needs, this will lead to stagnant customer satisfaction (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000). Most of the students will seek the best quality of service to gain a better dining experience. In this context; an efficient service with the least noise would provide a better dining experience for both diners and other library users. This may eventually influence them to repeat businesses with the best service providers. Liang and Zhang (2009) remark that interaction in service is not sufficiently noteworthy due to the certainty that the students see the eatery or café as a place to satisfy a basic nutritional need instead of a place of aesthetic attributes for enjoying attentive service.

Environment

Table 2 shows that there is a relationship between the environment of an eatery in library and foodservice acceptance among library users. The environment produces a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable as the value of sig. is less than 0.05 (0.000). With the Beta value of 0.395, this variable gives the most contribution towards the study. In other words, it is the strongest unique predictor of food acceptance among library users. The environment can be interpreted as a specific space that may create emotional effects that may influence the purchasing probability of buyers. Hanefors and Mossberg (2003) view pleasant atmosphere as a part of the contribution in intangible experiences, accompanied by an excellent food presentation and good company. Students will remember the condition of the dining environment for quite a long period. Cleanliness of the restaurant was a significant factor for consumers when deciding where to dine (Cullen, 2004). Soriano (2003) also claims that offering good food and quality service was not enough to attract consumers and that eateries should provide meals with good value in a favorable ambience. The pleasant and clean environment may provide fresh feeling and evoke curiosity, thus satisfying students' desires for new dining experiences and knowledge. As their desires can be fulfilled, students may prefer certain food establishment and eventually spreading the news about it all over their community.

Price

Table 2 shows that there is a relationship between the price factor of an eatery in library and foodservice acceptance among library users. Price produces a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable as the value of sig. was less than 0.05 (0.000). With the Beta value of 0.337, this variable gives the second most contribution towards the study. Students are concerned about the price they will need to pay for the foods they want. Some might say that the price of food is low and reasonable, and some may say it oppositely. Attitudes and tendency to pay for a food product is dependent on their needs and their resource availability (Hongjun, 2006). The price might not be an absolute predictor for the quality of the food and service. However, Choi and Zhao (2014) highlighted price as an excellent indicator to consumers who have not previously dined at the restaurant. It is undeniably true that most students want quality in their foods, and they are willing to pay a higher price for a better trade of food. Arthey (1989) states that their foods must increasingly be of high quality, and they must feel that they are getting the value for money spent. Buyers judge the fairness of the price regarding the differences between what they expect and what they get. He also added that foods offered to the customers must be in high quality and they must feel that they are getting the value for money spent. If the food establishments managed to provide better quality foods with reasonable prices to be paid, then it should be the best-case scenario for the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that firstly, the library management should consider establishing an eatery or café inside the library as 77.3% of the respondents in this study agreed on the establishment of the eatery or café inside the library. This would create another type of favourable service in the library that will be appreciated by the students as they prefer convenience, one-stop centre and centralized service to limit the distance from food. Thus, they do not have to go far to find food when they feel hungry when they are in the library doing revision or other activities. This endeavour is possible because such eatery has been established in the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) library. Secondly, the management of the library is recommended to consider and focus on all the factors relevant to the food acceptance among library users which are; menu offerings, service quality, environment and price factor, that has been examined the researchers. Menu offerings, environment and price factor, have a significant impact on the food acceptance of the students in the library. Service quality is the least important aspect demanded by the students. It is not that the management of the library can neglect the fine side of service quality, but they may focus more towards suitable menu offerings, pleasant dining experience and value of the money to attract more students to come to the library. Thirdly, it is recommended the need for positive word-of-mouth to supports more than physical marketing if the establishment of the eatery or café is happening inside the library. Trust may help to decrease the complexity and anxiety of food choices. Word-of-mouth is one of the most excellent marketing tools as it assists in attracting new customers. Information travels faster, and customers often trust each other more than they trust communication and information from the organizations. Students rely heavily on the tales and recommendations from other students who have dining experience of a specific food establishment before. Finally, the researchers would like to highlight the benefit of the study on the academic and practical perspective. From the academic perspective, this study reveals

factors influencing food acceptance in the library among students in three public universities in Malaysia as well as contributing to the wealth of literature in hospitality research. Results from this study may be used as a basis for introducing the foodservice entrepreneurship course in the program syllabus of Library Science Program. From a practical perspective, the discovery of this study would be useful and benefit the most to those who are in the line of the food industry.

CONCLUSION

Menu offerings, environment and price factor, affect significantly towards the food acceptance among library users. Service quality is the least important aspect demanded by the students. Effective communication is essential in gaining a competitive edge. Powerful and positive word-of-mouth can attract and retain customers that are students, intending to gain recognition among the students in a sustainable manner. A good reputation may increase sales, attract more students and reduce departures. Satisfaction factors are very crucial in determining the acceptance of the food among library users.

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