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DINING OUT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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DINING OUT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

By

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DINING OUT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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October 2019

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The growth of senior citizens globally is inevitable as the by-product of medical technology advancement, lower fertility rate, better quality of life and higher life expectancy. They are the growing market segment worldwide. Nevertheless, this age segment does not receive the attention they should as a consumer. The stereotype held about senior citizens prevents most marketers from even trying to attract this increasingly profitable group. Food consumption trend is not the same for all age group and little is known about the restaurant choice behaviour of the senior citizens. To fill the gap in the study, this research will focus on identifying the factors, barriers and demographic characteristic of senior citizens that influence them to visit a restaurant. Qualitative approach was used in this study. A total of 15 informants aged 55 and above were chosen from Klang Valley using the purposive sampling method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the whole interview were recorded using a voice recorder or by pen-and-paper method. The obtained recordings were then transcribed, translated, coded, and analysed. Atlas.ti software (version 7) was used in coding of the themes with the help of a codebook created from previous literatures and based on collected data. Factors identified in the study were ageing, life's perspective, socializing, food, service, location, price and discounts, and recommendation whereas barriers identified in this research were cleanliness, service, ageing, life's perspective and food. Some of the factors are both a reason and barrier to visit a restaurant. The demographic characteristic that influence the behaviour were education level, income and employment status and culture and religion. Recognising the factors and barriers and improvising the restaurant marketing strategy based on it is expected to be beneficial.

Keywords: senior citizens, factors, barrier, restaurant, dining out

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
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MENEROKA PERILAKU MAKAN LUAR WARGA EMAS DI LEMBAH KLANG, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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Peningkatan dalam bilangan populasi warga tua di serata dunia adalah hasil daripada kemajuan teknologi perubatan, kadar kesuburan yang lebih rendah, kualiti kehidupan yang lebih baik dan jangka hayat lebih tinggi. Mereka adalah segmen pasaran yang semakin berkembang di seluruh dunia. Walau bagaimanapun sebagai pengguna, warga tua tidak diberi perhatian yang sepatutnya. Tanggapan yang salah mengenai warga tua menghalang kebanyakan pemasar daripada berusaha untuk menarik kumpulan yang semakin menguntungkan ini. Amalan pemakanan adalah tidak sama untuk semua peringkat umur dan hanya sedikit yang diketahui mengenai tingkah laku pilihan warga tua. Untuk mengisi jurang dalam kajian, kajian ini akan menumpukan pada mengenal pasti faktor, halangan dan ciri demografi warga tua yang mempengaruhi mereka untuk melawat restoran. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam kajian ini. 15 orang yang berumur 55 tahun ke atas dipilih dari Lembah Klang menggunakan kaedah pesampelan bertujuan. Temu bual semi-struktur telah dijalankan dan keseluruhan temuduga direkodkan menggunakan perakam suara atau kaedah pen-kertas. Rakaman yang diperoleh kemudian disalin, diterjemahkan, dikodkan, dan dianalisis. Perisian Atlas.ti (versi 7) digunakan dalam pengekodan tema dengan bantuan buku kod yang dibuat dari bacaan penyelidikan terdahulu dan berdasarkan data yang dikumpulkan. Faktor yang dikenal pasti dalam kajian ini adalah penuaan, perspektif kehidupan, sosialisasi, makanan, perkhidmatan, lokasi, harga dan diskaun, dan cadangan manakala halangan yang dikenal pasti dalam penyelidikan ini adalah kebersihan, perkhidmatan, penuaan, perspektif kehidupan dan makanan. Beberapa faktor yang dikenalpasti adalah merupakan alasan dan juga halangan untuk melawat restoran. Ciri demografi yang mempengaruhi tingkah laku adalah tahap pendidikan, pendapatan dan status pekerjaan serta budaya dan agama. Menyedari faktor-faktor dan halangan dan menaiktarafkan strategi pemasaran restoran berasaskannya diharapkan dapat memberi manfaat.

