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**FOOD IMAGE, SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS:
THE CASE OF MALAYSIA'S PORTUGUESE CUISINE**

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate Malaysians' perceived image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions toward Malacca Portuguese cuisine. Self-administered questionnaire were distributed to customers who were dining at the Portuguese restaurant. A total of 187 respondents participated in the study. The 'quality' and 'variety and authenticity' was recognized as the essential images of Malaysia's Portuguese cuisine and on the other hand, the respondents were satisfied with the 'core value' and 'food choices' of the Portuguese food. Regression analyses showed that Portuguese food attribute satisfaction was significantly supported, and the overall satisfaction revealed a significant relationship with behavioral intentions.

Keywords: Food image; Satisfaction; Behavioral intentions; Malacca Portuguese Cuisine

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multi-racial country comprises of diverse cultures, resulting in fascinating and beautifully-fused ethnic traditions. The exotic Malaysian cuisines offer customers with an exciting range of flavor, culinary styles and limitless gastronomic adventure. Malaysian cuisines mainly comprised of the dishes from the three major ethnic groups – Malay, Chinese and Indian, each having its own different style of cooking. However, other cultural cuisines that present in Malaysia for several decades should not be abandoned. Malaysia's foodservice industry consists of many segments of the market that are demanded by all levels of the society. In fact, the uniqueness of different cultural cuisines in Malaysia has been the driving force for the socio-economic development and it is increasingly regarded as an important source of income to generate the nation's economic prosperity.

The intention to savor Portuguese cuisine among Malaysian has resulted in an increased number of the ethnic restaurants in Malaysia. All the gourmet lovers especially those who are interested in authentic dishes would expect more specialties when dining out. Presently, the Portuguese cuisine is being consumed mostly by the Portuguese community in Malacca, the oldest state in Malaysia. Unfortunately, the Portuguese cuisine is somehow unfamiliar among Malaysians due to lack of promotion and publicity of the cuisine. The cuisine might eventually lose its identity because it is likely to assimilate with other cuisines in Malaysia or will no longer be practiced. Therefore, effort to sustain the Portuguese cuisine as one of Malaysia's heritage is very important.

The distinctiveness of Portuguese cuisine could be an opportunity for Malaysia to become a culinary tourism destination in Asia. However, a fundamental question remains puzzling: how Malaysian food lovers view and evaluate Portuguese cuisine? Portuguese cuisine in Malaysia should have displayed its own identity and image which represented its cultural values and also to increase public awareness toward the cuisine. The attitude and behavior of people toward Portuguese cuisine are yet to be identified.

Therefore, a survey measuring diners' perceptions toward Portuguese cuisine is invaluable in understanding their subsequent behavioral intention. The findings would be useful to the foodservice industry as a promotional tool and to develop future food tourism products. To better understand diners' perceptions on Malacca Portuguese cuisines, this study was designed to:

1. Identify diners' perceived image of Malaysia's Portuguese cuisine.
2. Evaluate diners' satisfaction of the Malaysia's Portuguese food attribute.
3. Ascertain the relationship between diners' perceived image of Malaysia's Portuguese cuisine and overall satisfaction of the cuisine.
4. Determine the relationship between diners' evaluation of food attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction of the cuisine.

5. Assess the relationship between diners' overall satisfaction of Malaysia's Portuguese cuisine and behavioral intentions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire was developed and pre-tested by 30 diners at a Portuguese restaurant. The pre-testing was conducted to ensure the reliability of the instrument developed. Several modifications were made based on the feedback from the pilot test. Before the questionnaire was finalized, a few food experts reviewed the questionnaire, and alterations were made based on their suggestion. The final version was administered to the diners who were dining at a newly-launched authentic Portuguese restaurant in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia from September 2010 to November 2010. A total of 200 diners participated in the survey using convenience sampling technique. To avoid any biases, the survey was administered on weekdays only during the lunch hours. A total of 187 questionnaires were usable for this study.

Measurement

The questionnaire comprises of five sections. The constructs were developed based on previous research on image, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of the restaurant industry (Ladhari, Brun, & Morales, 2008; Ryu, Han, & Kim, 2008; Namkung & Jang, 2007). The first section was designed to measure food image with 20 attributes being developed based on past food image literature. Those attributes were then modified to suite the context of this study. The respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale measurement, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

The second section was aimed to measure diners' food attributes satisfaction with 20 attributes being developed. Respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (completely dissatisfied) to 5 (completely satisfied).

