



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND RETURN PATRONAGE IN
SPECIALTY COFFEEHOUSE IN MALAYSIA***

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PATRONAGE IN SPECIALTY COFFEEHOUSE IN MALAYSIA



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**CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND RETURN
PATRONAGE IN SPECIALTY COFFEEHOUSE IN
MALAYSIA**

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Dedicated with love:

To those who have helped me and gave me their supports and encouragement.

To all my friends and my loved ones.



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ABSTRACT

Specialty coffeehouse was a fast growing industry ever since it was introduced to Malaysia in early 1996. Among the established specialty coffeehouses were Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Starbucks Coffee and Gloria Jean's Coffee. If the local coffeehouse and restaurant would like to be as competitive as the franchise specialty coffeehouse, it is paramount important to understand the consumers' expectations and needs. Nevertheless, there is lack of theoretical understanding about the disconfirmatory effects on the formation of dining satisfaction, and how satisfaction affects post-dining behavioral intentions in Malaysia coffeehouse.

The main objective of this study is to study the theoretical understanding about the disconfirmatory effects on the formation of dining satisfaction in Malaysia. Besides that this paper will access the attributes which contributed to customers' satisfaction and measure the probability of return as a consequence of dining satisfaction in specialty coffeehouse.

From the results of the study, we concluded that post-dining satisfaction towards the specialty coffeehouse may not directly lead to return patronage. Second, marketer should put in extra effort in narrowing the gap between pre-dining and post-dining perception because customers' expectations are not easily met. Third, the attributes that marketers can improve to narrow the gap between pre-dining and post-dining perception are those attributes under the 'a coffeehouse that...'. Finally, the conceptual model for

customer satisfaction and return patronage suggested by Kivela et al (1999(1)) may not be applicable to all type of restaurant, especially the specialty coffeehouse involved in this study. Thus, other factors which may influence customers' decision to return to the restaurant should be further studied.



ABSTRAK

Kafe istimewa adalah satu industri yang cepat berkembang sejak ia diperkenalkan di Malaysia pada tahun 1996. Antara kafe istimewa yang berjaya adalah 'Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf', 'Starbucks Coffee' dan 'Gloria Jean's Coffee'. Adalah sangat mustahak untuk memahami ekspektasi dan keperluan para pelanggan jika kafe tempatan and restoran ingin bersaing dengan kafe istimewa francais. Akan tetapi, pemahaman tentang kesan 'disconfirmation' terhadap pembentukan kepuasan hidangan dan bagaimana kepuasan tersebut mengubah fikiran pelanggan selepas hidangan di kafe di Malaysia masih kekurangan.

Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pemahaman teori tentang kesan 'disconfirmation' atas pembentukan kepuasan hidangan di Malaysia. Selain itu, faktor-faktor yang memberi kepuasan pelanggan dan kebarangkalian pemulangan akibat kepuasan hidangan di kafe istimewa akan dikaji juga.

Dari keputusan kajian ini, kita mecadangkan bahawa kepuasan selepas hidangan di kafe istimewa mungkin tidak menjanji kepulangan pelanggan secara terus. Kedua, para pemasar harus berusaha lagi untuk mengecilkan perbezaan antara persepsi sebelum hidangan dan selepas hidangan kerana ekspektasi pelanggan susah dicapai. Ketiga, faktor-faktor yang harus diubahsuai untuk mengecilkan perbezaan antara persepsi sebelum hidangan dan selepas hidangan adalah faktor 'a coffeehouse that...'. Akhirnya, model konsep tentang kepuasan pelanggan dan pemulangan yang dicadangkan oleh Kivela et al

(1999(1)), mungkin tidak dapat dipakai untuk semua jenis restoran, terutamanya kafe istimewa yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Oleh itu, kajian tentang faktor-faktor lain yang mungkin mempengaruhi keputusan pelanggan untuk memulang ke restoran harus dikaji pada masa depan.