Kata kunci: warga tua, faktor, halangan, restoran, makan luar

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SCT   Social Cognitive Theory

TPB   Theory of Planned Behaviour

DOSM   Department of Statistic Malaysia

MYR   Malaysian Ringgit

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study background, which provides a deeper understanding of the study context. First, it discusses the growth of global older consumer market and the market significance in Malaysia. It then briefly discusses about senior citizens food requirements. It is then followed by the discussion of the implication of not understanding and meeting the senior citizens' food requirement. The research setting, problem statement, research objectives, overview of methodology and the significance of the current study are also highlighted. At the end of the chapter, the organization of thesis chapters is provided.

1.1   Background of the study

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the old people. This is because in the year 2015, there is one older person for every eight people globally and the number of people aged 60 and above are expected to double their population size from 901 million to 1.4 billion between the year 2015 and 2030 (United Nations, 2015). People are living longer than previously. There are many contributing factors to the increased longevity such as the 'rising living standards and better nutrition, safe water, improved sanitation, improved lifestyles, increased education and greater access to quality health services' (United Nations, 2017, p.22).

Most of the nations in the Asian region are facing the growth of older population. These regions are at the 3rd or 4th stage of the classical demographic transition model[1] (United Nations, 2017) or in other word is having a decline in the growth of younger populations and growing size of the older population. The size of the senior citizens' population and the value that they hold in a marketplace demands marketers to understand them (Meneely, Strugnell, & Burns, 2009).

One of the top 10 global consumer trends 2019 is the age agnostic where 'older people want to feel, behave and be treated as younger' consumer (Angus & Westbrook, 2019, p.7). It was mentioned that market potential of

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[1] Demographic transition model suggest 4 stages of demographic changes in a nation. Stage 1 is the Pre-Transition stage. It has high birth rate and high death rate. Stage 2 is the Early Transition. At this stage, births rate remain high but death rate begins to fall. Stage 3 is the Late Transition stage. Here, the birth rate starts to decline and population growth rate starts to decelerate. Stage 4 is the Post-Transition stage. At this stage, it has both low birth rate and death rate. Population growth is negligible (United Nations, 2017,p.18). The UNFPA website provides much more detailed explanation on this (http://papp.iussp.org/sessions/papp101_s01/PAPP101_s01_090_010.html)

senior citizens are huge due to employment status and inherited wealth (Bank of America Merrill Lynch, 2014). Figure 1.1 shows the comparison of senior citizens' average world annual gross income in USD for the year 2018 and 2025. The average gross income is expected to increase significantly. The potential benefit that can be gained from marketing to senior citizen is huge as they are not only big in population size but also wealthy. It is expected that in the year 2020, the spending power of the senior citizens' population would be more than USD 15 trillion (Bank of America Merrill Lynch, 2014).
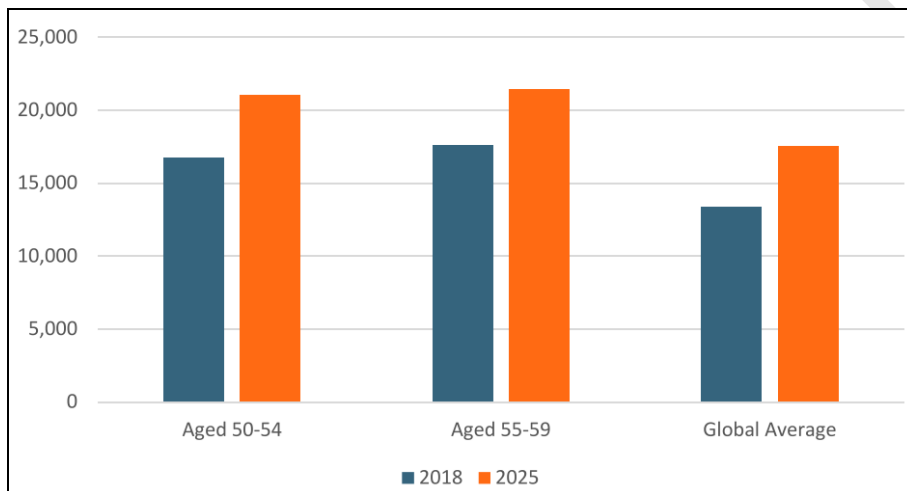
Figure 1.1 : Average world annual gross incomes in USD 2018/2025
(Source : Euromonitor International, as cited in Angus and Westbrook 2019)

In most developed countries senior citizens are said to age healthily and economically stable but this is not necessarily the same for nations in other part of the world (Arensberg, 2018). Many countries in Asia is said to be 'getting old before getting rich' (Hamid, 2015, p.15). Even though this is the case, it is wise to target this market as they are going to soon be the only consumer market to target in the future due to the decline in birth rate and increase in the life expectancy. It was mentioned that the older population is sometimes the only growing consumer segment (Ong & Phillips, 2007).