While the third section requested the respondents' on the overall satisfaction related to the Portuguese cuisine, which was measured by a single question asking: "How satisfied were you with the Portuguese cuisine at the restaurant?" Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction on a five-point scale measurement for the third time, from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). Several studies on food service have been undertaken with a single question to measure overall satisfaction (Bigne, Saez, & Saez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Nield, Kozak, & LeGrys, 2000) and they have proven to be reliable. The fourth section measured diners' behavioral intention pertaining to 8 items adapted from the study of AbKarim, Chua and Salleh (2008) using a five-point Likert scale measurement, from 1 (most unlikely) to 5 (most likely). Finally, in section 5, the questionnaire asked for the demographic profiles of the respondents.

An exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the underlying factors of Portuguese food image and the food attribute satisfaction. The relationship between diners' perceived of Portuguese food image and their overall satisfaction with the food, as well as the relationship between food attributes satisfaction and overall satisfaction, was empirically tested by a multiple regression analysis. Finally, the relationship between diners' overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions was tested with a simple linear regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed at the restaurant of which 187 usable questionnaires were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 93.5%. There were 64.7% male and 35.3% female respondents. Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 21-50 years old (89.8%). Approximately 26.2% of the respondents were in the managerial positions. A larger proportion of respondents were locals (93.6%). Almost 43.3% of the respondents spent approximately RM 11.00 to RM 30.00 for their meal. The results show that diners usually dine in at the restaurant once a month (64.7%). The survey shows that (62.2%) of the respondents first time consuming Portuguese cuisine. They have some knowledge on Portuguese cuisine (54.0%) and most of the respondents (75.9%) have developed the liking of Portuguese cuisine.

Underlying Dimensions of Malaysia's Portuguese Cuisine Image

Factor analysis of diners' perceived Portuguese cuisine image presented that the Bartlett's Test was significant at 0.00 and the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) was 0.96, proving that the data was significantly appropriate for factor analysis. For further analysis, item with factor loading 0.50 and higher was retained.

The 20 attributes associated with how Portuguese cuisine is perceived by diners were explored by principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation. The internal consistency of the 20 items was examined by Cronbach's alpha analysis. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.87. The factor analysis compiled a two factor solution as shown in Table 1. Each of the factors was labeled based on the items which constituted it. Factor 1 with 12 items relating to 'quality and variety' of Portuguese cuisine ($\alpha=0.96$). Factor 2 consists of eight items covering on 'authenticity' ($\alpha=0.93$). Both the two factors were generated with Eigenvalue above 1.0, which is about 69.48% of the total variance.

The summated means of all factors were above mid-point of 3.0. In other words, the respondents agreed on the 20 items of the Portuguese cuisine images. Specifically, diners perceived the image of Malaysia's Portuguese cuisine as 'authenticity' ($x=3.53$); followed by the image of 'quality and variety' ($x=3.51$).

Table 1: Perceived Food Image (N=187)

Factor and attribute	Mean	Factor Loading	Eigen value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Quality and Variety	3.51		12.82	64.10	0.96
Add to eating enjoyment	3.36	0.83			
Value for money	3.48	0.81			
Reasonable price	3.59	0.80			
Delicious	3.60	0.82			
Well presented	3.50	0.75			
A lot of traditional menu	3.53	0.77			
Local ingredients	3.54	0.73			
Nutritious	3.46	0.60			
Variety of food choices	3.46	0.64			
Quality of food services	3.54	0.62			
Attractive eating surrounding	3.54	0.60			
Quality ingredients	3.51	0.61			
Factor 2: Authenticity	3.53		1.08	5.38	0.93
Clean environment	3.54	0.62			
Variety cooking methods	3.59	0.62			
Variety flavors	3.56	0.65			
Information on the food	3.41	0.73			
Easy access	3.33	0.78			
<i>Halal</i>	3.50	0.73			
Hot and spicy	3.62	0.64			
Originality and exoticness	3.66	0.62			

Underlying Dimensions of Diners' Satisfaction with Malaysia's Portuguese Cuisine

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the underlying structure of food attributes satisfaction. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of 0.93 and significant Barlett's test of sphericity ($p=0.00$) suggested that data is suitable for factor analysis. The principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to examine the likely of the underlying factor to be correlated with each other. Two factor solutions with 17 items were retained as shown in Table 2. The internal consistency of the 17 items was found to be highly reliable with 0.91 Cronbach's alpha.