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CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND RETURN PATRONAGE IN SPECIALTY COFFEEHOUSE IN MALAYSIA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Restaurant market in Malaysia is a growing and competitive market. The local restaurant not only have to cope with the increasing demand and expectation of customers, but have to maintain and improve their business amidst the rising number of high standard restaurant. The competitive situation is getting stiffer by the introduction of specialty coffeehouse from overseas, especially those from US. Among the well established specialty coffeehouse in Malaysia are Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Starbucks Coffee, Gloria Jean's coffee, San Francisco Coffee, Seattle's Best Coffee.

These specialty coffeehouses have been set up since 1996 in Malaysia. Their businesses have pick-up and gained wide popularity in a fast phase. The target group for the specialty coffeehouse is mainly young Malaysian, between the age of 18 to 35 years old.

In order to survive under the intense pressure from the specialty coffeehouses, local coffeehouse has to understanding the customers' preferences on patronizing specialty coffeehouse over the local coffeehouse. To enhance the business of a restaurant, customer satisfaction is an important factor and it is directly linked to return behavior (Barsky, 1992, 1995; Almanza, et al., 1994).

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia has a large population of coffee lover since coffee has been part of the Malaysian culture. By the introduction of specialty coffeehouse to Malaysia, it has changed the way many Malaysian consume coffee. Coffee drinking is no longer sipping the black, thick and bitter liquid sweetened by condensed milk. Now, coffee drinking can be fashionable and stylish. It is no longer dominated by elderly group but the popularity has grown rapidly among the young Malaysian. The whole scenario has changed ever since the introduction of specialty coffeehouse, like The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, to Malaysia in 1996.

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf introduced gourmet coffee and tea to the Asia-Pacific Region in 1996. It has opened more than 70 successful stores in Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan with further expansion planned in Brunei and Korea. On the other hand, Berjaya Coffee Company (M) Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Berjaya Group Berhad was established in 1998 and granted the licence for the exclusive right to develop and operate Starbucks retail stores in Malaysia. The company opened its first

Starbucks retail location in Malaysia in 1998 at Kuala Lumpur. Up to 2001, the company has opened 22 stores in Malaysia and planned to open another 10 stores by the end of the year. Besides the top two specialty coffeehouse have planned their aggressive marketing to expand their business in Malaysia, other specialty coffeehouse, like Gloria Jean's coffee, San Francisco Coffee, Seattle's Best Coffee, etc., are trying to catch up with the market leader by expanding their coffee stores steadily.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Coffeehouse market is a big and rapid growing market. For example, Starbucks' overall net earnings in 1996 were US\$42.1 million and its revenue grew by 575% from US\$103.2 million in 1992 to US\$696.5 million in 1996 (Kotabe and Nelson, 1998). Asia is having a big potential in coffee market. For instance, the Bonvests Holdings in Singapore anticipates that the Starbucks retail stores will generate at least US\$40 million in sales over the next five to six years in Singapore.

To enable the local entrepreneur to venture into the coffeehouse market and compete with the international specialty coffeehouse, understanding of the customers' needs and preferences are the key weapon to success. Besides that, there are little theoretical understanding about the disconfirmatory effects on the formation of dining satisfaction, and how satisfaction affects post-dining behavioral intentions in Malaysia coffeehouse.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the above problem statement, the main objective of the study is to investigate the theoretical understanding about the disconfirmatory effects on the formation of dining satisfaction, specifically:

1. To access the attributes which contributed to customer satisfaction according to the attributes importance perception;
2. To measure the probability of return as a consequence of dining satisfaction in specialty coffeehouse in Malaysia.