The power in size and money is demanding the marketers to start catering for them. Many sectors have been affected by the growth of this population. Targeting the older people as consumer can be beneficial to marketers who are involved in 'senior living, care, managed care, healthcare, ageing in place, death care, pharmacies and drug stores, travel and leisure, beauty and cosmetics, fashion, retail, and technology, among other areas' (Bank of America Merrill Lynch, 2014, p.10).

Malaysia is part of the graying planet. The population of senior citizens is projected to increase as much as 211% from the year 1990 to 2020 (Jacob, 2016) which is from 1.05 million to 3.26 million people. The growth of the older population will have impact to the social system and the economy of a nation thus ignoring the growth can be costly both to the government and marketers (Khazanah Research Institute, 2018; Ong & Phillips, 2007).

Responding to the growth of older generation, the government of Malaysia has introduced National Policy for the Elderly (NPE) in the year 1995 and followed by Plan of Action for the policy a year after (Hamid, 2015). It was revised again in the year 2008 and endorsed by the government in 2011. In the year 2008 also, Ministry of Health introduced National Health Policy for Older Persons and this policy run concurrently with the National Policies for the Elderly as both of the policies looks into the wellbeing of the age group. Initiatives undertaken by the government of Malaysia can be grouped under three main groups as shown in Table 1.1.

In the research by Ong (2010), 56% of the respondent of her research said that sources of income for senior citizens are through present job that they are having which is either done part-time or full-time. Other form of financial services mentioned were the savings, fixed deposits, insurance and property. Financial support from the children is also a norm (Ong & Phillips, 2007). In the research by Ong (2010) Malaysian senior citizens spends 45% of the total expenditure on food and beverages seconded by gross rent, fuel and power by 13.2% and followed by transport and communications.

In the study by Suriah et al. (1996), most elderly in Malaysia do not consume the recommended dietary allowance especially in vitamin A, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and calcium. It was mentioned that the consumption of food high in carbohydrates (e.g. rice, noodles, bread, cereals, cereal products, and tubers) are consumed more as one ages while food high in protein and fat (e.g. fish, poultry, meat, and legume products and fat, oils, sugar, and salt) sees a drop in consumption as one age (Zainal Badari et al., 2012).

The increase in age increases the likelihood of getting non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer (Euromonitor International, 2013). Meanwhile according to Institute of Public Health (IPH) (2018), non-communicable disease among senior citizens are diabetes mellitus, hypertension, hypercholesterolaemia, and cancer. Another prevalent disease among senior citizen is obesity. According to National Health and Morbidity Survey (2015), 33.6% of Malaysian aged 60 years and above are overweight and 15.7% are obese (as cited by Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), 2016). This might be due to the decreased function of the bodily system and unbalanced consumption of food to the expenditure of energy. It is

pertinent for the marketers, especially foodservice operators to understand the senior citizens in order to cater them.

Table 1.1 : Initiatives taken by Malaysian government under National Policy for the Elderly (NPE)

Groups	Initiatives	Example/ explanations
Healthy ageing	Elderly health care programme	a) Health care package 1. Health education and promotion 2. Health screening and assessment 3. Medical examination, treatment, counselling and referral 4. Home visit and home nursing 5. Rehabilitation and exercise 6. Recreational and social welfare b) Senior citizen clubs - encourage the participation of senior citizens in health related activities and utilise the health facilities under the programme.
Old age financial security	Retirement	a) Increase the retirement age for both public and private sector to sixty b) Pension calculation revised accordingly c) Introduction of Private Retirement Scheme (PRS)
	Minimum wage	Enable more saving for old age
	Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit (AKPK)	Teach debt management to: 1. Recognize bad financial behaviour 2. Promote positive habits towards future finances.
Community activities and social care	Department of Social Welfare	a) Senior citizen activity centres (PAWE) b) Home help programme
	The Institute of Gerontology, UPM	University of the Third Age (U3A)
	Corporate social responsibility	Corporate bodies through their foundations are implementing social care initiatives in Malaysia as well as in countries they have their businesses.