All the factors were named accordingly to the items grouped under them. Factor 1 with 11 items relating to satisfaction of 'core value' ($\alpha=0.89$). Factor 2 consists of six items pertaining to 'food choices and accessibility' ($\alpha=0.83$). About 51.43% of the total variance was achieved by the factors and all the two factors with Eigenvalue greater than 1.0 suggesting that a two solution is appropriate.

The 'core value' and 'food choice and accessibility' of Portuguese cuisine had the mean score of 4.18 and 4.17 respectively, indicating that the customers were satisfied with the quality, variety, service, and choice of the cuisine.

Table 2: Perceived Food Satisfaction (N=187)

Factor and attribute	Mean	Factor Loading	Eigen value	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: Core Value	4.18		8.56	42.79	0.90
Food quality	4.01	0.67			
Food variety	4.21	0.50			
Prices	4.18	0.65			
Food service quality	4.21	0.77			
Service personnel	4.18	0.77			
Cultural experiences	4.18	0.74			
Cooking methods variety	4.19	0.70			
Food ingredients	4.22	0.65			
Locally produced	4.25	0.62			
Eating surrounding	4.25	0.74			
Restaurant attractiveness	4.11	0.62			
Factor 2: Food Choices and Accessibility	4.17		1.73	8.64	0.84
Food presentation	4.24	0.66			
Food festivals variety	4.11	0.71			
Easy accessible eating place	4.09	0.62			
Numerous eating place	3.89	0.60			
Opportunities visit	4.04	0.56			
Portuguese food information	4.07	0.65			

The Relationship between Malaysia's Portuguese Cuisine Image and Overall Satisfaction

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between diners' perception of Portuguese cuisine image and their overall satisfaction with the food. It was used to estimate the coefficients of the linear equation involving two factors of Portuguese cuisine images (independent variable) that best predict the value of overall satisfaction (dependent variable). Table 3 shows the significant variables that remained in the equation and which explain the customer's overall satisfaction based on standardized beta coefficient values. The standardized beta coefficient reflects the importance of each independent variable on dependent variable. The result presented in the Table 3 indicated that the most influential food image to the customer's overall satisfaction was the quality and variety of the Portuguese cuisine ($\beta=0.18$) and followed by food authenticity ($\beta=0.09$). However, the perceived Portuguese food image of diners did not significantly affect their overall satisfaction of the cuisine. Only 6% of variance in overall satisfaction was explained by Portuguese cuisine images. There was a positive and weak correlation between Portuguese cuisine images and overall satisfaction (Multiple R = 0.26).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of Portuguese Cuisine Image and Overall Satisfaction

Variables entered	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. t
Quality and Variety	0.18	1.34	0.18
Authenticity	0.09	0.64	0.53
Multiple R=0.26			
R Square=0.06			
F=6.55, Sig.=0.02			

The Relationship between Portuguese Food Attributes Satisfaction and Overall Satisfaction

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between cuisine attributes satisfaction and diners' overall satisfaction with the Portuguese cuisine. As revealed in the Table 4, the Beta coefficients indicated that satisfaction of 'core value' was the most important variable affecting overall food satisfaction ($\beta=0.59$) and followed by food choices and accessibility ($\beta= 0.07$). In other words, diners' satisfaction of 'core value' has a great influence on their overall satisfaction of the Portuguese cuisine. The results indicated that the regression model fits the data well ($F=48.45$, $p=0.00$). About 34% of variance in overall satisfaction was explained by food attributes satisfaction. There was a positive and moderate correlation between food attributes satisfaction and overall satisfaction (Multiple R=0.59).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis of Portuguese Cuisine Attribute Satisfaction and Overall Satisfaction

Variables entered	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. t
Core Value	0.59	7.22	0.00
Food Choices and Accessibility	0.07	0.08	0.94
Multiple R= 0.59			
R Square= 0.34			
F=48.45, Sig.= 0.00			

Behavioral Intentions

As indicated in the Table 5, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the behavioral intention was 0.86, indicating a high internal reliable within each item. The summated mean of the behavioral intention items was 4.14. Specifically, diners would like to try other types of Portuguese cuisine, which was reflected by the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=4.28$). They did not have the intention to savor the same food at the Portuguese restaurant ($\bar{x}=3.91$). Perhaps they want to try other types of Portuguese cuisine in the future.