1.4 THE HYPOTHESES

The theory of repeat patronage or return patronage, in restaurant, has been closely associated with customer satisfaction, and is often referred to as customer loyalty, repurchase, brand loyalty or repeat business. Loyalty or return patronage was a focal point in a long-term customer/seller relationship (Dwyer et al., 1987), implying both the need for favourable staff (seller) attitudes and customer retention (Fornell, 1992). Thus, the encouraging factors of customer loyalty should be of considerable concern to the restaurant marketer. In general, most customer satisfaction researchers agreed that there was a causal relationship between satisfaction and repurchase or return patronage (Barsky, 1995; Qu, 1997). The hypothesis of post-dining satisfaction leads to return patronage has been tested out by Kivela et al (2000) and the result of the study showed a significant relationship. The same hypothesis will be tested in this study as well:

H_{a1} Post-dining satisfaction leads to return patronage

For a better understand of the mechanics of the dining experience, it is necessary to examine and substantiate the connections between the individuals' expectations of the restaurant's attributes, their importance beliefs about the restaurant's attributes, and their actual experience with the restaurant's attributes (Lowenberg et al., 1979; Finkelstein, 1989). Finkelstein (1989) in particular, has emphasised that the customer's dining needs were often linked with the restaurant's attributes, implying that attributes such as ambience (décor, lighting, physical features), food and service quality, location, type of cuisine, and service staff attitudes, provide much of the initial setting for the formation of individual's experience of the dining event.

Thus, the following hypotheses are tested to gain better understanding on the relationship between the restaurant's attributes and return patronage:

H_{a2} Satisfaction with the attributes of 'food' leads to return patronage

H_{a3} Satisfaction with the attributes of 'service' leads to return patronage

H_{a4} Satisfaction with the attributes of 'atmosphere' leads to return patronage

H_{a5} Satisfaction with the attributes of 'convenience' leads to return patronage

H_{a6} Satisfaction with the attributes list under 'a coffeehouse that...' leads to return patronage

Kivela et al. (1999(1)) believes that predictive expectations are not the only antecedent of satisfaction. That is, restaurateurs should not believe that merely meeting or exceeding what is anticipated, e.g. expectations (PrDp), will satisfy customers, but should understand that the actual performance (EM in the model, Appendix I) will have a far greater predictive effect on satisfaction. The positive effect of expectations (E) on satisfaction through perceived performance (EM) is also extensively discussed. It was believed that disconfirmation was determined jointly by the combination of expectations and performance manipulations, and the post-dining perceptions (PoDp=EM x I) was

suggested in some studies to predict customer satisfaction (Barsky, 1992; Kivela et al, 1999(1)). In Kivela et al (1999(2), 2000), the following hypothesis was tested to confirm his model:

H_{a7} There is a significant different between pre-dining perceptions (PrDp) and post-dining perceptions (PoDp) mean scores

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of this study is confirmed to customers who are dining in the specialty coffeehouse, especially Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Starbucks Coffee, etc. The questionnaire, is based on Kivela et al (1999(2)) study, with some modification (Appendix II). In Kivela et al (1999(2)), the attribute 'handling of telephone reservations' could not be applied in specialty coffeehouse in Malaysia because telephone banking is not accepted. The above attribute is replaced by 'location' under category of 'convenience' in this study. Besides that, another two attributes, 'offers food which is value of money' and 'has short waiting time', are added into the questionnaire under the category of 'a coffeehouse that...'. The three new attributes mentioned above were taken from the study by Lee and Ulgado (1997). With the above modification, there will be total of 30 questions in the questionnaire in this study. The respondents have to answer section 1 before meal, and section 2 to be answered after meal.

The limitation of this study is that the respondents for this study are mainly from Klang Valley. Thus, the result of this study may not apply to other states in Malaysia because the respondents in other parts of the country may have different individual income and personal preference.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will enable the local entrepreneurs who are interested in venturing into coffeehouse business to understanding the customer needs and expectations. This study will also provide theoretical understanding about the disconfirmatory effects on the formation of dining satisfaction, and how satisfaction affects post-dining behavioral intentions in Malaysia coffeehouse.

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