(Adapted from : Hamid, 2015)

1.2 Problem statement

Active ageing is the concept that has been introduced by the World Health Organisation as 'the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (World Health Organisation, 2015). The term active ageing also had been extended to cover the concept of consumption which involves the decision making process to financial allocations (Ong, 2010). Passive behaviour towards ageing is slowly disappearing especially in the growing and developed countries (Angus &

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Westbrook, 2019). This is due to the fact that older people are becoming more self-sufficient and self-reliance than they previously were. The growth of senior citizens' population size is a global phenomenon where the growth itself is said to bring changes to many industries (Angus & Westbrook, 2019).

In order for the senior citizens to age gracefully, the industry should step up and start catering to the need of the senior citizens (Jacob, 2016). Before attempting to cater them, it is pertinent to understand their needs and wants as it will yield better result. One of the main contributor to the active ageing is food (Whitelock & Ensaff, 2018) because as a person gets older, food related illness are common (Chalise, 2019). Thus it is important to know what food they could and could not consume. Finding out what they really want from a restaurant can be proven profitable to the restaurant industry which at the same time provides a better eating option for the senior citizens.

Some of the food related research on the senior citizens are about the food preferences of senior citizens (Hunter & Worsley, 2009; Jang, Kim, & Yang, 2011; Popper & Kroll, 2003; Yamanaka & Almanza, 2003), restaurant visiting factors (Kim, Bergman, & Raab, 2010; Knutson, Elsworth, et al., 2006a; Sun & Morrison, 2007), and restaurant experience (Parks & Fu, 2016). Most of these researches were done in the Western countries which may or may not be applicable here due to the different culture and way of living. The research about underlying factors of restaurant visiting behaviour of senior citizens in Malaysia is still scares.

It must also be noted that most studies regarding senior citizens especially their eating out behaviour was done quantitatively which usually comes with a set of fixed response. The need to understand and gain as much information about senior citizens are vital especially in term of their eating out behaviour (Wan-Ibrahim & Zainab, 2014) and it can never be achieved using quantitative methodology. Qualitative studies allow the exploration of a topic under real world conditions and how it gives meaning to people's life (Yin, 2011). This method allows the people being studied to be able to say what they want about a topic rather than be confined to a pre-set response set by the researcher of a quantitative research. Thus, exploration of the topic provided by the qualitative research of the senior citizens' restaurant visiting behaviour is important to fill the gap in past literatures.

1.3   Objectives of the study

The primary goal of this study is to explore the factors influencing restaurant visiting behaviour of senior citizens in Malaysia. It is to understand what encourages or discourages the senior citizens in visiting a restaurant. From this, three research objectives were developed as below:

1. To identify the factors motivating senior citizens in Malaysia to visit a restaurant.
2. To understand the barriers for senior citizens in Malaysia to visit a restaurant.
3. To examine the influence of demographic background of senior citizens on restaurant visiting behaviour.

1.4   Research question

The research questions of this study are:

1. What are the factors that influence senior citizens in Malaysia to dine in a restaurant?
2. What are the barriers for senior citizens to visit a restaurant?
3. Does demographic characteristic play a role in restaurant visiting behaviour of senior citizens?

1.5   Significance of study

This study aims to identify the factors influencing the behaviour of older people in Malaysia to dine out in a restaurant. According to Gordon et al. (2002), to ignore the mature market is a risky move as most marketers are overlooking this affluent market segment and giving more priority to the younger generation. Restaurant preferences and patronage behaviours of senior citizens in Malaysia is literally unknown even though there had been numerous amount of research involving this population. The findings obtained through this study can be used to create a marketing plan to cater to this category of consumer by the hospitality industry in particular and general marketers as well. This study will provide us with important insights in understanding and serving the needs of the local market. This study is also valuable in developing marketing and operational strategies essential for the success of local and international restaurant companies in Malaysia.