Table 5: Behavioral Intentions
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Behavioral Intentions	Mean
I have the intention to savor the same food at the Portuguese restaurant	3.91
I will recommend Portuguese cuisine to others	4.10
I would like to try other types of Portuguese food	4.28
I consider going to Portuguese restaurant as my first choice	4.09
I would continue to come to the restaurant even if there's an increase in the food prices	4.09
I would encourage my family/friends to go to Portuguese restaurants	4.19
I would highly recommended Portuguese food to others	4.22
My likelihood of visiting Portuguese restaurant in the future (based on the experience with the cuisine)	4.25
Summated mean	4.14
Cronbach's alpha coefficient=0.86	

The Relationship between Overall Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between diners' overall satisfaction and their behavioral intentions. Results from the Table 6 shows that overall satisfaction ($\beta=0.35$) was significantly affecting diners' behavioral intentions ($p=0.00$). The analysis indicated that there the model fits the data ($F=25.60$, $p=0.00$). About 12% of variance in behavioral intentions was explained by overall satisfaction. There was a positive and low correlation between overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Multiple R= 0.39).

Table 6: A simple linear regression analysis of overall satisfaction with behavioral intentions

Variables entered	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. t
Overall satisfaction	0.35	5.06	0.00
Multiple R= 0.35			
R Square= 0.12			
F=25.60, Sig.= 0.00			

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Food and travel have become a trend in many countries around world, and destinations are capitalizing their potential to promote their cuisine as a unique product. Malaysia has various gastronomy products that can be offered to tourist and giving them the opportunity to savor different local food, especially the Portuguese food. However, it still remains a great challenge to establish Malaysia's position as a world renowned culinary tourism destination that can attract foodies from around the world. This study provides several managerial implications and could help destination managers better understand the factors that contribute to food satisfaction and high visiting quality; so that they would be able to provide appropriate products that accommodate diners' needs and wants.

It is suggested that government bodies and marketers to pay attention to improve the Portuguese food's image and diners' satisfaction with their food experience, which could enhance diners' perception of visiting quality and promote positive behavioral intentions among them. Destination marketers could focus on promoting the distinctiveness and diversity of Portuguese food, especially highlighting the fact that Portuguese food is a reflection of a unique and exotic culture. In today's competitive environment, creating and managing a unique image by effective positioning and differentiation has become critical to success.

Apart from food image, the role of food satisfaction in behavioral intentions should be considered. This study found that food satisfaction directly influenced behavioral intentions. Therefore, food managers should focus on establishing a favorable level of diner satisfaction in dining atmosphere, service quality, and food quality, presentation and variety. By projecting positive food image and inducing memorable experience, meeting diners' expectations and increasing the level of food satisfaction, and portraying the country's culture through dining experience, managers could improve diners' perceptions of Portuguese food in Malaysia, which in turn would generate positive behavioral intentions among them.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that the images of 'quality' and 'variety and authenticity' of the Portuguese food/cuisine are crucial in an effort to sustain the cuisine as the country's food heritage. It is suggested that food marketers should exert more efforts to promote the quality of the food and services. On the other hand, though the cuisine may assimilate with other Malaysia's ethnic food, the authentic cooking methods and taste of the cuisine should be preserved by all means. In sum, the Portuguese cuisine in Malaysia is expected for its authenticity and at the same time could satisfy diners with the quality of its core value such as services, variety, and price.

The influence of Portuguese cuisine images on diners' overall satisfaction was insignificantly different. On the other hand, the relationship between Portuguese food attributes satisfaction and overall satisfaction was significant. The influence of overall satisfaction has an imperative effect to diners' behavioral intentions. It has been generally accepted in the literature that behavioral intention has a strong relationship with overall satisfaction with the perceived food experience during visiting (Ryu & Jang, 2006).

This study has some flaws that need to be highlighted. The application of convenient sampling cannot be used to represent all the Portuguese food restaurants in Malaysia. The data was collected only from one authentic Portuguese food restaurant. The samples are relatively small and could not be claimed as statistically representative to the local Portuguese food diners' population. To further validate the findings, future study is suggested to collect the data from a wider sample of diners from different Portuguese food restaurants. With regards to instrumentation of this study, the utilization of structured questions to measure the variables has a common disadvantage in which researcher might neglect the important attributes. Thus, future study should advocate the use of triangulation "multiple operationism" methods. Conducting personal interview with chefs, foodservice managers, and/or Portuguese food lovers is suggested

to capture the important points that complement the strengths and weaknesses found in single method designs.

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