Malaysian population is growing old steadily. Developing nations such as Malaysia is ageing faster than the population in a developed nation (Hamid, 2015). The information gathered through this research can serve as a pre-cursor for future research about senior citizens in general and their eating out behaviour in particular. Result of this study will help to improve previous literature and at the same time be able to provide information on older people behaviour in Malaysia. The findings of this research will add to the existing body of knowledge in Malaysia.

The result of this study will help the marketers to understand the older consumer better as not much research was done about them. The understanding of the older consumer eating out behaviour will help the hospitality industry to device a proper marketing plan to attract this wealthy but unrecognised consumer segment. The information gathered from the informant serves as a form of feedback to the industry by the consumer. In short, the result of this study will be a reference for the marketers to develop an effective marketing plan, particularly in Malaysia.

Previous studies undertaken to understand mature consumer in term of food is about their dining out trait (Sun & Morrison, 2007), restaurant's problem in attracting and meeting the need of mature market in United States of America (Williams, Demicco, & Kotschevar, 1998). Research on mature adults in Malaysia discussed mostly on their welfare. Most of the discussions regarding mature adults are about financial security, health care system and policy regarding mature adults (Masud & Haron, 2008; Yusoff & Buja, 2013). Studies regarding the restaurant behaviour in Malaysia is still scarce and thus need to be addressed quickly.

1.6   Organisation of dissertation

The next chapter of this study will be the literature review. This chapter will discuss in detail the context of previous research and scholarly material pertaining to the topic, provide a thorough understanding of literature based on relevant themes or variables of this study, justification of this study and outline the theoretical or conceptual framework of the study.

Third chapter of this study is the methodology. In this chapter, method used to conduct this research will be explained in detail with a rationale why the method was chosen. Other than that, this chapter will also describe all the aspect of the design and procedures of the study.

The fourth chapter for this study is the finding or results. In this chapter, the study's main finding that includes the presentation of relevant data are organised and reported. Most of the report will be presented in table form to make it easier to be interpreted.

The fifth chapter is about the discussion of the result obtained in chapter four. In this chapter, the result obtained was analysed or interpreted and from which the conclusion is drawn. The obtained results were discussed in accordance with the objective stated in chapter one.

The final part of the study is the summary, conclusion and recommendations for future studies. In this chapter the significance of study were reinstated and a summary is written based on the obtained result and discussion done in the previous chapters. It also includes the limitations and suggestion for further studies.

1.7   Summary of chapter

This chapter emphasized the importance of senior citizens as a consumer segment especially in the foodservice industry and how they are still not visible to the marketers. This study intends to add to the existing body of knowledge on senior citizens and how they can be a profitable consumer group for the marketers. The following chapter will be the detailed review of past literatures on who are the senior citizens, their role as consumer, reasons for restaurant visiting behaviour and theories governing the behaviour.

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BIODATA OF STUDENT

Lalitha Ganesan was born on March 29, 1990 in Teluk Intan, Perak. She is the second of three siblings. After completing her primary school education at Sekolah Kebangsaan Seri Langkap in 2002, she continued her secondary education at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Convent Teluk Intan (2003-2005) and then at Sekolah Kebangsaan Taman Jasmin 2 Kajang (2006-2007). She completed her STPM at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Horley Methodist Teluk Intan (2008-2009). She persued her degree in Universiti Putra Malaysia at the Faculty of Food Science and Technology from 2010 to 2014. She graduated with Bachelor of Science (Food Studies) in 2014. She continued her master in the same faculty in 2015 and was granted with Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF). She worked as a Quality Assurance Control Coordinator from 2018 to 2019 in a food processing company in Kajang. She is currently working in Kluang, Johor.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Publication

Ganesan, L., Bakar, A.Z.A., Othman, M., & Haron, S. A. (2019).Barriers to visit restaurants by older adults. *International Journal of ccounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)*, *4*(18), 42–53.

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Conferences/ Colloquium

1. The 1st International Foodservice Graduate Research Colloquium and Workshop 2016 (Presenter), 29-30 november 2016

2. International Food Research Conference 2017 (Presenter) 25-27 July 2017, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor

Seminar/ Workshop Attended

1. Bengkel penulisan thesis pantas dan pengurusan artikel Mendeley, MPWS training centre, Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor, 5th January 2017

2. Two days' workshop on qualitative data analysis with Atlas.ti, MPWS training centre, Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor, 3-4 february 2017